

**Transnational Class Formation
in a School for the Global Elite**

Karen Jeanette Lillie

UCL Institute of Education

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I, Karen Jeanette Lillie, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

Karen Lillie

Abstract

This thesis examines transnational class formation at the Leysin American School (LAS), a secondary boarding school in Switzerland. LAS is reputedly one of the most expensive schools in the world. It also educates an international cross-section of the financial elite.

An emerging theory of class formation, put forward by Kenway et al. (2017), is that elite schools 'choreograph' this process. Practices and everyday experiences at LAS, however, suggest that another theory is needed to explain what is happening in that space. Importantly, Kenway et al.'s school sites are rooted in the former British empire, while LAS is informed by circulating images of Switzerland. 'Choreography' may therefore describe processes at some kinds of elite schools but not others.

I thus proffer another, complementary theory. This theory is that class formation is 'interpreted'. As another metaphor drawn from the performing arts, to 'interpret' in this context means to make a framework one's own. In other words, I argue that at LAS, transnational class formation is a process adapted by institutional and student actors in ways that work for them.

This case study of elite schooling is historical and sociological in nature. It draws from documentary, interview and observational data. The data were collected over 15 months in the field. My analyses use theoretical tools developed by anthropologist Aihwa Ong (1999). In particular, they employ her notions of 'state strategies' and 'flexible citizens' to make sense of LAS's on-the-ground realities.

This thesis makes a theoretical contribution to the field of elite school studies. Building another kind of theory through another type of school

strengthens our understandings of both different processes of class formation and how they interconnect. It also suggests that we need to build an assemblage of theories around class formation. This is a significant addition to the existing literature.

Impact Statement

This thesis impacts academia, policy and the wider public. Its contributions to academia are both empirical and theoretical. Empirically, Swiss boarding schools are under-researched. This thesis thus contributes new knowledge to an area in which it is needed. Theoretically, the thesis refines an emerging theory of class formation. It does so by examining the theory in a different space than that in which it was developed. This strengthens our understandings of class formation processes at various kinds of elite schools.

In terms of policy, this thesis enhances how we understand the effects of modern globalisation. A common assumption is that globalisation breaks down cultural and juridical borders. However, this thesis demonstrates that while some borders are eroded in this process, others are enforced. As such, it evidences multiple and complex forms of identification in our current world. Highlighting these nuances may help policymakers craft state responses to globalisation.

Finally, this thesis impacts the wider public's understanding of society. Economically elite groups are often shrouded in mystery. What the public knows about them tends to come from a media that arguably glamorises power and status. The thesis offers detailed insight into an economically elite school and the lives of some of its young people without glorifying being rich. In this way, it fosters a better-informed understanding of elites and one of their educational institutions.

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Publications

I have derived the following two publications from work in this thesis:

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At the time of thesis submission, other papers were in peer review.

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Abbreviations

ACS	American College of Switzerland
CV	Curriculum Vitae
ECIS	European Council of Independent Schools
EU	European Union
GCE	Global Citizenship Education
IB	International Baccalaureate
KLAS	Kumon Leysin Academy of Switzerland
km	Kilometres
LAS	Leysin American School
LASC	Leysin American School Collection
LASSA	Leysin American Schools Société Anonyme
m	Metres
NAE	Nord Anglia Education
NEASC	New England Association of Schools and Colleges
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OPEC	Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries
SFr.	Swiss Francs
SSCI	Social Sciences Citation Index
TCC	Transnational Capitalist Class
UHNW	Ultra High Net Worth
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
US	United States
USD	United States Dollars
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WWI	World War One
WWII	World War Two

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The Topic of This Thesis

This thesis is a case study of elite schooling. It asks: How do practices and everyday experiences at the Leysin American School (LAS), a school for the global financial elite, inform an emerging theory of transnational class formation? 'LAS' is the real name of the school where I did fieldwork. I discuss my decision to use the institution's real name in a later chapter (page 105). I have also taught at LAS and later reflect on this insider positionality (page 75).

The terms 'elite' and 'elite school' are both complex and ambiguous. I will discuss these at length in Chapter 2. I use 'elite' to signal an individual's or group's 'power to' and 'power over' social, political or economic resources (Maxwell, 2015). The economic elite, which includes LAS students, comprises those whose power derives from financial wealth. The term 'elite schools' here refers to institutions that are some combination of typologically, scholastically, historically, geographically and demographically elite (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2009b, p. 1093).

The rationale behind my research question is a desire to examine an emerging theory in a new context. As explained in the next chapter, extant literature argues that modern globalisation is forming transnational social classes (Carroll, 2010; Robinson, 2004; Sklair, 2001). In *Class Choreographies: Elite Schools and Globalization*, Kenway et al. (2017) investigate the role of elite schools in this process. The authors studied seven elite schools connected to the former British empire that educated primarily a

local elite. Such schools, they argue, produce ‘a new sense of transnational class-commonality and consciousness amongst students’ (2017, p. 228).

Kenway et al. thus propose a new theory of transnational class formation: that this process is ‘choreographed’ by elite schools. I consider this at length in Chapter 3.

My thesis revisits Kenway et al.’s theory through the lens of another kind of elite school. LAS is rooted in globally circulating images of Switzerland (Chapter 5), rather than the former British empire. It also educates an international cross-section of the global financial elite, rather than a local elite. This case study therefore explores processes of class formation in a different kind of school setting.

The thesis argues that another theory is needed to explain what is happening at LAS. As I will show, the ability of LAS leadership to bring together particular kinds of young people was limited (Chapters 6 and 7). Similarly, the ability of an LAS education to form particular kinds of student subjectivities was also limited (Chapters 8 and 9). Thus, practices and everyday experiences at the school point to a different kind of class formation process than ‘choreography’. I therefore proffer another metaphor drawn from the performing arts to describe these processes: ‘interpretation’. In this context, to ‘interpret’ is to make a framework one’s own. This metaphor shifts the focus from the creation of frameworks (choreography) to the adaptations of those frameworks in day-to-day life (interpretation). Yet, as I will show, there are also points of convergence between these theories.

In this way, the thesis contributes to our theoretical understandings of transnational class formation. Critically, it shows that different kinds of elite

schools may engage in different kinds of class formation processes. While Kenway et al.'s (2017) theory applies to one type of school, it does not seem to capture on-the-ground realities at LAS. This points to the heterogeneity of elite schools and their communities. Hence, this thesis highlights the need to examine elite schooling and class formation in multiple spaces.

The Research Site

When flying into Geneva, Switzerland, I always booked a window seat on the left-hand side of the aircraft. I then hoped for a descent from the other side of the lake and a clear sky. When these elements aligned, a spectacular alpine panorama unfolded outside my window. Once on the ground, my two-hour train ride around the lake began. I would sit on the right-hand side of the train; the lake was then just outside my window, though sometimes obscured by vineyards and estates. At the end of the lake, I switched to a cog train. This transfer might involve a lot of waiting (allowing me to buy snacks at the train station) since the cog only ran once an hour. Once on it, after 30 minutes and a 1500-metre elevation gain, I arrived at LAS.

Although this journey may seem glamorous, at the end of the trip I found myself in a small mountain village of 3000 people. Leysin, the village, had one post office, one bank and a handful of small grocery stores, all of which closed for lunch. The closest grocery store was almost 1.5 km and a 150-metre elevation change from LAS's campus – hence, the buying of snacks at the train station. Walking around the village, I mostly ran into locals, skiers or hikers (depending on the season) and LAS staff members. It was rare to see students. If they went into town for dinner at a restaurant, for

example, they usually took a taxi. Taxis were plentiful and charged a 10 SFr. (£8.50¹) flat rate to go anywhere within the village.

The village of Leysin was home to LAS. The school was founded in 1961 by F. Ott, a Swiss who emigrated to the US at age 10 and then returned to Switzerland in his 50s. In its early years, LAS was an American-curriculum school that educated the sons and daughters of overseas Americans (Chapter 6). Over time, its leadership re-oriented the school towards the global financial elite (Chapter 7).

At the time of my fieldwork, LAS educated 330 young men and women from the ages of 12-18, from over 40 nationalities. Students in the overall student body came from the following geographic regions, as defined by the United Nations (UN Statistics Division, 1999):

Eastern Asia	59	Eastern Europe	75	Latin America	47
Western Asia	15	Western Europe	20	Northern America	44
Southern Asia	13	Southern Europe	18	Sub-Saharan Africa	4
Central Asia	12	Northern Europe	10	Australia	1
South-eastern Asia	12				

There are two things worth highlighting about the composition of the student body. One is that it was not dominated by one particular nationality. The top five nationalities (Russian, American, Chinese, Mexican and Brazilian) constituted only 52% of the student body. Notably, although Chinese students were the third most well-represented group, they were only

¹ Unless otherwise noted, the currency rates for conversions throughout this thesis are from December 2020.

10% of the overall student body. This makes LAS different from elite schools that see Chinese students as their main international clientele (see Kenway et al., 2017; Ong, 1999).

The other item worth highlighting is that less than 3% of LAS students were Swiss. Similarly, less than 3% of teachers were born Swiss citizens, though some were naturalised while working at LAS. The lack of Swiss-born teachers may result from the Swiss state system paying higher salaries (DeVore, 2017) than LAS. Employees working in dining, groundskeeping and housekeeping were also usually non-Swiss; however, those in accounting and human resources *were* Swiss. These employee demographics had been in place since the school's founding. In 1964, for example, just five out of 100 employees were Swiss (Board Report, 1964, LASC). This means that both students and staff at LAS primarily came from other nations. Critically, then, LAS was not an elite school tasked with creating a national elite, as is often seen in the literature – including in Kenway et al. (2017). This makes it a fruitful space in which to examine processes of transnational class formation.

Admission to LAS was academically non-selective. As of 2020, the school offered both the International Baccalaureate (IB) diploma and an American high school credential. Although its students often went on to well-regarded universities – those ranked 20-50th in the US or 5-25th in the UK – very rarely were they admitted to the Ivy League, Oxford or Cambridge. As will be explained in Chapter 9 (page 250), however, LAS students instead focused on moving to so-called 'global cities' for their higher education, where they could network with other wealthy young people. LAS's reputation as an elite school thus did not arise from its young people attending elite

universities. This contrasts with elite schools in the extant literature whose reputations typically rely at least in part on placing students at top-tier universities (see Kenway et al., 2017; Weis et al., 2014; Ye & Nylander, 2015). LAS was thus unusual in that it did not position itself as a school for the academic elite.

Instead, it positioned itself as one for the global economic elite. LAS was reputedly one of the most expensive schools in the world (Lovemoney Staff, 2019; Parkes, 2020). The annual fee for 2020/2021 was 99,000 SFr. (£82,000). Additional one-time fees included a 500 SFr. (£400) application fee, an 8000 SFr. (£6,600) contribution to the capital improvement fund and a 5000 SFr. (£4,100) surcharge for the IB diploma. Other annual expenses included a health plan, sports equipment, school supplies, private tutoring, uniforms and airport transfers. A new student entering the first year of the IB diploma programme who travelled to and from the airport at each break (winter, spring and summer) could expect to pay over 120,000 SFr. (£99,400) for the year. These fees served as the principal barrier to entry at LAS, leading to a student body defined primarily by its wealth.

How I Arrived at This Topic

I taught at LAS for two years. As noted in Chapter 4 (page 75), I am vague about the timing of my job to help protect my research participants. That being said, my job started before my PhD programme. In fact, it led to it.

When I arrived at LAS, I glimpsed a new economic world. This was despite having grown up in comfortable financial circumstances, though in a city consistently ranked one of America's poorest. In university, amongst a

disproportionately monied student body, I realised that being considered wealthy is relative to one's surroundings. I did not realise that I was seeing only the tip of the iceberg.

At LAS, I learned that some people have much more money than I ever imagined. I also learned that those people are brought together in secluded places, like Swiss mountain villages. I felt like a participant-observer in that world, doing my day-to-day job while trying to find a framework that explained what I was encountering. Gaztambide-Fernández (2009a), Howard (2008) and Khan (2011) each describe similar experiences that led to their doctoral theses, all of which were ethnographic studies of elite schools. Like them, I wanted to understand the environment in which I found myself. I applied to a PhD programme so that I could do so in a formalised way.

The Importance of Studying Elite Schools

Elite schools can hold a lot of power in society. Through social closure, they can reproduce the structural advantages often held by those who attend them. In the UK, for example, such schools are the best predictor of who ends up in elite professional positions (Reeves et al., 2017) or as members of elite social clubs (Bond, 2012). In the US, elite secondary schools and their families may strategize to place students at elite universities (Karabel, 2005; Stevens, 2007; Weis et al., 2014). This leads to higher economic rewards for those students when they enter the job market (Carnevale & Strohl, 2011; Rivera, 2015).

Yet, compared to other kinds of schools, we know relatively little about elite schools. This is particularly true when it comes to their shortcomings.

Elite schools tend to be glorified in the social imagination, in part because the media arguably idolises privilege (Jaworski & Thurlow, 2017). Academic research is also guilty of focusing on the outsized influence of elite schools. This has led to a body of literature that overwhelmingly points to the failings of ‘normal’ schools and the power of elite ones. This thesis, along with a growing body of work in elite studies, seeks to slowly shift this imbalance. The thesis addresses an elite school’s processes, rather than emphasising its powers. In this way, it contributes to building an equality of information about our educational landscape.

The Structure of This Text

Chapter 2 examines existing literature. It asks how published research would answer the question: Can elite schools create a transnational elite class? Kenway et al. (2017) ask *how*, rather than *if*, elite schools create such a class. Asking and answering this chapter’s question is therefore a useful contribution to the conversation started by those authors. I conclude that, according to the literature, elite schools may be involved in class formation but probably as one of many players.

In Chapter 3, I discuss the theoretical foundation of my thesis, as well as its theoretical tools. I first review Kenway et al.’s (2017) theory that elite schools ‘choreograph’ transnational class formation. I then present the theoretical tools with which I make sense of such processes at LAS. These tools were developed by anthropologist Aihwa Ong (1999). I then proffer my own theory for what is happening at LAS. Using another metaphor from the arts, I suggest that transnational class formation there is ‘interpreted’ by both

institutional and student actors. This theory both complements and, at times, converges with that of Kenway et al. (2017).

Chapter 4 then turns to my research design. I first discuss my sociological and historical approach. I then evaluate my position as an insider researcher, as mentioned above. Following that, I analyse my methodological techniques (ethnographic), methods (documentary, interview and observational) and sources. Finally, I address two ethical complexities that arose during my research process. This chapter thus draws a map for the reader from my driving question to my analyses.

The first data chapter, Chapter 5, examines ways in which LAS is a 'different' kind of elite school. I first explore what is meant by 'Switzerland' and the label 'Swiss boarding school'. I then discuss three circulating images of Switzerland that were embedded in LAS's practices and positionalities: the nation as a retreat from the world, as a centre for global wealth and as the headquarters of the IB, a curriculum that arguably fosters mindsets of Western mobility. My analysis follows Ong (1999) in suggesting that such circulating images produce norms which then create a particular transnational space. This points to some of the ways that an LAS education significantly shapes its students.

Chapters 6 and 7 then together demonstrate the limited abilities of the LAS leadership to bring together particular kinds of young people, and thus to form a particular kind of class. Chapter 6 analyses roughly the first decade of LAS's existence, from 1961 to the early 1970s. I explore LAS's original motto, its founder's biography and its financial structure. Using Ong's (1999) notion that 'cultural logics' inform state strategies, I show that although LAS's

founder hoped to align the school with American Cold War priorities, his vision was ultimately constrained by financial needs. Hence, he needed to adapt his hopes for LAS within certain frameworks.

In Chapter 7, I look at the school's development from the mid-1970s to 2011, when LAS was rebranded as a school for 'high-end clientele'. Corresponding to Chapter 6, I examine the changing mottos of the school, the biographies of its new leadership and its evolving financial situation. Using Ong's same theoretical tool, I argue that, over time, LAS became misaligned with the broader socio-political and economic climate. To remain financially solvent, its leadership adapted the institution to emerging international capitalism and began catering to a global financial elite. This again speaks to the school leadership's need to shift LAS within its circumstances, even to the point of creating a different kind of school than was originally intended.

Chapters 8 and 9 then investigate the frameworks provided by LAS to build common experiences and identities amongst its students, and how LAS students made those frameworks their own. Chapter 8 explores the school's motto of developing 'citizens of the world' and what kinds of young people its students were actually becoming. Ong (1999) usefully frames mobility as both a strategy for wealth accumulation *and* a process that precipitates new hierarchies of status. Using this theoretical concept, I show that young people at LAS oriented themselves to the global economy while also negotiating power hierarchies amongst each other that were contoured by national imperial legacies. This demonstrates that although LAS claimed to create 'world citizens', students enacted that notion in their own way.

The final data chapter, Chapter 9, examines how LAS students envisioned their future mobilities. I show that they plotted particular routes that articulated with their economic class, their race and nation, and/or their gender. Drawing on Ong's (1999) contention that mobility can put one's privileges at risk, I argue that young people at LAS forged particular paths with such risks in mind. By doing so, they circumscribed the meaning of global mobility in ways that worked for them. Yet, I also demonstrate that their mobilities reflected historical paths of migration. This reveals a point of convergence between the theories of 'interpretation' and 'choreography'.

This thesis ends with Chapter 10. The chapter summarises my findings, discusses their significance, reflects on a limitation and offers suggestions for further research. I argue that while Kenway et al.'s (2017) theory of 'choreography' describes processes at one kind of elite school, it does not capture processes at LAS. I thus proffer the theory of 'interpretation' as a complement to that of 'choreography', while noting that these theories do, at times, also interconnect. Starting a theoretically-informed dialogue through the case study of a different sort of elite school is the fundamental contribution of this thesis.

Chapter 2

A Review of Literature

Introduction

Having presented the topic of this thesis, I here situate it within existing literature. I analyse how published research might answer the question: Can elite schools create a transnational elite class? The first section of this chapter discusses the literature that has been excluded from this review. Following that, I evaluate how the field of elite studies developed over roughly 50 years, from 1956-2008. This history helps explain why certain lines of inquiry have come to define the field. In the third section, I examine what the literature says about the concept of a 'transnational elite class'. I highlight the lack of consensus around this term. The fourth section then investigates both definitions of an elite school and the empirically-demonstrated abilities and limitations of elite schools to shape particular subjectivities. Finally, I conclude from the literature that elite schools may *contribute* to creating a transnational elite class, as one of many players involved in this process.

This chapter's question is motivated by Kenway et al. (2017), whose theory drives this thesis. As starting assumptions, *Class Choreographies* accepts (1) the existence of a transnational class and (2) elite schools' ability to play a role in its formation. Kenway et al. therefore ask *how*, not *if*, elite schools are creating this class. A useful contribution to this conversation, then, is to take a step back. By asking whether elite schools *could* create a transnational class, I highlight ambiguities woven through both assumptions above. This chapter thus helpfully appraises what we know about a

transnational elite class and the significant abilities, but also limitations, of elite schools to shape their students.

The Scope of This Chapter

This chapter cannot cover all published literature. I have thus made choices about what to include and exclude. This section reviews those choices. It moves from the macro to the micro – from language of publication, to the field of study, to particular topics. Throughout this chapter, I focus on key texts. My citations are by no means exhaustive; however, they reflect main ideas and debates in the field.

Regarding language, I cite literature published in English. This is for the practical reason that I am comfortable reading and analysing in that language. Most academic publications are in English. In 2010, the International Social Science Council and UNESCO co-published a World Social Science Report entitled *Knowledge Divides*. This report found that from 1998-2007, 94% of SSCI articles were published in English (Gingras & Mosbah-Natanson, 2010). I would suggest that this reflects the body of work in elite studies, as well.

However, although I limit my review to English, I try to disrupt the Anglosphere's² dominant presence in research publications. Much of elite studies literature published in English focuses on the Anglosphere, though influential scholars in the field have called for moving beyond this geography (Maxwell & Aggleton, 2016; van Zanten et al., 2015). Such a call is starting to be taken up by scholars, including myself. This thesis contributes to widening the field's geographical reach by focusing on a school in Switzerland.

² This term refers to Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the UK and the US.

Moreover, when possible, I have cited research emerging out of geographies other than the Anglosphere. This was difficult to find amongst the body of work published over 30 years ago. As a result, all of the 10 key elite school studies that I cite that were published before 1990 address Australia, the UK or the US. With literature published after 1990, however, I could better diversify the geographical focus. The 24 elite school studies that I cite from 1990-2020 represent: Argentina (1), Australia (1), Barbados (2), China (1), Germany (1), Ghana (1), India (3), Ireland (1), Nigeria (1), Singapore (2), South Africa (1), Sweden (1), Switzerland (1), the UK (2) and the US (5). Although the ratio of English-speaking to non-English speaking countries (19:5) could be better, my discussion draws from the global sphere.

For my purposes, I focus on key literature in history and the social sciences (particularly anthropology, sociology and political science). These fields' questions, methods and analyses are most similar to my own. Thus, they answer this chapter's question from the same framework in which I asked it.

I acknowledge that the study of elites has also influenced other fields, including philosophy (Plato) and theology (Aquinas). It has also impacted literature and the arts. Elite schools, for example, have been depicted both realistically, as in the film *Dead Poets Society* (1989), and fantastically, like in the *Harry Potter* books (1997-2007) and movies (2001-2011). Journalism has also investigated elite schools. There have been television exposés, like the BBC's 2011 special *Posh and Posher: Why Public School Boys Run Britain*, and radio programmes, like the *This American Life* episode 'Three Miles' from 2015. While these media also contribute to our understandings of elite

schools, they have been excluded from this chapter because their questions and aims differ greatly from mine.

This chapter furthermore excludes work that fits the criteria above but deals with themes outside my driving question. For example, it excludes the growing body of research on non-elite global social classes. Some key texts, for instance, attend to the global precariat (Bauman, 1998) or the global middle class (Ball & Nikita, 2014; Koo, 2016; Maxwell et al., 2019 special issue). Others have theorised the relations between these classes (Sassen, 2007; Weiss, 2005). Although I take E.P. Thompson's view that 'class is a relationship, and not a thing' (1966, p. 11), that relationship is not the focus of this thesis. I do not, for example, examine how LAS and its students are situated in wider power structures between the classes, beyond briefly highlighting this relationship (page 134). Although exploring this further would make for an excellent follow-up project (see page 279), this thesis focuses on what Thompson calls the 'making' of a class. I return to this later.

Finally, this chapter does not address literature on elite higher education. I have included one such citation (Karabel, 2005) that sheds light on elite secondary schooling processes. However, there is other literature on elite higher education that, while related, is not explanatory here. For example, Brooks and Waters (2011) examine European and East Asian students' perspectives on studying abroad for higher education. Power, Brown, Allouch, and Tholen (2013) investigate the mobilities of students at Sciences-Po, France and Oxford, England. These two examples attend to the intersection of education and international mobility, as I do. However, without explanatory power in this particular chapter, they have been excluded from it.

Elite Studies, 1956-2008

In this section, I appraise the historical trajectory of elite studies. I start in 1956, when C. Wright Mills published *The Power Elite*. His text is credited as the first critical study of elites. I end in 2008, when the global financial crisis engendered a renewed and sustained interest in elite groups. As a whole, this section demonstrates that the field of elite studies has been defined by lines of inquiry that parallel wider socio-political concerns.

The modern study of elite groups is often attributed to Mosca (1939) and Pareto (1935), who both considered rule by elites to be inevitable. Their work, however, is widely considered to be more celebratory than analytical (Khan, 2012; Maxwell, 2015; Savage & Williams, 2008). It was Mills's text *The Power Elite* (1956) that launched the field as we know it (Davis & Williams, 2017; Wedel, 2017). This text is seen as both the first large-scale, sociological study of American power structures and one of the first that did not take a purely Marxist approach, instead integrating various theoretical approaches (Domhoff, 2006). Mills theorised that a 'triangle of power' existed amongst American political, military and corporate elites. This continues to be a foundational idea, one with which Chapter 6 of this thesis engages.

Mills's theoretical framework arguably underpinned the next two decades of elite studies research in the US (Wedel, 2017). Inspired by Mills, Dahl (1961), for example, constructed a key alternative theory. Dahl studied the city of New Haven, Connecticut. He concluded that it was not run by a so-called power elite. Instead, he argued, power there was pluralistic. Notably, Dahl and Mills took different methodological approaches. Mills asked who had authority, while Dahl asked who was making significant decisions. According

to a keynote address given by Domhoff (2007), a third important figure to whom I return, these different starting positions characterise structuralists and pluralists in elite studies.

Drawing from both Mills and Dahl, Domhoff (1967) explored how the American elite deploy their power. Striking a balance between structuralism and pluralism, he argued that on a national level, elite groups rule, while on a community level, decision-making is spread out. Domhoff's work has faced warranted criticisms, including for its problematic definitions of the elite (i.e., social registers; Berle, 1968) and its lack of theoretical engagement (K. Miller, 1969). Still, his scholarship represented a step forward for the field. Domhoff showed that power works differently on different scales. This is an idea to which I return in Chapter 10 of this thesis (page 276).

The three texts above were sociological in nature and criticised for being ahistorical (Domhoff, 1978; Orum & Feagin, 1987). However, historical work on elite groups was also taking place. In 1961, for example, Graubard edited a special issue of *Daedalus*. The journal was published by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. The issue, entitled 'Excellence and Leadership in a Democracy', addressed the need to think historically to maintain what he saw as America's elite positionality (Graubard, 1961). Around the same time, Wilkinson's (1964) historical study linked the British fee-paying school system to the production of government leaders.

The intellectual discussions that evolved from this foundation during the 1960s and 1970s were rich but limited in scale. Savage and Williams (2008) attribute this to the survey analysis methods used at the time. Such methods can capture large social classes but not small ones, like the elite.

Khan (2012) alternatively links the limited scholarly attention to elite groups in the US to social and political events. As the civil rights movement came into being in the 1960s, he argues, it was the marginalised groups that held the interest of scholars.

Indeed, during this era, the academy generally focused on the working and middle classes. Key texts in both history and sociology took a Marxist approach, which I explain later. This included Thompson's *The Making of the English Working Class* (1966), to which I also return later. In sociology, Marxism engendered the so-called 'new sociology of education'. This is exemplified by Bowles and Gintis's *Schooling in Capitalist America* (1976), which argues that school environments mirror the workplace. Willis's *Learning to Labour* (1977) extended that argument by bringing everyday experiences into the conversation. Through an ethnographic study of an English school, Willis showed that working-class boys are socialised into working-class jobs. Along with other influential working- and middle-class school ethnographies (Hargreaves, 1967; Lacey, 1970), *Learning to Labour* brought ethnography to the forefront of educational studies. These theoretical orientations (Marxism) and methodologies (ethnography) would later become standard approaches for elite studies researchers.

In reaction to the prevalence of working-class research at this time, Nader pressed for the 'urgent' study of elites (1972, p. 1). Her call to 'study up' has become a common justification for studying elite groups. However, at the time, it was met with a general retreat from class studies. Fraser (2009) argues that in the 1980s, the rise of neoliberalism papered over discussions of inequality. Effectively, this pushed social class concerns into the background.

Despite this, the 1980s still laid a foundation for future elite studies research. Economically, neoliberal policies were implemented in the UK and the US, eventually leading to increased income inequality (Davis & Williams, 2017; Khan, 2012). This concentrated economic power in the hands of a few, thereby raising interest in elite groups. Methodologically, social network analysis developed. In contrast to survey analysis, mentioned above, social network analysis was sensitive to small groups (Khan, 2012). Theoretically, new ways to think about elite groups emerged. In France, for example, Bourdieu (1984) theorised the production and signalling of elite status.

Empirically, some important investigations of elite schooling kept the field alive in the 1980s. For example, historical work argued that American boarding schools developed so that elite groups could distinguish themselves from others (Levine, 1980). Other scholars examined elite American schools' socio-political power over time (Saveth, 1988; Story, 1981), the development of the British public schools (Honey, 1977), how athleticism at those schools interwove with wider society and politics (Mangan, 1981) and the femininities that were constructed in such spaces (Delamont, 1989). Sociological work, meanwhile, investigated the role of schooling in social class reproduction in Australia (Connell et al., 1982), the UK (Walford, 1986), the US (Cookson Jr. & Persell, 1985) and, later, France, the UK and the US (Bourdieu, 1996).

The above sketch of some key early studies is neither exhaustive nor detailed, but it is informative. It demonstrates that broader socio-political events shaped the questions that were being asked. The Cold War inspired a closer look at the power of elite groups. The same questions were asked of both elites and the war: Who has power (Dahl and Mills), how did they get it

(Graubard and Wilkinson) and how do they use it (Domhoff)? This led to questions about the development of elite schools, how they interact with wider society and what subjectivities and structures they produce. The American civil rights movement and the promise of neoliberalism temporarily averted that gaze elsewhere. Still, those early themes would continue to influence later elite studies research.

The general retreat from the study of elites remained until 2008, when the global financial crisis hit. As Davis and Williams (2017) later pointed out, the crisis changed how capitalism was viewed. For example, it invited new questions about so-called trickle-down economics. It also brought inequalities back into focus. Elite studies again gained traction, as both the public and the academy wondered how so few could have accumulated so much while remaining so out-of-sight. Fittingly, Savage and Williams edited a collection in 2008 highlighting the 'glaring invisibility of elites' in research to date (2008, p. 2). Since then, the field of elite studies has not just gained momentum but also taken off. The rest of this chapter primarily cites elite school studies from this post-2008 body of literature.

Changing socio-political concerns thus continued to contour the ebbs and flows of elite studies. While some scholars asked how the financial industry fit into broader power structures (e.g., K. Ho, 2009), those in elite studies asked how elite schools did the same. They pursued questions about the kinds of people, power and structures created by elite schooling. These questions both were relevant to the time and harkened back to the field's concerns in the 1960s and 1970s.

It is no wonder, then, that the question of transnational class formation has come to elite school studies. With modern globalisation being a widely-discussed theme, scholars are revisiting old questions on a new scale: Who has power internationally, how was that acquired and what are its implications? These questions have drawn our attention to the roles of elite schools in the production and processes of such power.

Of late, globalisation has become more complex and, I would suggest, more interesting with the side-by-side rise of nationalism. A few examples include the UK's exit from the EU, the election of US President Trump on the platform 'Make America Great Again' and the closing of internal EU borders in response to the COVID-19 crisis. In Chapter 10 (page 280), I return to the significance of my work in light of this context. For now, I simply note that this thesis reflects the lineage of its field, in asking questions that are relevant to the current socio-political context and forms of power therein.

Transnational Elite Class

Returning to my question (Can elite schools create a transnational elite class?), this section unpacks the concept of a 'transnational elite class'. I start with a discussion of 'class'. Then, I turn to 'elite class' and controversies around this term. Finally, I examine the notion of a 'transnational elite class' and its different meanings. Unpacking this term reveals ambiguities inherent to current theories of transnational elite class formation.

Class

A number of scholars have worked with the concept of a social class. Most important to mention are Marx and Engels and Weber, whose ideas still underpin much of how we understand class. Marx and Engels defined class by the struggle between those who owned the means to production and those who did the actual production work (see Marx et al., 2012). Weber instead distinguished between economic classes based on one's market-given opportunities, and social classes, which include social networks and chances for class mobility (see Weber & Tribe, 2019). Relevant to this thesis, Marx and Engels saw class consciousness as arising when one group (the proletariat) saw itself in relation to another (the bourgeoisie). Weber, on the other hand, did not. He understood class consciousness as emerging from a shared social status and/or political party. I will return to this difference later.

E.P. Thompson's canonical text referenced previously, *The Making of the English Working Class* (1966), studied working-class groups in late 18th and early 19th century Britain. Thompson drew from sources written about those groups, such as Home Office records. Significantly, he also used sources produced *by* them. This included songs, rituals and union club cards. With this approach, he argued that the working class was 'present at its own making' (1966, p. 9). Thompson thus gave agency to the class. Drawing from Marx, he then theorised class as 'happening' when 'some men [*sic*], as a result of common experiences (inherited or shared), feel and articulate the identity of their interests as between themselves, and as against other men whose interests are different from (and usually opposed to) theirs' (1966, p. 9). As other scholars have pointed out, this departed from traditional Marxism

in a significant way. It newly framed class-consciousness as arising *before* exploitative class relations, rather than developing *from* it (Toscano & Woodcock, 2015).

I employ this understanding of class in this thesis for two reasons. The first is practical. Kenway et al. credit Thompson with their definition of class: 'the production of systemic inequalities and injustices, as well as shared social, political and cultural experiences, communities and consciousness – shared solidarities and hostilities' (2017, p. 5). As I engage with their theory of class formation, coherence demands that we understand 'class' in the same way. The second reason is theoretical. Thompson offers an excellent way to approach the questions I ask of class formation. In the preface to his text, Thompson reflects on his title: '*Making*, because it is a study in an active process, which owes as much to agency as to conditioning' (1966, p. 9). This underlines the importance of investigating what people do within their frameworks (see page 68). Moreover, neither Kenway et al. nor I study whether economically-elite young people become a class vis-à-vis lesser-resourced young people (page 279). In this way, our approaches reflect Thompson's interests and analysis.

Although my working definition of class is thus a Marxist one, my analysis also resonates with Weber. For instance, where Kenway et al. (2017) see common experiences leading to class consciousness, I see new hierarchies of status brought into being (Chapters 8 and 9). This recalls a Weberian distinction between different social positions and political (here, national) parties within an economically defined group. However, and although some Marxists and Weberians might disagree, I would argue that we

should not be held back by a purity test. Combining elements of these major thinkers brings different angles of class to the table.

It is worth noting that 'class' is not a universally accepted idea. Ulrich Beck, for example, advocates for abandoning the concept and taking an 'individualisation' approach based on personal agency rather than social structure (Beck & Willms, 2004). Yet, the idea of 'class' continues to shape how many of us talk about and make sense of our social worlds. Even in Denmark, a country with one of the highest levels of economic equality, perceived class categories influence people's everyday lives (Harrits & Pedersen, 2018). Although I recognise the ongoing debate around 'class', then, the concept remains fundamental to this thesis.

Elite Class

An important question then becomes: Can elites be considered a 'class'? As noted in Chapter 1 (page 14), elite groups are often defined and understood by their relationship to power. They exert both 'power to' and 'power over' various social, political and/or economic resources (Maxwell, 2015). Is this enough to evolve class consciousness? Elite studies scholars do not seem to agree on an answer. Even Mills, discussed previously, sidestepped the question. Whether the 'power elite' constituted a class, he wrote, still needed 'to be investigated' (1956, p. 11). Over the last decade, this conversation has heated up.

Some scholars have challenged the concept of an elite class. Cousin, Khan and Mears, for instance, argue that elite 'groupness' needs to be 'cautiously assessed and described, not assumed' (2018, p. 227). These

scholars reason that elites 'may be in conflict, may have the possibilities of coordination but do not always use them or even know how to use them' (2018, p. 227). This argument has empirical support. In Norway, for example, elites have been shown not to form a cohesive group (Flemmen, 2012).

Other scholars, however, *have* pointed towards an elite class. Most influential in this regard are Savage et al. (2013). Analysing the BBC's 2011 Great British Class Survey, Savage et al. theorised that an elite class can be distinguished by its wealth. They used a latent class analysis to construct a seven-class model of British society. Compared to previous models, this included an 'elite' group defined by economic resources that roughly doubled those of the next class (the established middle class). This elite, according to Savage et al., is 'a relatively small, socially and spatially exclusive group at the apex of British society' (2013, p. 234). Savage et al.'s work has been criticised for not attending to either the importance of gender and race in class formation or the relationality between classes – i.e., for framing the elite as 'privileged' rather than 'exploitative' (Toscano & Woodcock, 2015). Still, this wealth-based approach to defining the elite offers significant insight into modern class compositions.

I adopt this understanding of an elite class in my thesis. When I refer to LAS's clientele as elite, it is because of their economic resources. When I theorise elite class formation, it is to the formation of class consciousness amongst wealthy people that I refer. At the same time, I remain sensitive to Cousin, Khan and Mears's (2018) point that elite individuals together may not form a unified whole.

Transnational Elite Class

Particularly relevant to this thesis is the problematic concept of a *transnational* elite class. Before discussing that, however, I offer a brief note on modern globalisation. Modern globalisation can be understood through what Arjun Appadurai terms 'imagined worlds' (1996, p. 33). These are 'the multiple worlds that are constituted by the historically situated imaginations of persons and groups spread around the globe' (1996, p. 33). Such worlds, Appadurai argues, arise from 'the sheer speed, scale, and volume' of modern movement (1996, p. 37). Globalisation can thus be seen as the connection of people across space and time that results from our greater ability to travel.

Against this backdrop of globalisation, what does 'transnational' mean? I adopt Rizvi's understanding, which he builds through a discussion of Steven Vertovec's (2009) work: 'systems of ties, interactions and exchanges that spread across and span the world' (Rizvi, 2011, p. 184). Fuchs (2014) traces a research agenda focused on transnationality to the early 20th century, although he claims that it did not gain traction until the end of the century. This agenda embraced transnationalism 'not simply as a theme or motif but as an analytic set of methods' (Bayly et al., 2006). Tyrrell (1999) offers an excellent overview of the concept in the context of American historical research.

Some scholars have analysed elite groups with this transnational analytic. Examples include studies of the 18th century Grand Tour from both British (Cohen, 1992) and colonial (Gupta, 2008) perspectives; 19th century Irish elites' pursuit of international education (O'Neill, 2014); and, for a doctoral thesis at European University Institute, a global history of elite educational institutions (Sandgren, 2017). Although I do not deploy

'transnational' as a method, my thesis grows from these analyses of entanglements across spaces and over time.

This brings us to 'transnational class'. The notion of a transnational class emerged in the 2000s through a series of seminal texts. Here, I link three of them together. First, Sklair (2001) framed a transnational capitalist class (TCC) as held together by shared global outlooks, global economic interests (property, shares, etc.) and the pursuit of denationalising economies. Robinson (2004) then took a Marxist approach to understanding the TCC. He saw this class as comprising elites who control capital in 'globalized circuits of production' (2004, p. 47). Subsequently, Carroll (2010) attended to how the TCC comes into being. In his aptly-named book *The Making of a Transnational Capitalist Class*, Carroll analysed interlocking directorates at transnational corporations. He found that by the end of the 20th century, 'a well-integrated transnational corporate community had formed' (2010, p. 54). In combination, these texts began to investigate the creation of a TCC, its desires and its goals.

It is with these resonances that Kenway and Koh (2013) define a transnational elite class. In a paper published from the same study leading to *Class Choreographies*, Kenway and Koh describe this class as composed of those 'which are not particularly rooted in any nation state, which relate to all nation states opportunistically and which ultimately are concerned with claiming power and profit in the transnational sphere' (2013, p. 287). This echoes long-standing arguments in sociological theory that the nation-state is in decline (Bauman, 2000) and that we need to move beyond it as a unit of analysis (Beck & Willms, 2004). These arguments have led some, particularly

John Urry, to advocate for a 'mobilities paradigm' in research (Sheller & Urry, 2006; Urry, 2000, 2007). Others, however, have been more circumspect (Faist, 2013). Still, in this vein of mobilities, Kenway and Koh (2013) theorise that for the transnational elite, juridical and cultural borders are irrelevant.

Other scholars' work as well as current events, however, suggest that there is no consensus around whether a transnational elite class exists or, if so, what it is. One issue is that global connectedness, it has been argued, can engender xenophobia and supremacist movements (Appadurai, 2006). Already 10 years ago, Vertovec (2010) suggested that we are moving into a 'post-multiculturalist' world, in which diversity needs to be reconciled with national identity. Europe came face-to-face with this reality in 2016, when the UK voted to leave the European Union. Four months after this vote, Prime Minister Theresa May (2016) declared, 'If you believe you are a citizen of the world, you are a citizen of nowhere. You don't understand what citizenship means.' The above definitions of a transnational class do not account for such nationalism, found across the class spectrum.

Another issue is with the implication that money engenders solidarity amongst those who have it. However, as Ong (1999) and this thesis (Chapters 8 and 9) show, even the rich can be racialised and gendered. The ability to 'relate to all nation states opportunistically' (Kenway & Koh, 2013, p. 287) is perhaps, then, a luxury of white men. Hence, it is still unclear whether mobility and money are enough to forge the commonalities necessary for transnational class consciousness. These issues make 'transnational class' a problematic concept, though one that I still use in this thesis. However, I return to these ambiguities in the conclusion to this thesis (page 277).

Elite Schools and Subjectivities

As this chapter asks whether elite schools can create a transnational elite class, this section turns to what we know about elite secondary schools. I examine what they are and their abilities and limitations to shape their students. I focus on key texts published since the 2008 global financial crisis. Where relevant, however, earlier texts are cited. In the first sub-section, I define an elite school. I then discuss what it means to be an international elite school. I argue that LAS is a different kind of international elite school than those usually studied, making its processes an important contribution to the literature. The second sub-section analyses the abilities and limits of elite schools to shape certain kinds of subjectivities, on both national and international scales.

Defining an Elite School

Published literature often does not explain why a particular school is labelled 'elite' (see Maxwell & Aggleton, 2016 for an exception). The assumption is usually that an 'elite school' is one that is socially and/or economically exclusive. In other words, elite schools are seen as selecting students from high-status families and/or charging high fees.

Pointing to a different kind of elite school, Khan (2016) highlights the ambiguities of this term. Khan discusses a well-known secondary school in New York City: Stuyvesant High School. The school is exclusive. It accepts around 3% of applicants. However, it selects students by admission test scores rather than 'character traits'. The latter criteria, it has been argued,

gives a palatable glaze to admission systems rigged for elite groups (Karabel, 2005). Stuyvesant also does not charge fees. In fact, most of its students come from low-income families. Hence, Khan (2016) shows, the term 'elite school' is more ambiguous in practice than we often presume.

Gaztambide-Fernández (2009b) was the first to offer a typology for this label. His criteria remain the gold standard. Gaztambide-Fernández induced that American elite schools could be defined by the following five characteristics, to varying degrees and in different combinations:

(a) typologically elite, based on their identification as 'independent schools'; (b) scholastically elite, based on both the expansive and sophisticated curricula they offer and their particular pedagogical approaches; (c) historically elite, based on the role of elite social networks in their historical development; (d) geographically elite, based on their physical character and location; and lastly, (e) demographically elite, based on the population that attends elite boarding schools. (2009b, p. 1093)

As noted, this model was developed in the American context. It has also been successfully applied in other contexts, such as India (Iyer, 2016). Although Kenway et al. (2017) do not cite Gaztambide-Fernández's study, their research site criteria align with his. Kenway et al. selected schools that were (a) based on the British public schools, (b) academically strong, (c) over 100 years old and boasting influential alumni and (e) well-connected to elite groups (2017, pp. 10–11). The authors did not take into account (d) geographic eliteness.

These overlaps are significant. It has been argued that labelling a school as 'elite' is 'deeply imbricated in the history and cultural politics of the [school's] nation' (Saltmarsh, 2016, p. 48). Here, however, we see that

Gaztambide-Fernández's criteria work in multiple contexts. This suggests that elite schools may be similar across numerous geographies.

I therefore deploy these criteria to evaluate LAS's status as an elite school. It is (a) an independent school that (b) awards the IB diploma, a globally-recognised credential (page 137). LAS also has (c) consistently recruited from elite groups over time (Chapters 6 and 7). The school is (d) located in the Swiss Alps, a symbol of Switzerland and thus of global wealth (page 128). Finally, its student body is drawn from (e) wealthy families willing and able to pay the annual fees and extra costs (120,000 SFr. / £99,400).

Significantly, although both LAS and Kenway et al.'s (2017) schools reflect Gaztambide-Fernández's criteria, there are key differences between them. One is typological. Kenway et al.'s schools are rooted in the former British empire, while LAS practices tie to circulating images of Switzerland (Chapter 5). Another difference is historical. At the time of writing, LAS was 60 years old, while Kenway et al.'s schools were over 100. This difference in age may have allowed LAS leadership to flexibly respond to changing environments (Chapters 6 and 7), while Kenway et al.'s school principals needed to balance the weight of history with their ambitions for the future (McCarthy et al., 2014; Rizvi, 2015). These distinctions support my claim, expanded in Chapter 5, that LAS is a different kind of school than those studied by Kenway et al. (2017).

International Elite Schools

It is generally agreed that the first known international school is the International School of Geneva, established in Switzerland during the interwar

period (Hill, 2001). This institution educated the children of elite civil servants who worked at the League of Nations or the International Labour Organisation (Dugonjić, 2014). Since then, the function of an international school has been conceptually expanded. Bunnell, Fertig, and James (2017), for example, identify three ‘types’ of international schools: those educating the children of globally-mobile parents, those teaching global mindsets and those offering an English-language education to a local (presumably, non-English speaking) clientele. Bunnell et al. further claim that an international school must offer an international curriculum, such as the IB, to be ‘legitimate’; however, one could also argue that this definition essentialises the idea of an international education. International schools are not to be confused with the overseas branches of elite schools, which serve a different purpose (see Bunnell, Courtois, et al., 2020).

Much of the extant literature on international *elite* schools examines elite schools that are developing an international outlook. These schools’ frames of reference often continue to be national. For example, Koh and Kenway (2012) argue that an elite school in Singapore ‘tactically’ internationalised in order to produce national leaders. In post-colonial Barbados (McCarthy et al., 2014) and India (Rizvi, 2015), elite schools balance their clientele’s global ambitions with the institutions’ British traditions. Rizvi contends that such schools’ globalising processes are refracted ‘through the prism of a national imaginary’ (2015, p. 137). Hence, in the literature, international elite schools are often seen as elite schools adapting to a more global landscape while retaining national interests.

Why might a school adapt? One answer is market demand. Research suggests that elite families seek out an international education for their children to both maintain and reproduce their social status. Sometimes, this happens on a local scale. In both Germany (Keßler et al., 2015) and Argentina (Prosser, 2016), for example, elite families want a locally-provided international education. This supports Savage and Williams (2008), who argue that the local context is the most relevant to elite groups.

In other geographies, however, elite families turn to a global marketplace. This has been shown in China (Ong, 1999) and Nigeria (Ayling, 2019b). In both of those cases, families sought schools in which their children would be the only foreigners, to facilitate their adopting the host country's culture and character. Understanding this, elite schools in England (Brooks & Waters, 2015) and Ireland (Courtois, 2016) have internally internationalised while outwardly maintaining a national image. This preserves their attractiveness to an international elite hoping to acquire a British Isles education and way of being.

As noted in the introduction (page 17), LAS is a different kind of international elite school. Both students and staff primarily came to LAS from somewhere else. Critically, then, LAS was not responsible to the vision or needs of any one particular nation. It is thus an important international elite school space in which to examine the possibilities and constraints of transnational class formation.

Creating Subjectivities

Having thus defined an elite school, I here examine the abilities and limits of such schools to shape particular subjectivities. I discuss the most prominent and relevant subjectivities addressed in extant literature. On a national scale, these are developing a sense of belonging to the elite, acting elite and adopting particular racialised and gendered elite identities. On an international scale, this is becoming a global citizen.

Elite schools arguably create students who feel they belong to elite groups. For example, in an ethnographic study, Gaztambide-Fernández (2009a, p. 6) identifies one American elite school's strategies to instil this sense of belonging in its young people. These strategies function through exclusion (not everyone can attend the school), engagement (in a broad curriculum), excellence (success justifies privilege), entitlement (to other opportunities because of getting an elite secondary education) and envisioning (of an elite future).

However, this sense of belonging seems to be selectively created. DeCuir-Gunby (2007) conducted in-depth interviews with six African-American students at a predominantly white elite school in the US. She found that these students felt excluded from the school's culture and opportunities because of their race. Thus, elite schools might instil belonging in some students, but not all. If we assume that this phenomenon is not an intentional differentiation of the lesson, an assumption that Purdy (2018) contests, it reflects elite schools' limited abilities to foster belonging across racial lines.

Elite schools have also been shown to shape a particular way of being – or, of 'acting' elite. Maxwell and Aggleton (2013), for example, interviewed

85 female students at four elite schools in England. They claim that these young women learned to exhibit ‘the surety of familiarity, of “presence” and of belonging, which fostered confidence and poise,’ thereby exuding elite status (2013, p. 88). Similarly, Törnqvist’s (2019) ethnographic study demonstrates that an elite school in Sweden taught values that signalled social status and privilege (there, egalitarianism and left-wing activism).

Notably, an ethnography conducted in Barbados complicates this narrative. Greenhalgh-Spencer et al. (2015) argue that this kind of ‘acting’ is just that – a performance. The authors demonstrate that elite school students use their clothing, technology, language and life narratives to link to and from different social classes, depending on what is most advantageous in the moment. Greenhalgh-Spencer et al. conclude that ‘social class is flow, not structure’ for those students (2015, p. 170). In other words, elite schools might foster certain behavioural characteristics or values that signal status but, in the end, students also learn to adapt those to the situation at hand.

These kinds of institutions can also create racialised elite identities. Epstein (2014) examined whiteness at an elite school in post-apartheid South Africa. Drawing from school archives and student interviews, Epstein contends that the school did not recognise whiteness, thereby neutralising it in a context that politicises skin colour. In other contexts, this work of (de)constructing race through elite schooling can be done by families rather than institutions. For her doctoral work at the University of Essex, later turned into a book, Ayling (2019b) interviewed elites in Nigeria who sent their children to British schools. Ayling argues that these Black parents valued a British education because it conferred ‘whiteness’ – which, to them, signalled

status. In both of these examples, race and elite schooling intersect in the maintenance or acquisition of privilege.

Gender is also an aspect of this elite-identity construction, though one that is seemingly less-well understood. Race and gender intersect in Goh's (2015) study of 19th and 20th century documents from a Singaporean elite school. He argues that by translating British colonial forms of masculinity, such as athleticism, into its local context, the school produced both racial anxieties and a new class of ruling men. Examining femininities, Fahey (2014) conducted interviews and focus groups with young women at elite schools in England and India. Fahey claims that these young women 'flexibly' constructed feminism, giving it different meanings in different places. These examples suggest that through elite schooling, young men learn a universalising image of masculinity and young women, a hyper-contextualised kind of feminism. Such different phenomena suggest that general conclusions about gendered identity construction at elite schools are difficult to reach.

Thus far, the themes discussed emerge from studies of elite schooling in a national context. What of an international one? Extant literature tends to focus on one subjectivity emerging from international elite schooling: the global citizen. Global citizenship education (GCE) and 'global citizen' have become buzzwords in both academic research and the public consciousness. As with many buzzwords, their meanings are both ambiguous and contested. For this brief overview, my definition draws from a special issue published by the *British Journal of Educational Studies* in 2018. In the editorial to that issue, Yemini, Goren and Maxwell (2018) explain GCE as teaching a cosmopolitan outlook. This happens through the development of 'concrete skills,

dispositions and structures' (2018, p. 426) – for example, foreign languages, neoliberal ideas and cultural exchanges. In contrast to traditional curricula that often teach national values, this approach is meant to foster global mindedness. Bunnell, Donnelly, Lauder, and Whewall (2020) claim that a South East Asian elite school's focus on developing 'international mindedness' even fosters 'class solidarity' on a global level.

Yet, empirical work has questioned the on-the-ground success of GCE in creating global citizens. In an article published in the special issue above, for example, Howard, Dickert, Owusu, and Riley (2018) examine GCE at an elite school in Ghana. The authors contend that the school's curriculum taught Western values rather than global or even pan-African ones, recreating a kind of colonialism. Other research has highlighted students' uneven responses to GCE. Doctoral student Fail (2002), for example, interviewed alumni from the International School of Geneva in Switzerland for her dissertation at the University of Bath. She argues that students embraced the core goals of GCE to varying degrees, including in their lifestyle (travel and languages), thinking (world-mindedness) and personal identity (sense of international belonging). There is thus a gap between international elite schools' goals and students' realities when it comes to GCE.

This sub-section offers an important insight for the question driving this chapter. Although elite schools can shape a number of subjectivities to some degree on both national and international levels, the outcomes of their efforts can also be uneven. They can be modulated by students, families or even administrators, as in the case of the Ghanaian school. This suggests that elite schools' abilities to create particular kinds of young people, while significant,

are also limited. The idea that elite schools do not have ultimate power to shape students' futures will be revisited in Chapter 9 (page 269), in the context of a point of convergence between the theories of 'interpretation' and 'choreography'.

Can Elite Schools Create a Transnational Elite Class?

The answer to this question, I suggest, is 'maybe'. The sections above have shown that to create a transnational elite class, elite schools need to forge solidarities between wealthy young people from different cultures and countries. In other words, they first need to break down inter- and intra-group bordering and create stateless young people who value global opportunities above national belonging. These common interests then need to give rise to a common sense of identity and solidarity amongst those young people.

Given my review of what the literature says about elite schools' abilities to shape subjectivities, it seems improbable that they can do this. While elite schools shape students in many significant ways, they do not have unlimited abilities to create particular kinds of young people. Their efforts are modulated by how various actors adapt the practices of these institutions. I do not mean to suggest that elite schools *cannot* create a transnational class. I instead highlight the importance of attending to how the frameworks provided by elite schools can be taken up differently by individuals.

Perhaps more probable than elite schools creating a transnational class, then, is elite schools being one cog in a larger wheel of production. This parallels a proposed multi-step process of reproducing privilege on a national scale. From an examination of elite bankers in the US, Nespor (2014) puts

forward the notion of ‘institutional wormholes’, borrowing from physics. This metaphor refers to the path from (a) having family resources to (b) getting into a prestigious university to (c) joining a high-status and high-paying profession, which leads to (a) resources to invest in one’s children. Perhaps creating a transnational class also requires a production line that moves from family to schools to profession, and back to family, but on a transnational scale. International elite schools would thus contribute to, but not run, this operation.

What this means for my thesis is that there is probably more to the story of transnational class formation than the aims and efforts of elite schools – something to explore in further research (see page 279). The outcomes of elite schooling depend on various factors, such as individuals and the broader system in which such schooling occurs. Thus, when considering how practices and everyday experiences at LAS inform the theory of ‘choreography’ (Kenway et al., 2017), it is critical to attend to the translation from frameworks to on-the-ground realities.

Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed extant literature to answer the question: Can elite schools create a transnational elite class? I first discussed what I excluded from my review. I touched on language of publication, field of study and particular topics. The following section turned to developments in elite studies research from 1956-2008. Linking key texts together, I showed that lines of inquiry paralleling broader socio-political concerns have come to define the field. I then highlighted contestations and ambiguities in the literature around ‘class’, ‘elite class’ and ‘transnational elite class’. In the fourth section, I

examined what it means to be an elite school and an international elite school. LAS, I suggested, is a different kind of international elite school than is usually studied. This makes its processes an important contribution to the literature. I then reviewed the demonstrated abilities and limitations of elite schools to shape particular subjectivities in both national and international contexts. Finally, I offered an answer to the question driving this chapter. I argued that according to the literature, elite schools *may* be involved in transnational class production, but probably as one part of a bigger process.

Class Choreographies (Kenway et al., 2017) motivated this chapter's question. That text assumes both that a transnational elite class exists and that elite schools play a role in its creation. Taking a step back, I looked at what the literature can tell us about these assumptions. I found that 'transnational class' is a contested concept and that elite schools do not have unlimited abilities to shape their students. In other words, I found ambiguity. Such ambiguity invites a return to Kenway et al.'s theory of class formation in a different kind of elite school space.

The next chapter turns to my engagement with theory throughout this thesis. I provide an in-depth overview of *Class Choreographies* (Kenway et al., 2017) and explain the specific theoretical tools that I use in my analyses. I also present my own, complementary theory of class formation.

Chapter 3

Theoretical Framework

Introduction

This chapter examines the theoretical foundation of my thesis, as well as its theoretical tools. The first section discusses the book *Class Choreographies* (Kenway et al., 2017). My thesis directly engages with this text's theory that transnational class formation is 'choreographed' by elite schools. I thus examine this theory, how it was constructed and why it is useful for my thesis. In the second section, I highlight nuances in Kenway et al.'s work emerging from their school sites' transnational aims but localised realities. I argue that such nuances suggest that another useful approach is to examine what actors do with the frameworks they are given. The third section of this chapter then turns to the specific theoretical tools that I use. These tools were developed by Ong (1999) and sometimes extended by Kenway and colleagues. Finally, I propose another metaphor for a complementary theory of transnational class formation: 'interpretation'. This metaphor, I argue, better captures what is happening at LAS. However, my theory is not just complementary to but also, at times, interconnected with Kenway et al.'s, as I will show later in this thesis.

Jane Kenway, Johannah Fahey, Debbie Epstein, Aaron Koh, Cameron McCarthy and Fazal Rizvi developed the theory of 'choreography' through the project *Elite Schools in Globalising Circumstances: A Multi-Sited Global Ethnography* (2010–2014). This project's aim was to 'enrich understanding of the education/social class nexus in globalising circumstances' (Monash University, 2020). Kenway and colleagues published a number of texts from

this project. The primary text is the book *Class Choreographies: Elite Schools and Globalization* (2017). This book won the 2015 Book Prize from the *Comparative and International Education Society's* Globalization and Education Special Interest Group. In 2018, it received second prize in the *Society of Educational Studies* Book Prize contest. It has also been reviewed in a number of journals, including the *British Journal of Educational Studies* (Howlett, 2019) and the *British Journal of Sociology of Education* (Waters, 2018). The most effusive review called it 'a sociological tour de force' (Hey, 2018, p. 280).

The body of work emerging from the *Elite Schools* project offers one of the most substantive inquiries to date into the role of elite schooling in our globalising world. It is an excellent theoretical starting point for this thesis. My study of a different kind of elite school thus provides an opportunity to examine this theory in another context.

The Theory of 'Choreography'

In *Class Choreographies* (2017), Kenway et al. examine how globalisation has reconfigured the educational and social roles of elite schools in British post-colonial contexts. The driving question of that text is, 'How are [these elite schools] making class, not only in national but also in transnational space?' (Kenway et al., 2017, p. 9). To answer this, Kenway et al. employ historical and sociological approaches – as I do in this thesis (page 72). The authors ultimately argue that elite schools 'implicitly seek to produce a new sense of transnational class-commonality and consciousness amongst students — building on old class solidarities and potentially forging new ones'

(2017, p. 228). In other words, Kenway et al. suggest that elite schools in different places and spaces create a sense of connectedness within and across their student bodies. This leads Kenway et al. to put forth an overall theory of transnational class formation – that it is ‘choreographed’ by elite schools.

Kenway et al. gathered data from seven schools, one in each of seven countries: Australia, Barbados, England, Hong Kong, India, Singapore and South Africa (the broader *Elite Schools* project also included school sites in Argentina and Cyprus). As mentioned in Chapter 2 of this thesis (page 43), these schools were founded during the British Empire and emulated the British public school model. They boasted both strong leaving exam results and prestigious university acceptances. Kenway et al. assess that each site ‘produced many influential people’ and had ‘powerful connections’ as well as ‘excellent reputations’ (2017, pp. 10–11). They also judge these schools to be well-resourced in comparison to others in the nation. Some of the institutions were ‘shaped directly by state policies’ (2017, p. 11) while others were more independent, though none were entirely free from government influence. Two of the schools educated only girls, one educated only boys and four had been boys’ schools but were co-educational at the time of the study.

Kenway et al. construct a theoretical toolbox with ideas developed by E.P. Thompson, Stuart Hall and Raymond Williams. Thompson (1966) informs their understanding of class, as described in Chapter 2 of this thesis (page 36). From Hall (1996), Kenway et al. employ the concept of ‘conjectures’. This refers to ‘the complex, historical meeting point of forces and institutions where things change and where new connections are

wrought, in a more or less coherent fashion' (Kenway et al., 2017, p. 10). Such 'conjectures' link Kenway et al.'s school sites, which differ in their foundations and motivations but similarly connect to British colonialism and global capitalism. As I suggest in Chapter 9 of this thesis (page 270), conjectures may also link the theories of 'choreography' and 'interpretation'. Finally, Kenway et al. also use Williams's (1977) notion of cultural dynamics. This idea calls attention to 'dominant, residual and emergent elements' which make for 'the complex and contradictory character of culture' (Kenway et al., 2017, p. 10). It is with these tools that Kenway et al. work through their analyses. As one reviewer pointed out, however, 'little attention was given to theorising international/transnational mobilities' (Waters, 2018, p. 6).

Kenway et al. begin their text by arguing, through extant literature, that when the English public school model was exported to the British colonies, its traditions and practices influenced both local power relations and colonial schools' positionalities over time, in various ways (2017, Chapters 2, 3). Turning to the present, the authors then claim that these schools remake such histories and traditions in order to re-define their current and future roles (2017, Chapter 4). This process is 'choreographed' by school principals (2017, Chapter 5). Both of these ideas – the reinvention of history and the importance of the head of school – are explored further in an article by Rizvi (2014). Kenway et al. then demonstrate that these schools' curricula have shifted over time to reflect emerging discourses of both nationalism and globalism (2017, Chapter 6).

In their last two data chapters, Kenway et al. examine students at these schools. The authors first argue that these young people's mobilities, which

they characterise as touristic and superficial in nature, are both enabled by and productive of privilege (2017, Chapter 7). Kenway and Fahey (2015), for example, argue that school-sponsored service activities in foreign locations parallel the colonial project of enacting power abroad. Kenway et al. then investigate how these young people understand and deploy their privilege (2017, Chapter 8). Although some students saw their schooling in relation to social advantages, few connected it to others' disadvantages.

Class Choreographies provides a critical foundation for this thesis in two ways. First, as seen in Chapter 2 of this thesis, elite schools have often been studied for what they do in a national context. Kenway et al. move this discussion into the transnational sphere by asking how elite schools have reacted to and been reconfigured by modern globalisation. Second, theorising that elite schools choreograph transnational class formation is a useful point of departure for my work. It provides a groundwork from which I can build a complementary theory that captures a complementary setting. This thesis thus owes a great deal to Kenway and colleagues, for beginning a conversation that it can continue.

Important Nuance to the Theory

Evidence from the broader *Elite Schools* project suggests that there is more to the theory of 'choreography'. As noted above, Kenway et al. argue that elite schools choreograph a transnational class by creating connections across borders. This, they claim, produces 'a new sense of transnational class-commonality and consciousness amongst students' (2017, p. 228). Data in the text of *Class Choreographies* and the authors' other published works,

however, also paint a picture of locally-bounded and -minded school stakeholders. This suggests that what Kenway et al. see as institutional aims of creating a transnational class are moderated by the locally-lived experiences of trying to become international.

Class Choreographies notes that many of its schools' ambitions for global positionality mismatched what was, instead, their local or regional positioning (Kenway et al., 2017, pp. 234–235). The institutions studied were often nationally-rooted schools that educated a national elite. They were just beginning to tap into 'the emergence of regional and global markets ... alongside national markets' (Kenway & Fahey, 2014, p. 181). In other words, for many of these schools, 'national social relations remain paramount' (Kenway et al., 2017, p. 234).

This was also true for the schools' students. Chapter 7 of *Class Choreographies* argues that these young people often dreamed of higher education abroad, usually in the UK or North America. However, that rarely came to fruition. At the school in India, for example, just over half of the students *hoped* to go abroad for higher education; less than 10% actually did (Rizvi, 2015, p. 133). Similarly, the school in Singapore engaged with globally-oriented activities to develop a transnational outlook amongst its students. Although its students often then did go abroad for higher education, they also later returned to Singapore for public service careers (Kenway & Koh, 2013; Koh & Kenway, 2012). As summarised by Koh (2014b) in his discussion of the school sites in Singapore and Hong Kong, institutional rhetoric around global engagement thus did not always reflect students' experiences and mentalities.

In other words, although ‘choreographing’ a transnational class may be a desire of elite schools, it is not necessarily an outcome of their elite schooling.

One way to reconcile this discrepancy is through the idea of ‘multi-scalarity’. Howard and Kenway (2015) put forth this idea in the editorial for a special issue on elite studies methodologies. ‘Multi-scalarity’ refers to elite schools ‘emphasizing one scale more than another at certain times and in certain places’ (2015, p. 1025). This suggests that elite schools can ‘choreograph’ transnational class formation in some moments while experimenting with being global in others (see Kenway & Fahey, 2014, 2015). Moreover, Rizvi suggests that the implicit binary here – that is, between the global and the local – is ‘misleading’ (2015, p. 136). At the school in India, Rizvi contends, ‘students are encouraged to interpret and imagine the possibilities of globalization through the prism of a national imaginary’ (2015, p. 137). I return to the idea of multi-scalarity in both Chapter 8 (page 222) and the conclusion to this thesis (page 276).

These nuances to the data importantly highlight a fundamental difference between LAS and Kenway et al.’s school sites. The latter institutions served national contexts, whereas LAS educated a cross-section of the global elite. Similarly, students in Kenway et al.’s schools primarily stayed in their home countries, while LAS students primarily left them. This is significant. It means that Kenway et al. and I investigate transnational class formation from very different starting points of institutional internationality. Their schools were looking to *become* international; LAS already was. Yet, the idea of ‘multi-scalarity’ brings together the co-existence of different shades of globalism and localism in both contexts.

Theoretical Toolbox for This Thesis

To make sense of what was happening at LAS, I use theoretical tools developed by Aihwa Ong. At the time of writing, Ong was Professor and Robert H. Lowie Distinguished Chair in Anthropology at the University of California, Berkeley, and Chair of the Center of Southeast Asian Studies. Ong is also one of six scholars interviewed by Kenway and Fahey in their book *Globalizing the Research Imagination* (Kenway & Fahey, 2009). Those six scholars are described not only as ‘foremost in their fields of knowledge, and their thinking on globalization is influential and inspirational’, but also as ones whose ‘thought is provocative, it unsettles, inspires, invites untrammelled thought’ (Kenway & Fahey, 2009, p. 1).

My analyses use tools from Ong’s canonical text *Flexible Citizenship: The Cultural Logics of Transnationality* (1999). The book won Honorable Mention for the Senior Prize from the American Ethnological Association in 2000, and the Cultural Studies Book Award from the Association for Asian American Studies in 2001. The text has also faced critiques. Some, for example, have called it not ethnographic enough (Smart, 2001; Stafford, 2001). Others have conducted empirical work demonstrating that Ong’s ideas may play out differently in the everyday lives of so-called ‘flexible citizens’ than suggested (E. Ho, 2008; Waters, 2009). Still, *Flexible Citizenship* has become a foundational text in globalisation studies.

In *Flexible Citizenship*, Ong analyses how people and states in East and Southeast Asia adapt to global capitalism. Ong argues that ‘individuals as well as governments develop a flexible notion of citizenship and sovereignty

as strategies to accumulate capital and power' (1999, p. 6). This 'notion', she demonstrates, is contoured by culturally-specific norms and understandings. How Ong arrived at that conclusion is especially useful for this thesis. She explains in her introduction, 'Whereas globalization has been analyzed as consisting of flows of capital, information, and populations, my interest is in the cultural logics that inform and structure border crossings as well as state strategies' (1999, p. 5). I take this same approach when drawing from two specific ideas that Ong developed: state strategies and flexible citizens.

State Strategies

Ong pushes back against Benedict Anderson's framing of the nation-state. Anderson (1994) argues that global capitalism engenders particular kinds of mobility that undermine a state's claims over its people. To this, Ong asks, 'Or is there another way of looking at the shifting relations between the nation-state and the global economy in late modernity, one that suggests more complex adjustments and accommodations?' (1999, p. 2). In pursuit of an answer, Ong examines East and Southeast Asian states' responses to 'capital and mobility' (1999, p. 4). She pays particular attention to how these responses articulate with both cultural meanings and economic rationalities. Ultimately, and importantly, Ong argues that states are 'highly responsive' to the challenges posed by globalisation (1999, p. 6).

My analyses in chapters 5, 6 and 7 of this thesis draw from Ong's understanding of state strategies. While not a state *per se*, LAS operates as such. It is an independent school with its own set of rules. It has a private campus on which all services are paid for by annual fees, including

groundskeeping, waste removal and building renovations. The school leadership has free rein to set the annual budget, make choices about the curriculum and design a disciplinary system. Campus security is maintained by a system of cameras and check points. Students and staff are given cards that signal their right to be on campus. Although LAS is accredited by outside bodies (namely, NEASC and ECIS), the school neither receives funding from them nor is dependent on them. For instance, LAS could lose its accreditation and still operate as a school. And, as Hobsbawm (1996) reminds us, nations were founded as political entities rather than 'socio-anthropological' ones. They 'consisted in the decision of a sovereign people to live under common laws and a common constitution, irrespective of culture, language, and ethnic composition' (1996, p. 1066). In these ways, LAS functions as a state.

LAS also faces many of the same challenges and displays many of the same strategies as Ong's states. For example, although LAS was founded in 1961 to link to American priorities (Chapter 6), the rise of global capitalism forced its leadership to re-orient the school to a global economic elite, to stay financially solvent (Chapter 7). In this instance, LAS reflects a state that 'evolved by aggressively seeking global capital while securing their own economic interests' (Ong, 1999, p. 21).

Framing LAS as a state, however, also requires taking some liberties with Ong's ideas. This arises primarily from the fact that LAS does not have citizen-subjects (students are arguably subjects but not juridical ones). Consequently, I do not pursue some of Ong's lines of inquiry – such as a state's regulation of its people and markets. I engage with other ideas of hers in a limited way. This includes Ong's concept of 'graduated sovereignty'. This

describes different 'ethnically marked class groupings' being subjected to varied 'regimes of rights and obligations' (1999, p. 7). Such differentiation emerges in a particular historical moment at LAS, which I point out in Chapter 7 (page 190). It does not, however, weave through my analysis. Two of Ong's other ideas around state strategies *do*, and so I now turn to those.

The first idea is 'the production of transnational spaces ... [defined] by the emerging regimes of normativity that engage the state in a variety of ways' (Ong, 1999, p. 158). 'Normativity' is defined as 'the structuring of norm making through the circulation of images and discourses about objects, features, and goals associated with particular categories of things and people' (1999, p. 159). For example, one chapter of *Flexible Citizenship* analyses 'the circulating images, information, and capital, which alternatively express the mass consumption, ambivalence and global reach of Chinese subjects' (1999, p. 181). With this framework, Chapter 5 of this thesis explores globally-circulating images of Switzerland and their embedment in mentalities and practices at LAS. Such embedment creates what Ong calls a particular 'transnational space' (1999, p. 158), which plays a significant role in shaping students at LAS.

The second idea is that of 'bring[ing] into the same analytical framework the economic rationalities of globalization and the cultural dynamics that shape human and political responses' (Ong, 1999, p. 5). As mentioned above, Ong argues against the notion that global capitalism erodes state power. She demonstrates that instead, the state is still key 'when it comes to the rearrangements of global spaces and the restructuring of social and political relations' (1999, p. 215). Moreover, Ong highlights states' flexible

responses to new economic circumstances. Applying this to LAS, we see that by realigning the school's goals with a shifting economic climate (Chapters 6 and 7), LAS leadership retained the institution's relevance. In other words, their responses were an exercise in adaptability, within certain parameters. My analysis thus attends to Ong's interest in how things become 'thinkable, practicable, and desirable' (1999, p. 5). In doing so, it reveals the limited abilities of LAS leadership to bring together particular kinds of young people.

Flexible Citizens

Chapters 8 and 9 of this thesis use Ong's concept of 'flexible citizenship'. This refers to 'the cultural logics of capitalist accumulation, travel, and displacement that induce subjects to respond fluidly and opportunistically to changing political-economic conditions' (1999, p. 6). As reviewers of *Flexible Citizenship* have pointed out, this definition does not attend to formal, material meanings of citizenship (Delanty, 2001; Smart, 2001). However, it does speak to how mobility comes to bear on everyday lives, as do Chapters 8 and 9 of this thesis. Those chapters speak to 'key conceptual questions around the convertibility and portability of capital, or spatialities of racialisation and the embodiment of status,' which a reviewer of *Class Choreographies* felt 'were not (to my mind) discussed sufficiently' by Kenway et al. (Waters, 2018, p. 6). The chapters thus complement the work of the *Elite Schools* study.

Ong, as Kenway (2017) and Kenway et al. (2017) acknowledge, takes Bourdieu to task in the transnational realm. She does this by highlighting the importance of social norms when it comes to capital valuation and conversion across fields. The next few paragraphs explain and unpack that idea.

'Capitals' are resources. Bourdieu (1986) identified three primary types of capital: economic, cultural and social. Economic capital means the financial assets one has. Cultural capital refers to the value attributed to how one is socialised to think and act. Social capital encapsulates the benefits derived from being in a particular social group and having certain social connections. These capitals are 'a process instead of just a set of attributes' (Besbris & Khan, 2017, p. 149).

They can also be converted. For example, I can use economic capital (money) to buy access to exclusive spaces, where I can develop social capital (networking with powerful people). However, Ong demonstrates that I cannot simply claim to be privileged. That claim must also be recognised and accepted by wider society (Ong, 1999, Chapter 3). What this means is that having money is not necessarily enough to be let into exclusive spaces. I also need the 'right' optics – usually in the form of the 'right' race and gender for a particular society. Otherwise, although I can afford the entrance fee, I might still be turned away at the door. Said another way, discrimination matters.

Importantly, what signals social status is context-dependent. For example, Ong (1999) shows that a rich Asian person may be received differently in the US than in Asia because of his/her racial status in each space. Similarly, academic qualifications (a form of cultural capital) play a major role in class reproduction in France but not in Germany (Hartmann, 2000). This means that someone who holds social power in one space puts that power at risk when moving spaces.

This can be understood in terms of fields. A 'field' (Bourdieu, 1993, 1996) is the contextualised space within which capitals 'circulate, compete

and are consecrated' (Kenway & Koh, 2013, p. 274). Capitals and fields are thus 'reciprocally defining notions' (2013, p. 274). Because the same form of capital may not confer the same privileges in different fields, some people might choose to remain within their field. This preserves their advantages. A study to which I return in Chapter 5 (page 133) argues that attending a Swiss private school produces social capital in that field, causing those students to remain in Switzerland (Bertron, 2016a). The students in my study, however, mostly did not stay in Switzerland. Instead, they often embraced mobility while trying to minimise the risks it posed to their privileges (Chapter 9).

Many contemporary studies of elite schooling deploy Bourdieu's tools. However, their use is both debated (see Stahl, 2016) and often imprecise (as discussed in Besbris & Khan, 2017; Reay, 2004). Moreover, Cousin, Khan and Mears (2018) argue that Bourdieusian concepts do not capture the importance of race relations. This limitation has also been empirically demonstrated. For example, Ayling (2016) found that Bourdieu's notion of 'distinction', which describes the complex signalling of being elite, did not apply in Nigeria. There, simply being white British meant being elite. Kenway and Koh (2013) also found that Bourdieu's capitals did not reflect the power dynamics of race and ethnicity in Singapore. There, just being Chinese or speaking English or Mandarin 'pay big dividends in all fields' (2013, p. 286).

These complexities suggest that a purely Bourdieusian framework would be problematic in this thesis. As such, I use just two of Bourdieu's concepts in a limited scope: capital and field. Moreover, these concepts are deployed as method rather than theory – in other words, as a tool in empirical

research (see Ball, 2015; Reay, 2004). They help demonstrate that mobility is not neutral for young people at LAS.

It is worth noting that, according to Bourdieu (1984), 'capital' and 'field' directly interact with a third concept with which this thesis does not engage: habitus. 'Habitus' describes how one embodies his/her social world and develops a particular cultural taste appropriate to that world (Bourdieu, 1984). Capital, field and habitus interrelate in that habitus can be seen as an expression of one's capitals that is shaped by one's field.

Many studies of elite schools (i.e., Ayling, 2019a; Forbes & Lingard, 2015; Khan, 2011) and universities (i.e., Reay et al., 2009; Xu, 2017) have employed the concept of 'habitus'. Using it in my analyses would have highlighted the cultural dimensions of class at LAS, such as the 'conspicuous consumption' mentioned but not further unpacked on page 131. Such insights, however, depart from my focus in Chapters 8 and 9 on theorising student mobilities. For this reason, I deploy 'capital' and 'field' alone.

The Theory of 'Interpretation'

As discussed in this chapter, Kenway et al. (2017) theorise that elite schools 'choreograph' transnational class formation. Their chosen metaphor ('choreography') is rooted in the performing arts, though it also extends to more general performativities. According to the Cambridge Dictionary, for example, the verb 'choreograph' means either 'to plan the combination of movements to be performed in a dance' or 'to plan an event or course of action very carefully'. In either case, one person (or group of people) imagines how something should be done. Others then bring that vision to life. Kenway

et al.'s (2017) choice of metaphor thus suggests that their elite school sites conceive of and design class formation, and that their students perform it as intended.

Kenway et al. (2017) could have chosen a number of other metaphors from the arts. 'Performing', for example, would have shifted the focus from the planning to the execution of class formation. 'Improvising' is another option. This metaphor would have suggested that when it comes to class formation, schools and students make it up as they go.

The findings in this thesis suggest that Kenway et al.'s (2017) theory of transnational class formation does not describe what was happening at LAS. I thus propose yet a different metaphor: interpretation. The Cambridge Dictionary defines the verb 'interpret' as 'to decide what the intended meaning of something is.' In the arts, to interpret choreography is to make choices about how to engage with that choreography and, ultimately, how to perform it. It means to do something according to one's own conceptualisation of a given framework.

Throughout this thesis, I demonstrate that although LAS shaped its students in some significant ways (Chapter 5), its frameworks for class formation were 'interpreted' by actors in ways that worked for them. I evidence this by investigating different players and different kinds of data. First, I examine the leadership of LAS through the school's historical documents (Chapters 6 and 7). I show that over time, the leadership needed to adapt LAS within changing broader circumstances. This points to the limited abilities of the school leadership to bring together particular kinds of young people and thus to shape a particular kind of class. I then shift focus to students at the

school, drawing primarily from interview and observational data (Chapters 8 and 9). With this evidence, I demonstrate that LAS students made the school's frameworks of 'global citizenship' and 'global mobility' their own. Therefore, they did not simply become what the school intended to create but instead adapted its messages to their own positionalities.

I propose this theory not only as a complement to Kenway et al.'s but also, moreover, as a connection to it. As I show in Chapter 9 (page 269), there is at least one point of convergence between these theories. This suggests that there are probably others, as well. Hence, building another kind of theory at another kind of site strengthens our understandings both of different kinds of class formation processes and of how they interconnect.

Conclusion

This chapter reviewed the theoretical foundation upon which this thesis stands. I first discussed the theory of class formation emerging from *Class Choreographies* (2017). I explained how Kenway et al. arrived at that theory and why it is useful for my thesis. I then explored nuances emerging from the global scope of the theory but the local scope of the schools that were studied. I brought these into alignment with the notion of 'multi-scalarity'. Following this, I reviewed the specific theoretical tools developed by Ong (1999) that I employ in this thesis. These are 'state strategies' and 'flexible citizens'. Finally, I put forward my own theory of class formation at LAS: interpretation. This theory rests upon two complementary pillars: that of the school leadership acting within broader socio-political and economic frameworks, and that of students acting within the school's frameworks. This

theory converges with Kenway et al.'s (2017) at points, meaning that they are not only complementary but also, at times, interconnected.

The next chapter turns to my research design. I discuss my general approach, positionality, methodology, methods, sources and ethical considerations. This offers insight into the raw materials with which I go on to build my proposed theory.

Chapter 4

Research Design

Introduction

This chapter examines my research design. I first discuss my historical and sociological approach. I review how I use these fields together to answer the driving question of this thesis ('How do practices and everyday experiences at LAS inform an emerging theory of transnational class formation?'). Then, I address my positionality as an insider researcher. I reflect on how this shaped my access, research questions, data collection and data analysis. The following section turns to my methodological techniques, which I frame as ethnographic. I then review my documentary, interview and observational methods and sources. Finally, I consider two ethical complexities threaded through my processes: naming the site and gaining privileged access to data.

This lengthy chapter sits between the reader and the core findings of this thesis. However, it also lays a foundation for the data that follow. I asked questions and sought answers in ways that suited my interests and thought processes. Another researcher may have done things differently. To understand the route that I took (my research design), is to understand where I ended up (my data and argument).

My Historical and Sociological Approach

My research approach contributes to ongoing synergies between history and sociology. In a key text on this topic, Peter Burke (2005) argues that history and sociology have always been informed by one another, though to varying

degrees. As he reminds us, the two began as one discipline. This can be seen in seminal works published before the late 19th century, such as Marx's *Capital*, Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, and Weber's *The Protestant Ethic* (Burke, 2005, Chapter 1). Sewell Jr. (2005, p. 2) writes that it was around this time, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, that distinct disciplines 'crystallised' under the influence (pressure) of newly-established university departments and chairs. This remained the status quo until the 1960s and 1970s. Sewell Jr. shows that historians and social scientists then began to draw from one another again. However, as McCulloch points out, history and sociology have had an 'uneasy intellectual relationship' (2016, p. 49). McCulloch explains, for example, that historians can find the sociological focus on theory and method 'strange and difficult' (2016, p. 49).

Even so, contemporary work in educational studies has continued to pursue this cross-pollination. O'Neill (2014), for example, cites Bourdieu and Foucault as major theoretical influences in his research on 19th century Catholic education in Ireland. Doney's historical doctoral thesis at University of Exeter even operationalises Foucault's archaeological method, to trace 'how certain practices become possible' in religious education (2015, p. 3). Likewise, Smith (2012) found that including a historical dimension in his ethnographies of schooling transformed and deepened them. In elite studies, key publications (Kenway et al., 2017; Khan, 2011) have also integrated historical perspectives and sociological arguments.

As seen in these examples, there are a number of ways and degrees to which these fields can be interwoven. Prominent scholars have also offered their views on this. Both Burke (2005), above, and Hammersley (2012a), for

example, argue that historical work and social theory are complementary. Jones (1976) takes a more active view. He claims that history and sociology should not 'diplomatically' work together but instead should be in dialogue with one another. Abrams (1982) further contends that arguments around the 'convergence' of history and sociology are 'essentially misconceived'. According to Abrams, 'There can be no relationship *between* them because, in terms of their fundamental preoccupations, history and sociology are and always have been the same thing' (1982, p. x emphasis in original).

My perspective is most similar to Abrams's. I use history and sociology as one, to address the question driving this thesis (page 14). The two fields thus form two pillars of my one argument, that class formation processes at LAS are 'interpreted'. For that reason, this section is entitled, 'My Historical and Sociological Approach', rather than 'Approaches'. This also recalls Mills's 'sociological imagination' (1959). Foundational to the field of sociology, this concept emphasises intersections amongst social structures, histories and individual actors.

A theory of method recently developed by Weis and Fine (2012) returns our attention to these intersections. Weis and Fine's approach, which they name 'critical bifocality', encourages researchers to 'account empirically for global, national, and local transformations as insinuated, embodied, and resisted by youth and adults trying to make sense of current educational and economic possibilities in massively shifting contexts' (2012, p. 173). This approach informs my thesis. It offers a guide for investigating the positioning of both LAS over time (Chapters 6 and 7) and the young people it educated (Chapters 8 and 9).

Insider Research

Before conducting fieldwork at LAS³, I worked at the school. This made me an 'insider'. In other words, I 'already [had] an attachment to, or involvement with, the institutions or social groups in, or on, which investigations are based' (Sikes & Potts, 2008b, p. 3). This positionality shaped my access, research questions, data collection and data analysis, in ways that I describe below.

Gaining research access to elite groups can be difficult. Such groups often have the know-how and resources to protect themselves from scrutiny (Howard & Kenway, 2015; Walford, 1994a). If they do grant access, they might set restrictive terms around a study or its publications. Ostrander (1995), for example, interviewed socially-elite women for a research project. These women were on the Board of an organisation that later offered her a job. Following this offer, Ostrander was asked not to publish her research. She agreed because she needed the employment. Gaztambide-Fernández was similarly pressured to censor his work on an elite school. His research site threatened to sue him if he did not remove a particular story from his text, which he finally did (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2015).

Still, gaining access is possible. Walford has written extensively about methodological approaches to researching powerful people. Having personal connections to an elite group, Walford (1994b) notes, eases access. Some doctoral students whose theses became influential elite school ethnographies took this approach. To gain access to their sites, they leveraged being a hired

³ I am vague about the years in which I did my fieldwork to help protect the identities of my participants.

researcher at the school (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2009a), a faculty member at a similar school (Howard, 2008), or an alumnus of the school (Khan, 2011).

I also leveraged my connections. I had a pre-existing relationship with the LAS Head of School, who approved my request to do research there. My reading of the situation is that he approved it because he knew me. I had also approached another Swiss boarding school about doing research there. I never received a reply to my numerous inquiries. This supports the notion that connections matter when it comes to this kind of research.

Maxwell and Aggleton (2015) argue that in addition to connections, an apparent social ‘match’ between a gatekeeper and a researcher can also influence access. Although this has been contested elsewhere (Bertron & Kolopp, 2017), my experience supports their claim. The Head of School and I shared financially-comfortable, white European backgrounds and Ivy League degrees. He had completed an EdD and seemed to enjoy talking about doctoral work with me. Thus, I was not just an insider researcher but also an *insider* – one whose class, race and educational history may have appeared to align my ideologies with my gatekeeper’s.

Having an existing relationship with the school shaped not only my access but also my research questions. Reflecting on his work, Hirsch (1995) writes that a personal connection to a topic gives a researcher a sense of what matters. This, he argues, leads to stronger studies. Similarly, my research questions were informed by my familiarity with the site. My prior knowledge of LAS helped me understand what could be asked and answered through it. A difficulty with this familiarity, however, is retaining the ability to

see beyond one's assumptions. I thus tried to maintain a questioning – and self-questioning – stance throughout my research processes.

Being an insider also affected the breadth and depth of my documentary, interview and observational data. For my documentary data, the Head of School gave me unrestricted access to the school's historical papers. In practice, this meant that I had a key to his office where they were kept. He even asked that I do my research when he was not using the space. I thus spent evenings and weekends there, alone. The trust this signalled probably grew out of my tenure as an employee, not as a researcher.

My interview data were also influenced by my insider positionality. Because of my job, I knew the young people whom I interviewed (ethical complexities of this are discussed on page 107). This meant that I dressed down for interviews to emphasise the distance between my 'researcher persona' and my 'staff member persona', even though I was always both. Yet, this seemed unnecessary. Students often appeared comfortable in, and even in control of, the interview context. They sometimes showed up late or not at all, and one once paused an interview to accept a food delivery. What this means for my data is that participants shared their narratives from a place of familiarity and ease. This was both because of and despite my position at the school. However, their ease may also have reflected their privileged economic positions, rather than our pre-existing relationships (see Khan, 2011).

It is also clear that my observational data were shaped by my insider status. Some staff members were suspicious of my research. At a staff social event, one asked if I was 'spying'. Hargreaves (1967) also uses the word 'spy' to describe how teachers at his research site felt about him. Cunningham-

Sabot (1999) reports that being an insider seemed to threaten her participants in a way that being an outsider did not. She did comparative research on local elites in Scotland and in her French hometown. It was in her hometown community that she was met with distrust, not in the foreign one.

My colleagues' suspicion not only was personally uncomfortable but also carried material consequences for my data. Their unease made me hesitant to ask for their participation in my study. Thus, although I did a pilot interview with a staff member, I stopped at that. I observed classes when I was allowed (some teachers declined my requests) but also let my research be guided by other sources – primarily, those from the institution and its students. Other research has explored the complex positionalities of teachers in elite (Kenway, 2018; Variyan, 2019) and international (Bunnell, 2017; Savva, 2017; Tarc et al., 2019) school spaces. This could thus be an interesting avenue for later research, at a different site.

Finally, being an insider also contoured my data analysis. I knew that I needed to cultivate and maintain a critical eye. McCulloch comments that insider historians can be seen as 'enthusiastic amateurs' writing in service of their institution (2008, p. 52). Their loyalty, as well as a fear of retribution, he suggests, can lead to commemorative texts. This phenomenon can also be found in sociological studies. Berbary (2014), for example, discusses becoming friends with her study participants while immersing herself in her research site. As a result, Berbary later reflected, she tempered her findings.

There are, of course, counterexamples. One particularly relevant to this thesis is a historical study of an elite school in Manhattan (Semel, 1992).

Semel (1994), who was intermittently involved with her school site for over 25

years as a student, teacher, parent and researcher, recalls that she was careful to produce a well-researched piece of scholarship rather than a self-congratulatory text. As a result, she felt, her book was not well-received by the school or her participants.

In writing this thesis, I aimed to ‘subvert the usual stereotype’ (McCulloch, 2008, p. 59) of the uncritical insider. Yet, I also did not want to cross a line from critical to criticising. I have tried to be fair to the complex realities of an educational institution. My data analysis and write-up were thus informed by a desire to find a middle way. This required constant awareness, reflexivity and editing.

Ethnographic Techniques

This thesis is a case study of elite schooling that draws from ethnographic techniques. I do not consider it an ethnography as such. This is a term that some argue is overused (Ingold, 2014) or misused (Hammersley, 2006). Traditionally, an ethnography ‘describes and interprets the shared and learned patterns of values, behaviours, beliefs and language of a culture-sharing group’ (Parker-Jenkins, 2018, p. 19). It relies on ‘thick’ descriptions of a field site. These notions do not capture the ‘what’ or ‘how’ of my thesis. Still, I employed ethnographic techniques. These techniques arguably do not have a defined set of characteristics (Hammersley, 2018). Hence, I followed the examples of influential work in this field. My site, fieldwork time and data collection, each of which I describe here, reflect this.

Some have called using ethnography in elite school studies ‘clinging to the familiar’ (Howard & Kenway, 2015, p. 1006) and proposed that we expand

the field's standard methodological toolkit (Cousin et al., 2018; Howard & Kenway, 2015; Savage & Williams, 2008). Excellent work has done this. It has analysed, for example, elite schools' prospectuses and websites (Brooks & Waters, 2015; Courtois, 2016; Forbes & Weiner, 2008; Wilkins, 2011), media representations (Koh, 2014a), films (Fahey & Prosser, 2015) and geographies (Gamsu, 2016; Waters & Brooks, 2015). Some studies of elite groups have also drawn conclusions from big data sets (Piketty, 2014; Reeves et al., 2017) and social network analyses (Flemmen, 2012; Savage, 2015; Savage & Williams, 2008).

Still, ethnographic techniques offered the best way to answer my research question. Ethnography captures what Khan, in his elite school research, calls 'how people live their lives with one another in particular places' (2011, p. 201). This is what interested me. It also allows a researcher to draw from multiple academic disciplines (Delamont et al., 2000). As such, these techniques provide excellent tools for implementing my historical and sociological approach, as previously discussed.

In terms of my site, elite school ethnographies are often single-school studies. This is true of the scholarship referenced in this section, save for Kenway et al. (2017). Kenway et al. call their study of seven schools a 'multi-sited ethnography'. This approach, the authors claim, 'rethinks conventional ethnographic understandings of space and time' (2017, p. 9).

Notwithstanding, single-school studies remain the norm in educational ethnographies. This norm is reflected in the scope of my fieldwork.

Debates have arisen over how long an ethnographer needs to be 'in the field' (i.e., immersed in the research site) and what he/she should do while

there (Hammersley, 2006; Jeffrey & Troman, 2004; Walford, 2009). Regarding the first issue, seminal educational ethnographies have often relied on one to two years in the field. Foundational examples include Hargreaves (1967), who spent one year teaching at his site, and Lacey (1970), who for 18 months taught and did research at his school site. More recent examples also follow this guideline. Khan (2011) taught at his site for one year while collecting data. Gaztambide-Fernández (2009a) was at his site for two years, though he was there once a week for hours to days at a time. I was in the field for 15 months – constantly for the first eight and then intermittently for weeks at a time for the next seven. This, I conclude from the examples above, was an ‘acceptable’ length of time.

There are, of course, excellent studies that took place outside of this one- to two-year window. On one end of the spectrum, Ball (1981) spent three years at a school doing ethnographic work. Reflecting on this, however, he wrote that ‘a long period of time did not always make this easy’ (1981, p. 280). On the other end, Kenway et al. (2017) spent three *weeks* per year doing fieldwork at each of their schools, for three years. The researchers thus spent a total of nine weeks at each site. Discussing their project’s methodology, Epstein, Fahey and Kenway acknowledge that this ‘play[ed] fast and loose with ethnography’s three chronic and sacred imperatives; time, depth and field’ (2013, p. 472). However, they defend it as giving ‘an intensity and urgency to the fieldwork that, perhaps, sharpens the acuity of the ethnographic gaze’ (2013, p. 472).

Regarding the second issue of what to do in the field while there, my activities paralleled those of the ethnographers cited above. As Khan writes,

'The task of the ethnographer can only be achieved through a deep embedding' (2011, p. 202). As an insider, part of me already was embedded. However, belonging to a community is different than researching it. I thus had to embed my *other* self, my researcher self, in the space. This was how I spent the first two months of my fieldwork. As a researcher, I attended events and meetings, socialised with the staff and students, ate in the dining hall and hung out in the dorms, among other things. This time was useful for honing my research questions.

I then began collecting data. Ethnographic research has been called 'a judicious mix of observation, interviewing, and archival study' (Angrosino, 2007, p. 53). Reflecting this, I made observations, conducted interviews and analysed documents. This kind of approach and data are consistent with other ethnographies discussed here.

Additionally, I kept a research diary during my fieldwork. Gaztambide-Fernández describes this custom as 'essential in my effort to understand how I interacted with others ... and what this revealed about myself as well as the school' (2009a, p. 239). Similarly, I found this practice helpful for maintaining reflexivity. Sometimes I jotted down ideas or questions. Other times, I noted my researcher moods ('feeling tired') or reflected on my researcher activities ('not as awkward as I thought'). This fostered reflections on my processes and also created a useful space between me and my research. I found these notes helpful to revisit when writing up from a distant library. Re-reading them brought me back into the field, keeping my impressions alive.

I did not intend to capture everything in the field. I made choices based on my interests and the constraints of a PhD, including both time and word

limits. Some things that I decided were out of scope were topics discussed in Chapter 2: developing 'belonging' to elite groups (page 47), acting elite (page 47) and forming racialised and gendered elite identities (page 48). However, my research contributes to another topic discussed in that chapter: the creation of global citizens (page 49).

Methods and Sources

This section addresses my documentary, interview and observational methods and sources. Reflecting on her ethnographic thesis work at the University of California, Santa Cruz, Luttrell (2000) argues that methods can only ever be 'good enough', never perfect. With this in mind, I also highlight some limitations to my work.

Documentary Methods

This thesis draws from documentary evidence, defined as written texts (Scott, 1990). To assess the documents, I drew on four criteria: authenticity, reliability, meaning and theorisation (McCulloch, 2004), described below. As Scott (1990) comments about his own criteria for document assessment, these are not evaluated in distinct, consecutive stages. Instead, they are addressed in interdependent phases of what Scott calls a 'never-ending process' (1990, p. 35). Although I found this to be true in practice, I here address each phase on its own, for clarity.

Authenticity refers to a document's nature and origin. To evaluate authenticity, the author, place and date of a text need to be established and verified (McCulloch, 2004). On most of the LAS-held documents, someone

(presumably, the author) had recorded this information. In some cases, however, it was unclear. A date was not given on LAS founder F. Ott's CV, for instance. However, paper-clipped to the CV was a typewritten note that was dated 26 August 1985. The CV was therefore written after the latest date mentioned therein (1984) and 26 August 1985.

The question of authorship can also get complicated. For example, a number of LAS Board documents are signed by F. Ott but were probably typed by his wife, S. Ott, as Secretary of the Board. It is unknown how much content she edited or authored. The same is true of the CV above. One might assume that F. Ott wrote his own CV; however, handwritten annotations on the document are in S. Ott's handwriting. Again, we do not know to what extent she produced that document. These questions do not devalue the documents. Still, they should be kept in mind while analysing them.

Reliability means the extent to which an account is truthful or biased (McCulloch, 2004). Many of my sources were biased. Some were letters expressing a particular viewpoint and, often, trying to convince the reader of it. Others were marketing materials, which present a manufactured picture. Even school yearbooks must be seen as biased documents. Yearbooks are shaped by those who produce them. As Eick (2010, Addendum, note 12) discusses in her school history, yearbook content can be influenced by the priorities and even the friends of students on the yearbook committee. Thus, my document analysis often involved thinking about which (not whether) biases were embedded in my sources.

Another aspect of reliability is representativeness. A document collection can be shaped by 'selective deposit' and 'selective survival'

(McCulloch, 2004, p. 43). The former refers to what documents have been saved and the latter, to what has survived. These factors shaped the LAS document collection. Without a formal archive, document maintenance at the school depended on the interest, space and resources of individuals. Staff members mentioned discarding documents over the years. The admission department told me that almost nothing produced before 2011 survived their office relocation. The largest proportion of school documents that I accessed were curated and kept by the Ott family, who founded and still ran the school. This means that my sources reflect what the Otts found important. It also means that documents expressing opposing views may have been discarded. These sources thus reflect a part of the picture, not its entirety.

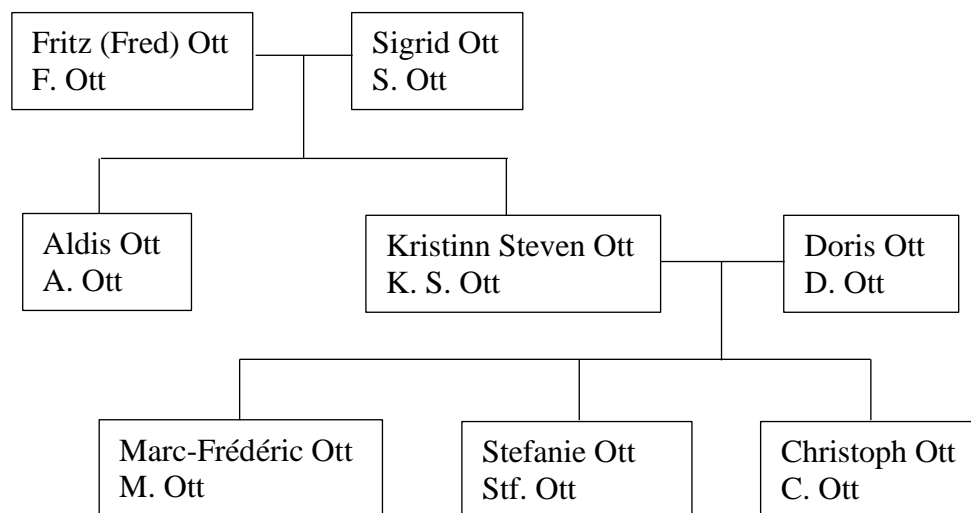
To investigate the meaning of documents, I considered their authors' situations and motives (Scott, 1990). I also took into account the socio-political climate in which they were produced. As Purdy (2018) demonstrates in her study of desegregation at an American elite school, private schools and their stakeholders are not exempt from public forces. I thus approached LAS documents as both being constructed within and responding to wider discourses (Prior, 2003b). This approach places a document in its particular time and place.

Finally, I adopted an interpretivist and critical approach to theorising the documents (McCulloch, 2004). This involved considering what the documents 'did' in addition to what they contained (Prior, 2003a). I thus read for how they 'structure[d] social relationships and social identities' within the school (Prior, 2003b, p. 52). Letters, for example, present an interesting case of this. In a review of canonical American scholarship on immigrant letters, Gerber writes

that such sources can be analysed 'for what they might reveal about the individual letter-writer's consciousness and self-awareness and all the societal and cultural influences upon which both are contingent' (1997, p. 5). At the same time, letters are not the product of a solitary mindset. Instead, they are written for a reader (Dobson, 2009). Thus, letters can be seen as both informed by and influencing relationships between readers and writers.

Through these multiple considerations, I sought interactions in the documents between social processes and individual responses. My analysis could have taken other directions. For example, I could have looked for unheard voices (Aldrich, 2003) – in particular, women's voices. Helpful to my discussion of this is the Ott family tree below.

Image 1. Ott Family Tree.



Although F. Ott is considered the founder of LAS, his wife, S. Ott, played a significant role in starting the school. As will be discussed in Chapter

6 (page 155), she was approached with a real estate deal in Leysin and envisioned a school there. Yet, she is present in the document collection primarily as a scribe – as the Board secretary and a letter-writer on behalf of her husband. There are many examples of women, in various geographies and times, whose creations were credited to men: 20th century American painter Margaret Keane, 20th century French writer Colette, and 19th century German composer Fanny Mendelssohn, to name a few. S. Ott may be another of these women.

In my interview with S. Ott, discussed in sub-sections that follow, I tried to better ascertain her contributions to LAS's development. She told me that she was sceptical of the school in the beginning: 'I used to wonder about the value [of a boarding school] but I don't today. I'm convinced that a good boarding school is a very good education.' This indicates that she had a strong opinion, one that she probably communicated to her husband. It also means that her perspective evolved over time. That evolution would have been interesting to trace.

D. Ott, the wife of K.S. Ott, who ran LAS after his father, is another example of missing women in this story. She is far less visible in the document collection than S. Ott. In fact, she is mostly missing. Yet, D. Ott was managing the Education Desk at the Swiss Center in New York City when she met her future husband. In this position, she learned about Swiss international schools and even visited 60 such schools in Switzerland. She also served as the liaison between these schools and prospective American students (S. Ott & K.S. Ott, 2017, p. 166, LASC). D. Ott probably had a lot to say about the

school that her husband eventually took over. However, as with S. Ott, her voice has been lost.

In addition to the wives, there were the sisters. F. and S. Ott had two children: K.S. Ott, who took over LAS, and his sister A. Ott. She was not involved with the school and is not mentioned in school documents. The LAS 50th anniversary book dedicates four pages to K.S. Ott and one paragraph to A. Ott. K.S. and D. Ott had three children: M. Ott and his brother C. Ott, who both took over leadership positions at the school, and their sister, Stf. Ott. Like her aunt, Stf. Ott is not mentioned in school documents. She is also given one paragraph in the anniversary book, compared to four pages each for her two brothers. The family biography states that Stf. Ott was 'restless' and 'wanted to strike out on her own' (S. Ott & K.S. Ott, 2017, pp. 226-227, LASC). However, she was also on two Boards responsible for running LAS. This instead suggests that visible school leadership was reserved for the men.

If I had used only documentary sources for my thesis, I would have traced these threads. Even Board meeting minutes and letter transcriptions might offer insights into the roles of these women. However, as my data sources were more wide-ranging, I focused my historical analysis on the core elements that illustrate LAS's trajectory: its mottos, official (male) leadership and financial structures.

Documentary Sources

To collect written texts about the school, I contacted current and former LAS staff and students, visited Swiss cantonal and national archives, and searched in online catalogues. Broadly, I ended up with:

- accounting records and auditor reports
- admission agents' contracts and correspondence
- admission and marketing data
- alumni mailings
- annual reports and progress reports
- articles about the school in online and print media
- Board and shareholder meeting minutes⁴
- Board and shareholder reports
- communication with membership organisations
- CV of school founder F. Ott
- founding documents for the school
- graduation speech transcripts
- letters written to or from the Otts
- memos from the school leadership
- Ott family biography (commissioned and self-published)
- school publications
- strategic plans and reports
- yearbooks

The main sources from which my analysis draws are letters, meeting minutes and memos; the Ott family biography and F. Ott's CV; and yearbooks and school publications. I discuss each of these shortly. In combination, they represent a mix of personal and public materials (McCulloch, 2012). They also shaped the story I could tell by bringing particular themes to the fore. In text, I cite these sources using the format '(Author/Document, Year, LASC)' – LASC referring to the LAS (document) Collection.

The majority of documents incorporated into this thesis were held by the Head of School. Four cabinets in his office contained 93 five-centimetre binders. These were filled with various papers dating back to the founding of LAS. Trying to make sense of these documents, I felt what Steedman calls the 'in medias res' nature of an archive – or, 'the account caught halfway through, most of it missing, with no end ever in sight' (2001, p. 1175).

⁴ As will be discussed (page 165), LAS was a shareholder school.

The document collection contained around 85 sets of written correspondence, each ranging from 1-8 letters. These letters were dated from 1960-1982. The lower boundary is just before LAS was founded in 1961. The upper boundary is when K.S. Ott took over leadership of LAS. It is possible that when this happened, K.S. Ott moved communication from letters to phone calls and, later, email. It is also possible that he did not file the letters he sent and received, as his parents did. The surviving letters were primarily written between shareholders and the Ottos. They often contained a mix of the personal and the professional, discussing recent holidays and the health of family members as well as official school matters.

In the collection were also around 200 Board and shareholder meeting minutes and approximately 70 school memos. These were dated from 1961 to the time of my fieldwork. Such documents can be seen as 'deeply embedded in organisational routines and practices' (Scott, 1990, p. 83). As such, they offer valuable insight into how and why certain decisions were made (Spohr Readman, 2009). However, they can also emphasise consensus and the view of the chair (McCulloch, 2004). Similarly, these documents might be used to convey or establish power relations and hierarchies within an organisation (Prior, 2003b). In this way, they must be understood as both reflecting and enacting a particular picture of LAS.

The Ott family commissioned and self-published a family biography in 2017. The book is entitled *Saga: How One Family Made a World of Difference Through Education*. Authorship is attributed to 'Sigrid B. Ott & K. Steven Ott with David Beaudouin'. I cite this in-text as '(S. Ott & K.S. Ott, 2017, LASC)'. At the time of writing, Beaudouin described himself as 'an award-winning

writer, content strategist, and brand communications consultant' based in the US (Beaudouin, 2020). The biography seems intended to celebrate the family, particularly as S. Ott was 100 years old at the time of publication. It also served as a marketing tool for LAS. During my fieldwork, the book was displayed in the Head of School's office as well as in the Marketing and Admissions departmental office.

I also draw from F. Ott's CV, mentioned in the previous sub-section. A CV is an autobiography that constructs, presents and performs a particular self (N. Miller & Morgan, 1993). For example, the aforementioned note paper-clipped to F. Ott's CV reads: 'For the intended purposes the focus needs to be changed slightly, away from family, music and internationalism and more towards "Americanism."' Although the 'intended purposes' here are unknown, it is clear that the CV was meant to craft a particular narrative.

In both biographies and autobiographies, like the two documents above, a writer tries to shape the knowledge, opinions and beliefs of his/her reader. The writer might, for example, construct an identity, justify beliefs or actions or put forward a philosophy of life (Prior, 2003b). I thus approached these biographical pieces of evidence with an eye towards what function they performed. I asked not *what* they said, but how and why.

Finally, my thesis employs data from the complete collection of LAS yearbooks. The first yearbook was published in 1963, two years after the school opened. I also draw from other school publications, including promotional materials and school catalogues. These documents were produced for 'limited circulation', with their intended audience of existing and

prospective school community members being their 'fundamental point of reference' (Scott, 1990, p. 136).

There is a strong precedent for drawing on this kind of material in educational histories. Mangan (1981) used school magazines to explore daily life in late 19th century English public schools. Eick (2010) traced race-class relations from 1950-2000 in an urban American high school with the help of yearbooks. O'Neill (2014) used school publications to gather biographical information about Irish pupils in the second half of the 19th century. In this thesis, I use these materials to explore both on-the-ground experiences within the school (yearbooks) and LAS's cultivated message to the outside world (other school publications).

Interview Methods

My interviews examined participants' beliefs, perspectives and experiences. Such an approach is underpinned by the assumption that interviewees can assess and describe their subjectivities (Roulston, 2010). A criticism, of course, is that this is not always the case (Atkinson & Silverman, 1997). Roulston (2010) therefore suggests seven best practices for this type of interviewing. I employed five: conducting a pilot study, being in the field for an extended period, collecting multiple kinds of data, asking open-ended questions and documenting the research process. I did not follow the other two suggestions: interviewing a participant multiple times and sharing transcripts with participants, which I discuss below.

Some scholars contend that interviews with elites differ from those with others (W. Harvey, 2011; Hertz & Imber, 1995; C. Williams, 2012). A doctoral

student at Sichuan Normal University and the UCL Institute of Education also found this while researching higher education (Liu, 2018). However, this suggests that interviewing elites inverts otherwise-typical power asymmetries between researchers and participants. In other words, it assumes that an interviewer is usually in a position of power over an interviewee.

I see a fundamental issue with this claim. Believing that 'elite' participants have more power than others in an interview not only gives them that power but also *disempowers* participants not labelled as such. Implicitly, it says that we, as researchers, have power over some (the 'other') but not all (the 'elite'). I thus agree with Smith (2006), who argues that researchers must move beyond a conceptual dichotomy of 'elite' and 'other' interview subjects. Doing so might begin to break down assumed power differentials, thereby distributing power more evenly – at least in the interview context.

I interviewed students in empty offices, conference rooms and classrooms. After a student arrived, we chatted as I tried to discern his/her level of anxiety. Participants generally did not seem nervous. We then went through the informed consent forms. I obtained consent both from the students and their parents. At the beginning of the interview, I gave the student a two-page questionnaire. This had fact-gathering questions: number of years in Switzerland, number of years at LAS, which countries he/she considers home, in which countries he/she has lived and which passports he/she has. The questionnaire also had a series of prompts that mirrored my interview topics. Completing this second section was optional. It was meant to give students a moment to collect their thoughts.

When my participant was ready, I turned on an audio recorder. I then followed my semi-structured interview guide, developed through two pilot interviews. My first question asked about the student's background. This kind of question signals an interest in the participant as a person, gets a participant talking and yields insight into what 'structural forces' might shape his/her perspectives and experiences (Forsey, 2012). I then asked about the student's 'home' and language, journey to LAS, school community and future aspirations. I used a combination of open-ended questions in everyday language and elaboration questions ('Can you tell me more about that?').

In addition to interviewing students, I conducted two oral history interviews with former administrators. These interviews were less structured than those with students. Portelli describes oral histories as revealing 'less about *events* than about their *meaning*' (2016, p. 52 emphasis in original). In other words, oral histories 'tell us not just what people did, but what they wanted to do, what they believed they were doing, and what they now think they did' (2016, p. 52). Following this, I aimed to understand my participants' view of LAS when they were involved with the school, their aspirations for the school then and how they thought back on it at the time of our interview.

While oral histories contribute to 'a more realistic and fair reconstruction of the past' (P. Thompson, 2016, p. 36), they also *do* something. A critical question, as phrased by Eick, thus becomes: 'Who speaks: the adult reconstructing the past to justify the present, to justify the past, and to whom? To herself or to the historian?' (2010, p. 158). Keeping such complexities in mind, these oral histories informed and complemented my documentary analyses.

I took notes during my pilot interviews but found, like Forsey (2012), that this distracted participants. During my actual study, then, I took notes from memory immediately following an interview. I recorded the setting, the interviewee's apparent mood and my own feelings during the experience. This practice fostered reflections on the 'affective atmospheres' of an interview, which can help inform analyses (Maxwell & Aggleton, 2015). It also added texture to my transcripts, which do not capture an interview as a whole event (Sunstein & Chiseri-Strater, 2007).

If I were to do these interviews again, I would incorporate visual elements (Emmison, 2004). It has been shown that articulate participants' narratives tend to be privileged in a researcher's final analysis (Elliot, 2012). Providing a non-verbal way for participants to share their stories might facilitate more equal representation in research write-ups. For example, I could have asked participants to draw maps of their local or global lives (Donnelly et al., 2020). Additionally, next time I would ask participants to choose their own interview location. As a 'micro-geography' of social relations and meanings, participant-chosen interview sites are yet another form of data (Elwood & Martin, 2000).

I transcribed interviews as soon as possible. I intended to capture the words used rather than sounds made. Therefore, I did not focus on intonation, accent or pace (Hammersley, 2012b). When I could not understand a word, I made an educated guess followed by '[?]'. I left grammar as it was spoken. When a participant used a tone that changed the meaning of his/her spoken words, such as sarcasm, I noted that in the transcript. I also transcribed some

'non-word' elements such as long pauses and laughs, but not others like coughs or gestures (Hammersley, 2010).

As Hammersley reminds us, transcripts are not 'sacred and infallible texts' (2012b, p. 442). Scholars have demonstrated that they can contain technical inaccuracies (Kitzinger, 1998; Poland, 1995). Moreover, they reflect what a participant *said*. This is not always what a participant *meant*. Although this difference can be moderated by sharing transcripts with participants, I chose not to do this. On a practical level, the notion that sharing transcripts improves data quality has been questioned (Thomas, 2017). On an ethical level, this practice offers both benefits and drawbacks. Sharing transcripts can empower participants, but it can also lead to edits that change a participant's voice (Mero-Jaffe, 2011; Turnball, 2000). The nature of the data then shifts from a record of speech to a written text. Because I did not share my transcripts, I tried not to over-interpret participants' words in my analyses. Instead, I placed this data alongside my field notes, background knowledge and other data sources (Hammersley, 2012b).

After all interviews were completed and transcribed, I thematically coded my transcripts by hand. Following Eick's approach (2010), I continued my analysis through written prose that narrated both individual and group experiences. Like Forsey (2012), I developed so-called 'portraits' (after Seidman, 2006). Portraits 'capture the beliefs, the values, the material conditions and structural forces underpinning the socially patterned behaviour of the person that emerged in the interview' (Forsey, 2012, p. 374). Also like Forsey (2012), I endeavoured not to turn participants' stories into

uncontextualized quotes either during my analyses or in my final text. Instead, I aimed to preserve the complexities of their experiences and perspectives.

Interview Sources

For my interviews with students, participants needed to be (1) age 17 or older, (2) in their final school year and (3) educated at LAS for more than one year. There were 94 students who met those three eligibility criteria. I decided to interview 19 (20%) of them.

To choose the 19, I used a stratified purposive sampling technique. This strategy selects participants from different 'strata', or groups, to ensure that each group is represented in the final sample (Patton, 1990). From my background knowledge, I knew that a student's experience of LAS was shaped largely by the number of other students from his/her home country. In other words, students from countries that were well-represented in the student body had one kind of experience, while students from countries that were not well-represented had another.

Therefore, I defined sampling groups according to how many students in the year group shared a nationality. I created four strata:

- a. Groups of 6+ students who were citizens and residents of a particular country
 - Captured 2 countries and 25 students (11 women, 14 men)
 - Interviewed 4 students (2 women, 2 men)
- b. Groups of 4-5 students who were citizens and residents of a particular country
 - Captured 6 countries and 25 students (13 women, 12 men)
 - Interviewed 5 students (2 women, 3 men)
- c. Groups of 1-3 students who were citizens and residents of a particular country
 - Captured 13 countries and 21 students (11 women, 10 men)
 - Interviewed 6 students (3 women, 3 men)
- d. Students who were not resident in their country of passport
 - Captured 23 students (9 women, 14 men)
 - Interviewed 4 students (2 women, 2 men)

I then chose particular participants within these strata according to three parameters: theoretical, contextual and practical. This follows Gaztambide-Fernández's practice for his elite school ethnography (2009a, pp. 228–231). Theoretically, I wanted to include students from different kinds of nation-states. This meant seeking out participants from the Orient and the Occident, the so-called Global South and Global North⁵, and colonising and colonised countries. Contextually, I included students from different friendship groups. I had a sense of these relationships from my observations and conversations. I also knew which students had full financial scholarships, which were so-called 'corporate' students (those whose fees were subsidised by their parents' employers) and which students paid for LAS out-of-pocket. My participants reflected this range. Practically, I could only interview students who consented to participate. Every eligible Chinese young woman, for

⁵ These terms can be debated (see Kloß, 2017). I use them as a shorthand indicating two kinds of nation-states – those that have benefitted from unequal power relations (Global North) and those that have suffered from them (Global South).

example, declined my request for an interview. Rather than a perfect sample, I strived for an insightful one.

Table 1, below, lists my participants according to their pseudonyms. I also provide their self-identified home countries and intended destinations for higher education when known. Magnus, for example, took a gap year after graduation. It is unclear whether and where he enrolled at university thereafter. His intention at the time of our interview was eventually to study in the UK or US.

Table 1. Student Participants.

<i>Name</i>	<i>'Home'</i>	<i>Higher Education</i>
Ahmed	Saudi Arabia	UK
Brian	US	Europe
Corli	South Africa	Europe
Diego	Spain	UK
Emily	US	US
Fredek	Russia	US
Guozhi	Malaysia	Middle East
Helena	Brazil	UK
Irina	Russia	Canada
Jieun	South Korea	UK
Luke	US	US
Magnus	Denmark	n/a
Natalia	Mexico	UK
Olek	Ukraine	Canada
Sergei	Russia	Europe
Tanya	Russia	Switzerland
Wei	China	US
Ya-Hui	Taiwan	US
Zahra	Iran	Canada

My interviews with students lasted for an average of 52 minutes. The longest was 78 minutes and the shortest, 23 minutes. I felt that the length of the shortest interview was influenced by my positionality as a white female interviewing a Saudi Arabian male. If this was indeed the case, it supports Archer's (2002) argument that the race and gender of interviewees and interviewers interact to shape outcomes. I did not, however, ask participants what *they* thought about this. If I did this project again, I would.

What also seemed to shape interview outcomes was my prior relationships with these students. While writing up my research, I categorised my participants into one of two groups: students with whom I thought I had a close relationship before the interview, and students with whom I thought I did not. Seven fell into the first category. Those interviews lasted an average of 57 minutes. The other 12 participants were in the second category. Those interviews averaged 48 minutes. It may be that closer familiarity with participants engendered longer conversations, or that those participants felt they 'owed' me more time. It could also be that students whom I did not know well felt more uncomfortable in this interview setting – that they were 'taking' my time or talking about themselves with someone who, from their perspective, may or may not actually be interested in the details. I did not probe this further by asking participants about their experience of the interview process after the fact. I would if I were to do this again.

As previously mentioned, in addition to the student interviews, I conducted two oral history interviews. The first was with S. Ott. She witnessed the founding of LAS and its running ever since. S. Ott was 100 years old at the time of our interview, which took place in her home. She was physically

frail but mentally sharp. S. Ott then referred me to Richard⁶. He was the longest-standing principal at LAS, at a time when principals still ran the school's day-to-day business under the Ott's leadership. These interviews informed my analyses but did not become major data sources in my write-up. In the end, I focused on the voices of administrators as they came through in the historical documents.

There are two groups of stakeholders whose perspectives are either minimally represented in or absent from this thesis. One, discussed earlier, is that of the LAS staff. Another is that of LAS students' parents. I decided not to include parents in this study for the practical reason that most were not native English speakers. Interviewing only those who felt comfortable in an English-speaking interview setting would have effectively privileged the voices and experiences of parents from certain geographies and/or educational backgrounds.

Observational Methods

A key aspect of ethnographic work is recording observations in the field. As Khan wrote while reflecting on his elite school ethnography, 'There are limits to what we can glean from these verbal accounts ... the narratives that [students] construct in an interview are at odds with situated behavior' (Khan & Jerolmack, 2013, p. 11). In other words, observations shed light on how perspectives that are articulated in interviews and documents translate into everyday practices. However, people can act differently when they know they are being observed. Hargreaves (1967), for example, noticed this during his

⁶ This is a pseudonym.

ethnographic work at a school. Still, to observe is to gain insight into on-the-ground experiences, even if those insights are imperfect ones.

I was a 'participant-as-observer'. This means that I was integrated into my research site but was also known to be conducting research there (Angrosino, 2007). As a result, it was important to delineate my 'community member' role from my 'researcher' role. I attempted to do this by creating a sign that read 'Making Observations'. I displayed this when I observed specific spaces during specific times, like classes, the cafeteria and library, and all-school events, which I describe in the following sub-section. However, at all times, I observed what was happening around me. These general observations were not demarcated by such a sign.

I was as uniform as possible in my note-taking. Still, observations are subjective. Reflexivity is thus paramount in this process. Throughout my observations, I returned to three guiding questions offered by Sunstein and Chiseri-Strater (2007). The first is, 'What surprised me?' Asking this, the authors note, brings a researcher's assumptions to the forefront. The second is, 'What intrigued me?' This highlights a researcher's interests, which in turn can guide his/her focus in the field. Finally, I asked, 'What disturbed me?' According to Sunstein and Chiseri-Strater (2007), this question calls attention to a researcher's biases and blind spots. These questions helped me reflect on my data while collecting them.

Observational Sources

As previously noted, I took general field notes and also observed classes, everyday moments in the cafeteria and library, and all-school events. Before

doing so, I sent an email to all staff and students outlining my research interests and methods. I explained that I would be taking field notes in various spaces. Anyone, I wrote, could opt out by emailing me. One student did this. As this student was in a much younger grade on a different part of campus, it was easy to ensure that he/she was not included in my study.

I made general field notes around campus, in the town of Leysin and on school trips. I drew diagrams of LAS buildings and recorded the symbols with which they were adorned, such as flags and photographs. I chronicled how and by whom both public and private spaces on campus were used at different times. I noted who socialised with whom and how, and changes that occurred when new people entered that social space. I watched, listened and asked myself questions (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 3).

I also observed 15 class periods for final year students. Each was taught by a different teacher. At the beginning of a class, I recorded if and how my presence was recognised by the teacher and/or the students. In three different instances, for example, students directly asked if I was there to observe them. Then, I drew a diagram of the classroom. I documented who sat where. As the class unfolded, I logged with whom students interacted, the nature of those interactions (socialising, working on class material, asking questions, etc.) and the languages they used. Finally, I summarised any relevant comments that the teacher or students made to me after class. Following Hargreaves (1967), who was not always sure if he was spoken to as a researcher or a colleague, I used these exchanges to inform my analyses but not to quote, unless I was given explicit permission to do so.

Additionally, I observed the cafeteria three times, the library once and all-school events three times. As in the classroom setting, I drew diagrams of the spaces and where people sat. I also recorded who was interacting with whom, how and in what language. These sessions, however, were often interrupted. This is why I did so few of them. During one cafeteria session, for example, I was approached by a staff member on three separate occasions. Each time, he/she commented on my 'Making Observations' sign, asked me what I was doing (making observations) and then enquired into my research, lunch or the origins of my water bottle. I chatted for as long as politeness required before returning to the task at hand. However, my focus had been disrupted. In the library, students seemed not to notice my sign at all. One asked me for help composing an email; another, for a laptop charger. This went on. It became so difficult to record observations in the library that I did not bother returning a second time.

Ethical Complexities

My research complies with the third edition of the British Educational Research Association's ethical guidelines. It was approved by my university's ethics review process and by the Head of School at LAS. This section discusses two ethical complexities threaded through my research: naming the school and gaining privileged access to data.

Naming the School

With the LAS Head of School's permission, I name my research site. This goes against traditional wisdom in sociology. Such wisdom maintains that to

protect participants, neither their nor their location's (or, in this case, institution's) identifying characteristics should be known. However, in the historical tradition, naming a site is the norm. Doctoral studies of elite schools that bridge history and sociology (Khan, 2011; Ventouris, 2014) have used the conventions of the former. My decision, therefore, has precedent.

I made this decision because I did not think I could, in good conscience, guarantee institutional anonymity. This was for two reasons. The first was my historical work. To anonymise the historical details of LAS would be to lose all texture of its history. Moreover, there are relatively few Swiss boarding schools, each of which is unique. Anonymising measures would have to be drastic to hide the school from those familiar with this landscape. In writing *Hightown Grammar*, Lacey found himself in a similar situation. He wrote, 'Any reader with a little knowledge of the demography or the educational provisions of northern towns will speedily recognise [the site] from the descriptive passages that follow' (1970, n. 1). Lacey then urged discretion: 'I feel it is extremely important that in any public discussion its anonymity should be preserved' (1970, n. 1). However, requesting discretion does not guarantee it.

The second reason I did not think I could successfully anonymise LAS was my CV. I have worked at one Swiss school. This meant that if I mentioned being an insider researcher, anyone who saw my CV would know where I had done my research. This mirrors Khan's (2011) position during his doctoral work. Khan was an alumnus of his research site. Because this revealing detail was also an integral part of his narrative, he requested and was granted permission to use the site's real name.

Thus, because I could not guarantee institutional anonymity, I felt it was essential to not falsely promise this to participants. Naming the school meant clearly telling the Head of School and all potential participants that, without question, the school would be known to readers. With this information, I felt, they could make a better-informed decision about whether to participate.

Naming the school was thus the more ethical route, though it exposes me to a number of potential problems. LAS, for example, could accuse me of slander (Walford, 2012). If the school ever becomes embroiled in a court case, I could be subpoenaed for my notes (Khan, 2019). I have come to agree with Khan's (2011) observation that using a pseudonym protects the researcher even more than the participants. Still, I feel that my decision was the ethically-correct one.

Privileged Access to Data

Sikes and Potts (2008a) argue that insider researchers face ethical issues particular to that positionality. In my case, one of those issues was being granted privileged access to documents and student participants.

McCulloch (2008) cautions that insider researchers should negotiate access to documentary sources as if they were outsiders. Although I tried to do this, a true 'outsider' probably would not have been given a key to the Head of School's office (page 77). An outsider probably also would not have been asked to read the documents therein when the Head was not there. I could have declined those rights and requests. However, doing so would have felt untrue to the fact of my insider positionality. Thus, I write this thesis with an awareness that my access to data was a privileged one.

Regarding students' participation, my association with the school staff may have complicated the notion of 'informed consent'. Some students may have felt obliged to participate. This became apparent in Natalia's interview. While discussing the school community, she told me, 'You don't know how many times I was freaking out and you were there for me. So, when you told me about this interview, I was like, no second thought. I was like, "Obviously."' She seemed to view participation as a form of reciprocation. However, other students turned down my request for an interview. This supports the extant literature showing that privileged young people have a strong sense of autonomy and agency (Khan, 2011; Maxwell & Aggleton, 2015). Still, understanding that my position was complex, I made it as easy as possible for students to decline to participate and emphasised that whatever their decision, it would not bear on our relationship.

Conclusion

This chapter presented and discussed my research design. I first considered my historical and sociological approach. I explained that I use history and sociology as one, to answer the same driving question. Then, I examined my insider positionality at my research site. I reflected on how this shaped my access, research questions, data collection and data analysis. The next section turned to my methodology. I considered the ethnographic techniques I use in this case study. After this, I reviewed my documentary, interview and observational data. I explained my methods and sources while also reflecting on their limitations. I closed the chapter with a discussion of two ethical complexities that informed my research processes.

The next chapter marks a turning point in this thesis. Having discussed extant literature (Chapter 2), my theoretical framework (Chapter 3) and my research design (this chapter), the next chapter turns to my data. It evaluates circulating images of Switzerland as embedded in practices at LAS. These images and practices, I argue, influenced what kinds of young people were attracted to the school, how they understood themselves and what mindsets they cultivated. Ultimately, this offers insight into LAS's particular transnational space and ways in which the school significantly shaped its students.

Chapter 5

Switzerland's Images and LAS Practices

Introduction

This chapter examines circulating images of Switzerland that were embedded in LAS's practices and positionalities. First, I discuss the concept of 'Switzerland'. Then, I review three Swiss boarding schools in the Lake Geneva area in relation to LAS. I inductively reason what the label 'Swiss boarding school' signals. Following this, I turn to three examples of Switzerland's images that were reflected in LAS practices. The first is the nation's reputation as a retreat from the world. As I show, LAS marketing materials drew from this, attracting young people seeking such a retreat. The second is the perception of Switzerland as a global centre for both wealth and tax evasion. Mirroring this, LAS likewise both attracted the rich and downplayed their resources. Doing so, I argue, normalised being financially wealthy and 'othered' those who were not. Finally, the third example is one understanding of the IB, which started and continues to be headquartered in Switzerland, as associated with international mobility and Western hegemony. At LAS, an IB school, students also cultivated a mindset of moving West.

This chapter thus investigates 'circulating images, information, and capital' (Ong, 1999, p. 181) that link LAS to its host country. Ong (1999) argues that circulating reputations and materialities produce norms. This can also be seen in Rizvi's (2015) article about an elite school's imaginary in India. This imaginary, Rizvi argues, was constructed around images of the country's economic development and rising world profile. Ong moreover contends that

such norms then produce particular transnational spaces (1999, pp. 158–159). This chapter thereby ultimately seeks to understand what kind of transnational space was produced at LAS.

Once we understand that, we understand more about what kind of elite school LAS was and how this shaped its students. If we extend Kenway et al.'s (2017) metaphor of choreography, LAS's space is the rehearsal hall. Its particular dimensions shape which movements can be imagined and practised. As I show, this space contoured which young people came together at the school, how they understood themselves and what mindsets they cultivated. Ultimately, this demonstrates some significant abilities of an LAS education to shape its students. Its limits will be explored later in this thesis (Chapters 8 and 9).

Construction of a State

This section discusses to what I refer when I say 'Switzerland'. Nation-states are both spatially- and politically-constructed over time. As such, this section asks: What is Switzerland and who are the Swiss?

According to Diener, Herzog, Meili, de Meuron, and Schmid (2005), Switzerland as a territory grew out of alpine transit routes. As those authors point out, travellers want safe and reliant corridors. Consequently, those who control such corridors can charge fees for their use. Alpine transit routes, being both safe and reliable, brought in so much financial capital through tolls that disparate communities in the surrounding valleys came together to maintain them. In other words, as Diener et al. argue, 'hegemony over alpine transit is one *raison d'être* of Switzerland – and that remains true in present-

day Europe' (2005, p. 294). Thus, from its beginning, 'Switzerland' has financially profited from an image of safety – a theme woven through the rest of this section.

Diener et al. (2005) trace those valley communities back to the Celts. The Celts inhabited modern-day Switzerland from around 450 BC. They lived in separate 'zones' that traded with one another. The Romans then occupied the region from the 1st to 5th centuries AD. They turned these 'zones' into regions with borders. After the Romans left, Germanic tribes moved in. In 1291, three valley communities formed a security alliance. In the Swiss public's imagination, their treaty is the Swiss nation's founding document. Over the next 250 years, more territories (eventually called 'cantons') joined this coalition. In 1536, the Swiss Confederation was formalised.

In 1798, Diener et al. (2005) continue, Napoleon invaded and established the Helvetic Republic. The French created a constitution that eliminated cantonal sovereignty. When the French withdrew in 1803, the Republic dissolved. A Federal Pact then returned the territory to a political Confederation. In 1848, a Federal State was established. Switzerland's modern borders were drawn 15 years later, in 1863.

Geographically, the nation-state has largely been confined to the juridical borders we see on a map today. Switzerland, for example, did not have colonies. However, it did profit from colonialism. Purtschert, Falk, and Lüthi (2016) argue that *not* having colonies was actually economically better for the country. Switzerland profited first from facilitating the trans-Atlantic slave trade and colonial trade, and then from trading with former colonies that had gained their independence. Post-colonial states, Purtschert et al. (2016)

contend, preferred to trade with Switzerland over the colonial powers, believing Switzerland to be a more neutral party. According to Purtschert et al. (2016), the Swiss government and its people often claim that Switzerland did not play a role in colonialism. Such 'amnesia', as Purtschert et al. call it, is foundational to Switzerland's modern construction as a neutral mediator between countries.

Switzerland also did not try to expand its borders during WWII, nor did it lose territory. Similar to in the colonial period, Switzerland strategically adopted a policy of neutrality that was economically beneficial. Also similarly, neutrality did not mean inactivity. Switzerland traded with both Axis and Allied countries, thereby financially gaining from both sides of the war (Golson, 2011). Doing so ensured the nation's survival, not only economically but also physically. Switzerland was rarely bombed during the war; when it was, it received reparations (Helmreich, 1977).

What we learn from how Switzerland positioned itself during colonialism and WWII is that the country's image of political neutrality allowed it to flexibly pursue economically-profitable alliances. Its positionality can therefore be understood not as a moral stance but rather as a strategy of wealth accumulation.

This brings me to my second question: Who are the Swiss? According to Switzerland's Federal Statistics Office (2019), in 2018 there were 8.5 million permanent residents in Switzerland. That was 0.1% of the world's population. Of those, 6.4 million were Swiss citizens. Not all Swiss citizens were born and raised in Switzerland. In 2018, for example, 42,000 people acquired Swiss citizenship. Thereafter, they were included in statistics such

as those above. There are also 760,000 Swiss citizens who do not live in Switzerland. They are 'counted' in statistics as citizens but not as residents. More Swiss citizens emigrate annually from the country than return to it. In 2018, for example, Switzerland saw a net loss of 8,000 citizens (Federal Statistical Office, 2019).

There is no one culture or language in Switzerland. The country has four distinct cultural and linguistic regions: German, French, Italian and Romansh. Romansh is a Romance language. In 2018, it was spoken by less than 45,000 people in the country, or 0.5% of the population. For comparison, Swiss German, the most widely-used language, was spoken by over five million, or 62% of the population (Federal Statistical Office, 2020b).

Switzerland is thus an inherently multi-cultural space, though not always harmoniously so. One Swiss described the nation to me as 'different countries held together by the Swiss Franc [currency]... the French and Germans don't trust each other, and the Italian part might as well be in Mongolia.' While this was just one, arguably exaggerated, opinion, its basis in reality can be seen in internal politics. For example, in 2017, a French-speaking commune voted to switch cantons from a German-speaking one to a French-speaking one, claiming discrimination in its district, though this never came to fruition (SwissInfo, 2019).

Issues around the politics of representation play out not just at cantonal levels but also on an individual level. This can be seen in voting rights.

Switzerland is a direct democracy that functions through frequent referendums. Voters approve new laws, budgets and even constitutional changes. In other words, voting carries real power. Women, however, did not

get the constitutional right to vote until 1971. Even then, it was passed with only 66% approval (Federal Statistical Office, 2020a). This was on a federal level; individual cantons still set their own voting rules. Two of Switzerland's 26 cantons decided not to give women suffrage. One of those, Appenzell Ausserrhoden, finally did in 1989. The Federal Supreme Court then forced the other, Appenzell Innerrhoden, to allow women to vote in 1990 (Le News, 2017). In some parts of Switzerland, then, women did not have voting rights until 30 years ago.

Juridical rights are also complicated for Switzerland's foreign population, which accounts for 25% of the country's residents. According to the Federal Statistics Office (2019), in 2018, a net of 48,000 non-Swiss citizens moved to the country. For job-seekers, the immigration process is complicated. Annual quotas limit the number of work visas available. To receive one, a person must be labelled a 'highly qualified worker', have a university degree and work experience and demonstrate a willingness to adapt to Swiss norms. This includes evidencing either basic knowledge of the local language (which is canton-dependent) or enrolment in a language course.

Those who are labelled 'refugees' have an even more difficult time. One newspaper article reports that asylum applications in Switzerland take an average of 562 days to be processed (MacGregor, 2018). Neighbouring countries are much quicker – Austria averages 70 days; France, 161; and Germany, 240 (Asylum Information Database, 2020). During that time, refugees in Switzerland are not allowed to work and are not offered local-language classes (MacGregor, 2018). A person's 'type' of foreignness thus

makes a material difference to how one is seen by the Swiss state. Workers are told they must integrate, while refugees are not supported in doing so.

When we talk about Switzerland, then, we talk about a single, bounded territory that has continuously positioned itself in economically-profitable ways. Although it maintains both linguistic and cultural diversity within its borders, it also has differentiated rights according to gender and 'status'. Thus, Switzerland can be seen as a nation-state constructed from outward-looking opportunism and inward-looking conservatism.

The 'Swiss Boarding School' Label

Switzerland has a reputation for hosting expensive boarding schools. In one online ranking of 'the most expensive boarding schools in the world', the top 10 were all in Switzerland⁷ (Lovemoney Staff, 2019). This section induces what the 'Swiss boarding school' label signals. I examine three boarding schools in relation to LAS: Aiglon College (Aiglon), Collège Alpin Beau Soleil (Beau Soleil) and Institut Le Rosey (Rosey). A summary of the facts and figures in this section follows.

⁷ LAS was ranked seventh.

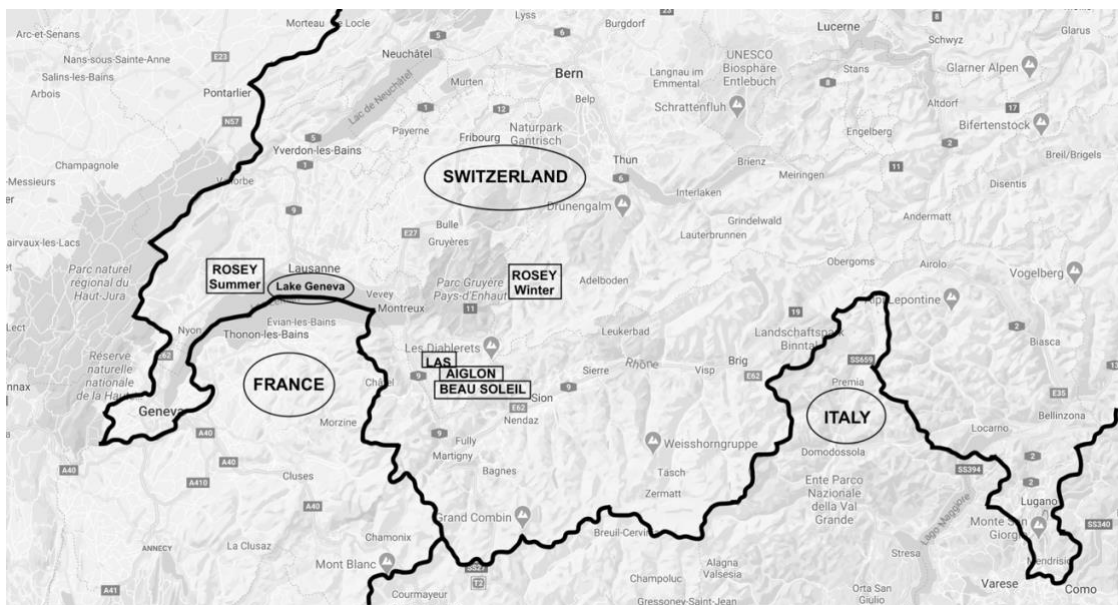
Table 2. Select Swiss Boarding Schools: Overview.

	Aiglon	Beau Soleil	LAS	Rosey
<i>Location</i>	Chesières	Villars-sur-Ollon	Leysin	Rolle & Gstaad
<i>Founding</i>	1949	1910	1961	1880
<i>Students</i>				
<i>Ages</i>	9-18	11-18	12-18	8-18
<i>Number</i>	375	260 max.	320	420
<i>Boarding</i>	86%	100%	99%	100%
<i>Nationalities</i>	60+	55+	50+	60+
<i>Fees in SFr. (2020/2021)</i>	120,000	109,000	99,000	124,000
<i>Scholarships</i>	17	0	2 per year group	3-5
<i>Curricula</i>	IB	IB, US high school diploma	IB, US high school diploma	IB, French Baccalaureate
<i>Governance</i>	Non-profit organisation	For-profit organisation	Non-profit organisation & shareholder company	Owner-directors

Information provided by each school's website.

As you can see on the following map, these schools are in the Lake Geneva area, which is French-speaking. Rosey is supposedly the only school in the world that moves between two campuses every year (Guertchakoff, 2013). Its summer campus is in Rolle, on the lakefront. This is around 90km from LAS – a drive that winds around Lake Geneva. Rosey’s winter campus is in the famous ski resort Gstaad. This drive is around 40km from LAS. Aiglon and Beau Soleil are approximately 500m apart in the neighbouring alpine villages of Chesières and Villars-sur-Ollon. Their mountain is next to LAS’s. Although these two schools are less than 6km from LAS as the crow flies, they are 30km away by car.

Map 1. Select Swiss Boarding Schools.



Underlying map from Google maps.

However, just because these schools are in Switzerland does not mean that they are for the Swiss. According to Swann's (2007) doctoral thesis at the University of British Columbia, Swiss tourism materials from the early 20th century were produced in collaboration with the Swiss Private Schools' Association. They promoted an 'education in Switzerland rather than Swiss education' (Swann, 2007, p. 301). As noted in Chapter 1 (page 17), at the time of my fieldwork, less than 3% of LAS students were Swiss. Aiglon, Beau Soleil and Rosey did not publicise the number of Swiss students they educated, but it was probably comparable. By one estimate, only around 5% of Swiss children receive private school educations (Expatica, 2020). In other words, these schools did not serve their host nation's population. Instead, they educated a clientele from around the world.

Rosey, Beau Soleil and Aiglon had international beginnings, which I present briefly and chronologically. I discuss LAS's history in the next chapter. Carnal, a French-Swiss, started Rosey in 1880. He opened the school with three students from three different countries. In 1916, Carnal's son inaugurated its winter campus in Gstaad. He hoped to use winter sports to attract more Anglo-Saxons to Rosey, particularly since WWI had hurt student enrolment. This launched Rosey's association with the social and economic elite, who soon took up 'wintering' in the Alps (Swann, 2007).

Beau Soleil was founded by Ferrier in 1910, also in Gstaad. The institution began as a place for sick European children to recover from their illnesses. In 1920, Ferrier moved Beau Soleil to its current location and tried to re-formulate its image. Ferrier began advertising its health-*inspiring* (but not treatment-oriented) location, family-run environment and pedagogical

methods. In this way, the institution slowly shifted its reputation from a sanatorium to a school (Swann, 2007).

Corlette founded Aiglon in 1949. Corlette attended Stowe School in England before transferring to a Swiss alpine school to recover from pneumonia. After then studying at Oxford, Corlette taught at Gordonstoun School in Scotland. He often disagreed with its founder and then-headmaster, Kurt Hahn, and was dismissed. Corlette then returned to Switzerland and opened Aiglon. He based the school on the British public school model and, ironically, on Hahn's educational philosophies around leadership, service learning and outdoor adventure (Watson, 1999).

Nowadays, these three schools are often grouped together, along with LAS. Twelve of the students I interviewed considered schools other than LAS. Rosey, Aiglon and Beau Soleil were the top contenders. Five students considered Rosey; four, Aiglon; and four, Beau Soleil. In 2010, the LAS Board listed Aiglon and Rosey as its closest peer schools (Board Minutes, 2010, LASC). LAS's most recent Strategic Plan drew from Beau Soleil's (Strategic, 2016, LASC). At the time of my fieldwork, these schools also overlapped through three organisations: the Swiss Group of International Schools, Swiss Learning and the Association des Directeurs des Instituts de Suisse Romande. Additionally, their leadership was interconnected. McDonald, for example, led Aiglon from 1994-2000. He then became Director of Strategic Development at Beau Soleil in 2002. In 2009, he returned to Aiglon as headmaster (McDonald, n.d.). The LAS Head of School told me that he considered McDonald to be a mentor.

Rosey, Aiglon and Beau Soleil have become known as the three most expensive schools in the world (Lovemoney Staff, 2019; Parkes, 2020).

According to their 2020/2021 application documents, annual fees for that year were 124,000 SFr. (£102,700) at Rosey, 120,000 SFr. (£99,400) at Aiglon, and 109,000 SFr. (£90,300) at Beau Soleil. This does not include extras. Beau Soleil, for example, charges an additional 3,000 SFr. (£2,500) for the application, 6,000 SFr. (£5,000) for uniforms and 9,200 SFr. (£7,600) for students in their final two years. Comparatively, LAS charged 99,000 SFr. (£82,000) for the 2020/2021 academic year.

According to their official websites, Aiglon, Beau Soleil and Rosey each educate 250-420 students. The youngest students are 8-11 years old, depending on the school. The oldest are 18. Similarly, LAS enrolled 320 students, from the ages of 12-18. The student bodies at each of these four institutions represent over 50 nationalities. The schools are all currently co-educational. LAS was co-educational from its start in 1961. Rosey admitted young women in 1967 and Aiglon, in 1968. It is unclear whether Beau Soleil started as or became co-educational. They are all primarily boarding schools.

The schools vary in their number of financial scholarships. Beau Soleil does not offer scholarships, while Aiglon gives 17. Rosey has 3-5 scholarships, though it did not always. In 1965, for example, the General Director of Rosey told the press that scholarships 'would do more harm to the poor boys than good to the wealthy ones' (Liber, 1965, p. 60). Already by that time, the school was known as 'the true home of many boys who belong to the extremely wealthy so-called Jet Set' (Liber, 1965, p. 60). Although scholarships are now available, the language used is largely unchanged. In

2007, Rosey's General Director similarly stated that a financially-disadvantaged student would not feel comfortable at the school (Simonian, 2007). LAS offers a maximum of two full scholarships per year group. It also has a 'corporate student subsidy' scheme, whereby it charges a lower fee to students whose parents' companies contribute to boarding school costs. I return to scholarship students' experiences at LAS later in this chapter.

These schools' campuses are extensive. Beau Soleil has one main building, six external dorms and an on-piste ski chalet. The main building contains numerous arts and sports facilities, such as a film studio, music studio, yoga room and climbing wall. LAS has 12 buildings. One, the Belle Époque, is described in LAS marketing materials as a 'leading architectural jewel of the region' (Brochure, 2018, LASC). Another school publication highlights the building's history as a 'luxurious sanatorium that catered to the wealthy' – apparently including Igor Stravinsky, Tsar Nicholas II, Marie Curie and Mahatma Gandhi (*School*, 2011, LASC). Aiglon has 36 buildings spread over a 60,000 m² campus. Rosey's summer campus in Rolle is 280,000 m². It contains football and rugby pitches, riding stables, a sailing centre, two swimming pools and tennis courts. The winter campus is a collection of chalets in Gstaad. A video on Rosey's website devoted 52 seconds to its quality of education and 65 seconds to the alpine sports available in Gstaad.

At the time of writing, Aiglon, Beau Soleil, Rosey and LAS all taught the IB curriculum. Kenway and Fahey (2014) argue that when internationalising, elite schools in post-colonial contexts adopt the leaving exams of their former colonial power. These Swiss schools instead took on the IB while phasing *out* a national curriculum. Aiglon, as mentioned above, was modelled after the

British public schools. It replaced British A-levels with the IB in 2009. Beau Soleil was a Francophone school. It taught a French curriculum (French Baccalaureate and the *diplôme national du brevet*) but gradually eliminated it, instead offering the IB and US high school diploma. Rosey, founded by a Swiss, phased out the Swiss Maturité to award only either the IB or the French Baccalaureate. Similarly, LAS, an American school, slowly replaced its US Advanced Placement courses with the IB, though it continued to offer the US high school diploma.

The schools' governance structures differ widely. Aiglon is run by a non-profit organisation. Rosey has always had owner-directors. It is in its fifth generation of leadership. LAS has been run by three generations of men in the same family. Initially, it was incorporated as a for-profit shareholder company. In 2005, the family created a non-profit foundation to control the school alongside the shareholder company. This is detailed over the next two chapters.

Beau Soleil's structure is arguably the most intriguing. In 2010, Beau Soleil was bought by the for-profit organisation Nord Anglia Education (NAE). As of 2020, NAE owned 68 schools in 29 countries. The largest concentrations of its schools were in China (11) and the US (10). There were five NAE schools in Switzerland (Nord Anglia Education Inc, 2020). According to its registration with the US Securities and Exchange Commission, the company 'primarily operate[s] in geographic markets with high FDI [foreign direct investment], large expatriate populations and rising disposable income' (Nord Anglia Education Inc, 2015).

Its most recent available filing with the Commission reported a gross profit of \$334 million (£250 million) for the 2016 fiscal year (Nord Anglia Education Inc, 2017). Moody's Investors Service estimated this to grow to \$460 million (£345 million) for the 2019 fiscal year (Moody's Investors Service, 2019). However, Moody's also downgraded NAE's investment rating from stable to negative. It cited two reasons: '(1) the company's strong appetite for inorganic growth; and (2) some inherent uncertainty over the company's ability to sustain its strong margins amid its rapid expansion and slowing macro conditions' (Moody's Investors Service, 2019). Hence, although Beau Soleil made a lot of money for its investors, its future was uncertain.

From this overview, we can induce what the label 'Swiss boarding school' signals. Starting with internationality, these schools are in Switzerland but are not Swiss schools. They are not geared towards educating Swiss students. As we will see in the next two chapters (pages 154 and 198), LAS even positioned its students as tourists in the country. The schools claim international founding stories and teach an international curriculum.

These schools are further distinguished by their economic resources. This refers to both their clientele and the institutions themselves. The vast majority of families at these schools paid full fees, which often ran over 100,000 SFr. per year (£83,000). Meanwhile, the institutions themselves owned and maintained vast properties with wide-ranging amenities.

Finally, the label 'Swiss boarding school' signals being part of a collective group. These schools were in conversation with one another through their prospective students, administrators and membership

organisations. At the same time, this collectivity does not require structural homogeneity. These schools were governed in very different ways.

Understanding to what category of elite schools LAS belongs is critical to my thesis. My overall argument hinges on the notion that LAS is a different kind of elite school than those studied by Kenway et al. (2017). Kenway et al. examined schools informed by the exportation of the English public school model to colonised spaces (page 57). LAS belongs to a different category: Swiss boarding schools. The rest of this chapter explores LAS's particular kind of transnational space within that category, as informed by three circulating images of Switzerland. That space, I argue, significantly shaped LAS students.

A Retreat From the World

Switzerland is often seen as a retreat from the world. As I will show, LAS adopted this image in its marketing materials, presenting itself as a refuge. This created a particular transnational space that attracted young people seeking that refuge. These young people, I demonstrate, were often running away from something in their everyday lives.

As previously discussed, Switzerland cultivated an image of safety and neutrality during colonialism and WWII. In part, this reputation was achieved through explicit marketing. In the interwar period, Swiss tourism materials portrayed the nation as 'a safe, moral destination populated with cooperative, multi-lingual and foreign student-friendly folk' (Swann, 2007, p. 37) – in other words, as a refuge ('a safe, moral destination') full of people who welcome diversity. During WWII, Switzerland added its geographical imagery to this

messaging. According to Zimmer (1998), pictures of the Alps were deployed to signal the nation's natural defences against Hitler's *Heim ins Reich* foreign policy, which meant to convince ethnic Germans abroad that their territories should be incorporated into the state of Germany.

Switzerland's marketing from these eras helped to build the country's modern-day reputation as a space for multinationalism and multiculturalism. As a result, it now hosts high-profile international institutions. These include the UN, the World Trade Organisation, the World Health Organisation and the International Olympic Committee.

LAS marketing materials echoed these notions. For example, its 50th anniversary book constructed the school as a place where political grievances can be forgotten. That text contains seven 'student stories'. One of those narrates an Israeli student's return to LAS after the winter break. She explains that she is unhappy: 'In my country, we are at war against the Arabs and our country expects us to dislike and look down on them. But here at LAS, the Arabs are my best friends.' There is no outcome to this story. It seemingly suggests, in and of itself, that politics did not matter at LAS.

LAS also used its location to paint the institution as a place of safety. The third spread in the school's brochure discusses its location. The first sentence reads, 'Switzerland is a place like no other; one that is safe and welcoming with breath taking scenery, historical cities, and a vibrant culture.' The second sentence reiterates these themes: 'Switzerland has a healthy climate and a safe, stable environment.' Aside from articles, only two words appear twice: 'Switzerland' and 'safety'.

Like Switzerland, LAS leaned on the Alps to construct this image of safety. Its campus was on the highest part of the highest village on its mountain. From there, one looked down over the valley. The 1990 yearbook was even entitled *Above the Rest: Leysin Above the Clouds*, evoking LAS's physical and social separation. Elite education has long been linked to seclusion. Three years after LAS opened, for example, Wilkinson (1964) argued that preparation for public service in Victorian-Edwardian Britain depended on elite schooling in geographical isolation. During that era, at the end of the 19th century, schools in London relocated to rural areas to maintain or enhance their status amongst elite groups (Gamsu, 2016). In the US at the time, elite schools gained stature as places where the established elite could escape from both industrialists and immigrants (Levine, 1980). Today, schools in the UK continue to emphasise their geographic isolation as a symbol of social distinction (Waters & Brooks, 2015).

These images of refuge thus created a transnational space at LAS that was politically and physically isolated. The young men and women I interviewed felt hosted by Switzerland, rather than integrated into it. When I asked whether they felt the school was Swiss, for example, 10 of 19 interviewees said 'no'. They pointed to the school's language offerings – French and Spanish rather than French and either German or Italian – and to having classes on Swiss national holidays. Those who did mention something Swiss highlighted the school's location, rules (being on time), quality of life (clean water and skiing) and/or cafeteria food – although the lattermost was a contested claim. On the whole, however, these young people preferred separation of school and state. As Irina summarised, 'The fact that [LAS is]

located in Switzerland doesn't mean that we have to celebrate every Swiss holiday, or everyone should speak French.'

This kind of transnational space seemed to attract young people who wanted to get away from their everyday lives. Most often, according to my interviews, they sought to escape 'boredom'. They wanted new experiences (Diego, Helena, Magnus, Natalia, Tanya), new freedoms (Emily) and new challenges (Brian). Some wanted to escape a future in their home country (Fredek, Guozhi, Olek, Zahra). One (Luke) wished for a fresh start after struggling at his previous school. Hence, these young people came to LAS seeking the refuge it advertised.

Global Centre of Wealth

One LAS student told me, 'I'm in Switzerland, the country of gold' (Guozhi). Switzerland has become known as a global centre of wealth. In addition to simply hosting the rich, its status as a tax haven protected their fortunes. Practices at LAS reflected this image. While reputedly being one of the most expensive schools in the world, LAS minimised its students' wealth. Doing so, I argue, shaped a transnational space in which being rich was normalised and not being rich was 'othered'.

Switzerland has a wealthy population. In 2019, Swiss adults were the richest in the world, with an average wealth of \$565,000 (£423,000). This average is somewhat misleading, though, given the top-heavy nature of the curve. In 2019, 12% of the population were millionaires (Shorrocks et al., 2019). Around 25,500 multinational companies were headquartered in

Switzerland at the time. In 2018, they created 25-30% of the country's jobs (Davis Plüss, 2018). Switzerland's economy, then, was largely corporate.

Switzerland attracted large companies and rich individuals in part because it was a tax haven. This status referred to its low taxes and strong secrecy laws. Until 2018, Switzerland did not disclose banking activities with third parties. Guex (2000) offers the first comprehensive examination of this policy. He unravels the national myth that banking secrecy arose to protect Jewish valuables from Nazis. Instead, he shows, the policy's roots date to 1910. Switzerland introduced low taxes to compete with banking centres like London and Paris for foreign capital. This, combined with its neutrality during WWI, made the country the 'refuge of choice' for foreign money (Guex, 2000, p. 242). Then, in 1932, French authorities uncovered tax evasion facilitated by Swiss banks. This amounted to 1-2 billion French francs (around £300 million in 2020) in unpaid taxes. France thus filed a series of legal suits against Switzerland, inspiring fear amongst Swiss bankers. According to Guex (2000), it was this fear that led to the Banking Secrecy Act of 1934. In 2018, under international pressure, Switzerland finally began dismantling this Act.

Popular audience books such as *Secrets of Swiss Banking: An Owner's Manual to Quietly Building a Fortune* (Barber, 2008) offer tips on how to capitalise on the country's tax haven status. *Secrets*, for example, calls Switzerland an 'alpine financial oasis' (2008, p. 29). It dedicates an entire section to tax evasion, which is not a crime in Switzerland. Yet, as Urry points out, moving income to avoid taxes is part of the 'dark side to borderlessness' – akin to moving smuggled workers or drugs (2014, p. 227). Avoiding taxes,

he argues, reduces funding for public services and projects, thereby trading democratic ideals for personal financial gain.

Nonetheless, the ability to avoid taxes attracted the wealthy to Switzerland. As Urry also explains, the globally rich sought Switzerland's 'careful paperwork, utter discretion, long-established banks and financial institutions, stable government, good public services, especially transportation, and the asking of no questions and hence no need to tell lies' (2014, p. 229). This allure materialises every year as the World Economic Forum in Davos.

The wealthy's attraction to Switzerland also brings students to LAS. One interviewee went to LAS because 'a lot of [other] Saudis come around here, around Lake Geneva... [it's] famous – famous and nice' (Ahmed). Another interviewee wanted to study in 'the most glamorous [country] ever' (Helena). Yet another transferred to LAS from a school 'in the desert', in Qatar, to study in what he called 'a vacation destination' (Magnus). This reasoning broadly reflects what Waters and Brooks (2011) see as the influence of the media (here, of reputation) in making certain destinations appealing for study abroad.

It also relates to what studying in Switzerland *signals*. In her thesis written at Monash University, Rowe (2014) argues that in Melbourne, middle-class families' class narratives wove into the geographies they choose for schooling. We also see that here. One student, Ya-Hui, explained to me that attending a Swiss boarding school 'makes people feel like you're rich and smart.' Similarly, Irina from Russia said of her experiences in Switzerland, 'The type of people who come here [to Switzerland], they're really rich, right?'

So, people here often see Russians as really rich people. I don't know – strange but it suits.' For both Ya-Hui and Irina, studying in Switzerland announced their identities.

And, in fact, LAS students *were* rich. To make small talk, I asked one young woman which airline she had flown from the US. She replied, 'Oh, miss. I don't fly commercial.' Shopping was extravagant. Students returned from school trips to Geneva with enormous bags from Chanel, Gucci, Louis Vuitton and other luxury brands. One day I found a Louis Vuitton backpack in the dorm's clothing donations pile. In the dorm lounge one evening, two young women talked about shopping. When the topic of shoes came up, one told the other, 'I never buy anything under a thousand. It's just not worth it.' These displays of wealth contrast with other elite groups' strategies of downplaying consumerism and espousing egalitarian values. It has been argued that in New York (Sherman, 2018) and Finland (Kantola & Kuusela, 2019), for example, doing so actually legitimises wealth. At LAS, on the other hand, status was seemingly asserted through what Mears sees as the global elite 'play[ing] out conspicuous consumption' (2020, p. 14).

At the same time, LAS leadership downplayed the wealth of its student body. The rest of this section argues that this posed no material risk to the school's elite status. Instead, I claim, it was a marketing strategy. However, it also engendered a transnational space in which having money was normalised and not having money was othered.

LAS leadership reconstructed the school's history to emphasise its modesty. In the next chapter, I demonstrate that the school linked to an American Cold War elite when it was founded. Yet, during my fieldwork, the

Head of School repeatedly used the word 'humble' to describe LAS's foundations. He would say, for example, 'It was a humble school', or 'It has humble roots.' The Head invoked this narrative during visits with prospective families, all-school assemblies and staff meetings. This seemingly appealed to a meritocratic ideal – the implication being that hard work and dedication over time made LAS what it was.

Moreover, it appeared to construct a particular kind of past that the community was meant to connect to the present. This can be explained through the LAS laundry policy. Students at LAS were required to do their own laundry. An entire section of the student handbook is dedicated to explaining who would teach students how to do laundry⁸ (dormitory staff), what was provided (machines and detergent) and what would be washed for students (bedding). For the younger students, doing laundry was integrated into the so-called 'life skills curriculum'. This laundry policy was often deployed to prove that LAS was not elitist. It was emphasised to visitors and in staff meetings. It was also emphasised to me as a researcher. When I told the Head of School that my academic field was elite studies, he interjected, 'But we're not an elite school. Our students do their own laundry.'

The Head could make this statement because LAS signalled its eliteness in a variety of other ways. In other words, he could afford to be modest because there was no mistaking LAS's elite status. One way the school signalled being elite was through its fees. Another way was through visual cues. Although students wore uniforms, they could accessorise as they

⁸ LAS assumed that they had not done this before.

wished. Over one day of roaming the halls, I observed the following luxury brand items amongst the 96 final year students:

<u>Wristwatch</u>	<u>Shoes</u>	<u>Purse</u>	<u>Bracelet</u>	<u>Backpack</u>
1 Hublot	1 Chanel	2 Chanel	3 Cartier	2 Fendi
1 Omega	3 Gucci	1 Fendi		
1 Piguet	6 Valentino	6 Gucci		
1 Rolex		4 Prada		
1 TAG Heuer		1 Saint Laurent		

These items start at £600 (shoes). The Rolex probably cost around £7000.

Verbally disavowing LAS's elite status thus posed no risk to that status. So, *why* would the Head do that? Research has shown that some elite schools engage with discourses of merit to disavow being elitist (Kenway & Lazarus, 2017). A study of two elite schools in Buenos Aires, for example, found that those schools emphasised students' academic talents (rather than, for instance, financial resources) to rationalise their exclusionary education (Ziegler, 2017). A Singaporean belief in meritocracy likewise arguably prevents criticisms that an elite school in the country reproduces privilege (Koh, 2014a).

At LAS, however, I would suggest that this was a marketing strategy. For her thesis at the Pantheon-Sorbonne University and the University of Lausanne, Bertron (2016a) examined eight anonymised Swiss boarding schools. During her fieldwork, a headmaster told her, 'We are not, as they are sometimes called, elite schools'⁹ (Bertron, 2016b, p. 171). Bertron frames this statement as a Bourdieusian strategy of distinction. She argues that denying

⁹ This seemed to be a common refrain amongst Swiss boarding school leadership. The headmaster at Aiglon, discussed previously, has also claimed that the school is not elite (Nicholas, 2012, para. 11).

the 'elite school' label implies that the institution offers an even richer array of symbolic capital than your run-of-the-mill elite school. LAS leadership may have used a similar marketing tactic to a different end. Highlighting its laundry policy distinguished LAS as the down-to-earth Swiss boarding school – albeit one that still charged 99,000 SFr. per year.

Teachers helped perpetuate this image of LAS. Kenway (2018) describes this phenomenon as an institutional enlistment of teachers to represent school values. Take Kathleen¹⁰, who taught at a state-funded school in rural America before coming to LAS. She told me that students are students, no matter their wealth:

Kids are still the same, when you take away everything. ... There's still that kid who's going to be the class clown. There's still the kid who drives you crazy. There's still going to be the kid who always wants extra work. ... My students [in the US] weren't buying Gucci bags and spending thousands of dollars because they didn't have it ... but when you're in the classroom, all on the same equal playing field, they're the same.

And yet, they are also *not* the same. The stakes of the classroom are arguably higher for a class clown destined for a working-class job than they are for one inheriting a business empire. Seeing students as students whitewashes the privileges of wealth.

The LAS leadership's strategy of downplaying students' vast resources shaped a particular transnational space at the school. Kenway et al. (2017, Chapter 8) argue that ignoring privilege prevents elite young people from grasping that their class position is relational. In other words, when privilege is hidden, so is inequality. This, Kenway et al. argue, creates young people for whom class advantages are normalised. We see something similar at LAS.

¹⁰ This is a pseudonym.

However, at LAS, a space was created in which wealth was normalised and non-wealth was othered.

Such normalisation was exemplified by how one wealthy student saw himself. Luke attended one of the most prestigious and expensive boarding schools in the US prior to LAS. Although he also had a prestigious and expensive address in Manhattan, his parents 'didn't work on Wall Street' and he summered in a 'normal' part of rural Pennsylvania, instead of the usual 'South Hampton or Martha's Vineyard or something like that.' These were things that he felt relevant to tell me when I asked about his background. As a result, Luke continued, he developed a more 'realistic outlook' than his classmates. In other words, at LAS, his vast economic privilege was ordinary.

In addition to wealth being normalised, non-wealth was othered. This is seen in the treatment of scholarship students at LAS. Two students per year group were awarded full financial scholarships from the school. Their LAS education was precarious; they needed to re-apply for a scholarship every year. Sometimes these students had very few resources, such as one from a farming community in Southeast Asia. Often, however, they were part of a global middle class. They were resource-poor in comparison to the typical LAS student but not in comparison to many others.

LAS language framed these scholarships as part of a transactional exchange. Scholarships were not mentioned in the school brochure. They were referenced once on the school website, as a dropdown on the fundraising page encouraging people to donate to the scholarship programme. Under this dropdown, the website stated, 'Our top university applications often come from our scholarship program.' I verified that over the

last five years at LAS, that was true. In essence, then, the school used scholarships to buy a better academic profile.

This makes strategic sense, given that wealthy students seemed to have different priorities. As Irina explained to me about her classmates,

Some of the people choose to study hard and get to the top universities while others are just like, 'Oh, I'm going to graduate with something, go somewhere. My parents have enough money to support me throughout my future life, so I don't need to graduate with a good degree or get a good job. I can just use the resources I already have.'

For her wealthy classmates, university was not the key to a financially comfortable future – family was.

These differences seemed to manifest in how these two groups – wealthy and non-wealthy students – integrated into the school culture. Primarily, the latter group was excluded from it. Sometimes this was implicit. Talking about his classmates, Luke, for example, told me, 'The people who come from these different places come from the same .1%, you know what I mean?' This statement captured some but not all of his classmates. At other times, exclusion was more explicit. Wei, for example, referenced the 'uniform culture' of the school in our interview. He then clarified that the two scholarship students in his year group were not part of it. Ya-Hui reinforced this idea. She told me, 'I had this conversation with my friends about how there's a lot of higher income families – children – here and there's also a few that are not and it's really obvious that they're probably not as happy to be here as the rest.' This spoke to an 'us versus them' mentality. On the one side were the happy and wealthy (including Ya-Hui and her friends); on the other, the unhappy and non-wealthy ('they').

Ya-Hui did not clarify *why* non-wealthy students were not happy at LAS. Luke, however, offered a possible reason. Referring to social class, he explained,

That translates to where kids travel together, who kids hang out with, attitudes towards school... [trailed off]. I think that's a big factor – class. ... The differences are so salient. ... [Even], you know, never eating in the cafeteria and ordering food every night. It just creates separations.

In other words, it was expensive to be socially integrated at LAS. Those who could not afford it were left out of the general milieu. LAS's transnational space thus normalised the rich and 'othered' the less rich.

Associations With the IB

Switzerland is the birthplace and headquarters of the IB. The particular geographical spread of IB schools has been linked to the agendas of individual actors at national, local and school levels (Resnik, 2016). Similarly, how the IB is implemented on the ground also depends on individuals (see, for example, Prosser, 2018). Generally, as a world-recognised curriculum associated with global-mindedness and rigorous coursework, it can expose young people to wider horizons (Resnik, 2009). At the same time, the IB can perpetuate hierarchies through, for example, questions of access (Windle & Maire, 2019). As a result, I suggest, there is no single impact of the IB.

This section explores one way of understanding the IB: as a curriculum that promotes both international mobility and Western hegemony. I interweave these facets of the programme with practices at LAS. This dovetailing, I argue, engendered a transnational space in which students cultivated mindsets of Western mobility.

In 2019, the IB diploma was offered in 2,926 schools in 144 countries (International Baccalaureate, 2019). Forty-six of those schools were in Switzerland. LAS was the first boarding school in the country to introduce the programme, which it did in 1991. At the time of my fieldwork, LAS also offered the US high school diploma. Almost 75% of students in the year group I studied, however, received the full IB diploma. Their average score was one point higher than the worldwide average, out of a total of 45 points.

International Mobility and Western Hegemony

The IB was designed for globally-mobile populations. According to Fitzgerald's (2017) thesis written at Carleton University, histories of the IB are inconsistent. Discrepancies can be found not only across authors but also across works by the same author. However, as Fitzgerald explains, it is widely (if not entirely) agreed that the IB started in the 1960s. It was meant to provide a continuous education to children whose parents' jobs moved them around. Typically, those parents worked as diplomats or at multinational organisations. Thus, in the beginning, the IB aimed to serve families that were already internationally mobile.

However, LAS's experience with the IB suggests that things were more complicated. In 1971, the school applied to the programme. At that time, there were seven schools worldwide that offered the curriculum (International Baccalaureate, 2017). LAS was declined. Renaud (1971, LASC), who would become the second Director General of the IB from 1977-1983, wrote to the school that its 'student body is not truly international.' That student body consisted primarily of overseas Americans. This suggests that the IB intended

to educate not just the internationally mobile, but an international cross-section of that group.

Over time, however, this changed. As the IB gained a reputation for preparing young people to join the global marketplace (Resnik, 2009), local families at state-funded schools in Australia, for example, embraced it as a way to become mobile (Doherty et al., 2009). Local schools caught on. Some in Argentina adopted the programme to appear more globally-oriented, which attracted more families (Prosser, 2016). Others saw this globalism as a threat. In Israel, for example, stakeholders in the state education sector feared that introducing the IB would negatively affect the teaching of local history and culture (Yemini & Dvir, 2016). The IB thus became linked to pursuits of mobility, for better or worse.

LAS finally joined the IB programme when the school was both becoming more international and trying to enrol more international students (page 185). Kenway et al. (2017, p. 139) argue that curriculum contestations reveal 'competing social visions' for an institution. In LAS's historical documents, however, I found little evidence of disagreement over this change. One reason for consensus may be that the IB did not replace the standing US Advanced Placement programme but instead complemented it. Advanced Placement exams were phased out over the next decade. Another reason may be that this transition happened at a time when the percentage of American students at LAS was declining. In other words, unlike Kenway et al.'s schools, LAS was not catering to one nation's elite. Therefore, it was seemingly also not beholden to one national curriculum.

Along with international mobility, another discourse around the IB is of maintaining Western hegemony. One way it arguably does this is by selling an education developed in Europe as globally-prestigious and -advantageous (Maxwell, 2018). The programme comes with a price tag. In 2019, schools paid a £2510 application fee and a £5900 yearly service fee (International Baccalaureate, 2019).

It has been shown that families buy into the value of an IB degree. For middle-class families in the Global South (Gardner-McTaggart, 2016) and Hong Kong (Wright & Lee, 2019), for example, an IB diploma represented new social and economic opportunities. In England, elite families saw the diploma as a way to maintain their children's privilege (Outhwaite & Ferri, 2017). Families in Sweden felt it could both produce and maintain elite status (Börjesson et al., 2016). Hence, an IB diploma has been connected to gaining status in non-European contexts, and to maintaining it in European ones.

Another way the IB arguably maintains Western hegemony is through its Western-centric pedagogy. Its emphasis, for example, on individualism and academic criticality does not always translate to contexts in Asia (Drake, 2004) and Africa (Poonoosamy, 2010). Moreover, although the diploma programme is officially available in 40 languages, the language of instruction is often English. In 2019, the three most frequently-used languages of instruction were English (3011 schools), Spanish (743 schools) and French (115) (International Baccalaureate, 2020) – all European languages. Corli, a South African student at LAS who was raised speaking French, commented on this. She told me, 'We're doing the IB which is technically an *International*

Baccalaureate but we're doing everything in English' (emphasis hers). To her, that was not true internationality.

Cultivating Particular Mindsets

At LAS, these associations of the IB were reflected in students' mindsets of Western mobility. Almost all graduating students in the year group that I studied went on to higher education (one, Magnus, took a gap year). The three most popular destinations were the US (40%), the UK (13%) and Switzerland (12%). I discuss this more in Chapter 9 (page 263). However, it is worth noting here that for many of these students, this meant leaving their home countries to move North and/or West. Americans were the only students whom I interviewed who returned 'home' for university.

Interestingly, the way the IB was implemented at LAS erected one particular barrier to higher education – to public Swiss universities. Of the 11 students who stayed in Switzerland for higher education (the 12%, above), only one attended a public university. The others enrolled at private institutions. LAS offered an IB course that Swiss public universities did not recognise: Environmental Systems and Societies. This course was taught because it was popular with LAS students. It fulfilled the IB's science requirement while being accessible to those not particularly science-oriented. Yet, its existence at LAS also signalled that the school's curriculum was not oriented towards Swiss university requirements. This contrasts with other research on Swiss boarding schools arguing that such institutions link to the Swiss nation (Bertron, 2016b). That was not the case for LAS.

Conclusion

This chapter began by explaining how I understand 'Switzerland'. This constructed state, I claimed, looks opportunistically outward and conservatively inward. I then inductively reasoned what the label 'Swiss boarding school' signals. I examined three Swiss boarding schools in the Lake Geneva area, in relation to LAS. The label, I argued, indicates schools that are international rather than Swiss, economically well-resourced and part of a collective but not structurally-homogenous group. Next, I analysed three circulating images of Switzerland that are nonetheless embedded in practices at LAS. The first was Switzerland's reputation as a retreat from the world. I showed that LAS marketing materials borrowed this language and attracted young people who were looking for such a retreat. The second was Switzerland's status as a global centre for both wealth and tax evasion. Mirroring this, LAS attracted rich families and also downplayed their resources, normalising being rich and 'othering' not being rich. Finally, the third image was around the IB, which started and was still headquartered in Switzerland. Particular associations connect the IB to both international mobility and Western hegemony. At LAS, this was seen in students' mindsets of Western-oriented mobility.

This chapter drew from Ong. Ong (1999) demonstrates that circulating images engender norms, which then produce particular transnational spaces. Using this framework, I investigated Switzerland's reputations as embedded in LAS practices. I argued that this created a particular kind of transnational space. It shaped which young people were attracted to the school, how they

understood themselves and what mindsets they cultivated. In these ways, an LAS education played a significant role in shaping LAS students.

This is a vital component of my overall thesis. LAS is a case of elite schooling. Yet, it is a particular kind of elite school. It is not the same kind of school, for example, as those studied by Kenway et al. (2017). Those authors' school sites grew out of the British public school tradition, exported to the colonies. As a Swiss boarding school, LAS belongs to a different tradition. Moreover, its particular kind of transnationality fostered a unique space for its students. This shaped students' lives in some significant ways; although as we will see later (Chapters 8 and 9), its influence was limited in other ways.

The next chapter turns to LAS's foundation and the first decade of its development. It traces LAS's links to and from the American Cold War elite through the school's first objectives, its founder's biography and its financial considerations. I demonstrate that the LAS leadership's ability to create a particular kind of school was constrained by outside forces. This supports my theory that LAS actors 'interpret' frameworks in ways that work for them.

Chapter 6

A School for the Cold War

Introduction

This chapter analyses LAS from when it was founded in 1961 to the early 1970s. In the first section, I examine American priorities at that time through a discussion of Mills's 'elite' (1956), introduced in Chapter 2 (page 29). I argue that those priorities linked to American Cold War needs. The remaining three sections examine LAS's articulation with those needs. I first explore the school's objectives when LAS was founded. I show that these goals reflected the American social and political climate around the Cold War. Following that, I review the biography of F. Ott, who founded the school. I contend that his life story further placed LAS within the larger narrative of the period. Finally, I investigate the commercial imperatives embedded in LAS's for-profit structure. Tensions between the institution's educational goals and financial needs, I show, ultimately constrained what kind of school LAS could be.

This chapter unveils an uneasy relationship between what an elite school's leadership *aims* to do and what it *needs* to do. To make this point, I draw on Ong's notion of the 'cultural logics' that make things 'thinkable, practicable, and desirable' (1999, p. 5) at an institution. I argue that F. Ott's cultural logics in part reflected his desire to align LAS with broader American Cold War needs. This allowed LAS leadership to recruit the same kind of young people that it claimed to produce. Yet, F. Ott also needed to consider what was financially practicable. This unhinged LAS's alignment between recruitment and production. Gradually, the school's leadership turned to

prospective students whom it did not necessarily want but whom it needed: those who could pay the fees.

This chapter contributes to the overall point of my thesis. While Kenway et al. (2017) argue that principals at their elite school sites ‘choreograph’ class, I demonstrate that the on-the-ground reality at LAS suggests a different kind of process. F. Ott’s desire to educate certain kinds of students was contoured over time by evolving practical considerations. Rather than shaping a particular kind of framework, then, F. Ott needed to dynamically respond to one in ways that worked for LAS. Hence, his ability to bring together particular kinds of young people – and thus, to create a particular kind of class – was limited.

An American Elite

In 1950s and 1960s America, linking to the Cold War conferred elite status. We see this in Mills’s work (1956). As previously discussed (page 29), Mills interrogated the ‘power elite’ of 1950s America. This elite, he argued, comprised those who exercised power over ‘the major institutions of modern society’ (1956, p. 5). They were corporate officers, statesmen and military leaders. Notably, Mills (1956) defined ‘the elite’ by their careers. This group held specific professional positions, not a certain amount of money or a particular social network, though these three categories often interrelate. In fact, Mills showed that the shared social backgrounds and networks of his elite allowed them to coordinate decisions amongst themselves (1956, pp. 19–20). Mills’s framing of the elite was and continues to be influential.

Mills's theory was inspired by the American public's acceptance of the Cold War (Davis & Williams, 2017). He thus homed in on arenas related to the Cold War: the economy, the government and the military. To help unpack this, I offer a very brief description of the Cold War. The war was ostensibly a stand-off between two superpowers, the US and the USSR, that emerged from WWII. According to Saull (2007), there are two reigning accounts of the Cold War: one that focuses on the conflicting military and economic interests of those superpowers, and one that focuses on their conflicting domestic ideologies. Saull, however, convincingly argues for a third. He suggests that 'the Cold War was a form of global social conflict associated with the revolutionary and communist consequences – in the form of political movements and states – of a shifting, contradictory and uneven capitalist development' (2007, p. 1). It is this understanding that I adopt, particularly since international capitalism is a critical part of LAS's story moving forward.

Mills's trifecta of the economy, the government and the military reflected the three prongs of US policy at the time – what Saull describes as 'leadership of the capitalist world, geopolitical containment of the USSR, and the containment and rollback of international revolution' (2007, p. 152). In other words, the US pursued multiple aims through its Cold War policies. Those aims were about both curbing the USSR and communism, and becoming a (capitalist) world leader, politically and economically. Saull (2007) argues that from 1947 to the 1970s, US economic and military policy complemented one another. Hence, Mills's power elites were aligned.

That Mills located these elites within Cold War priorities speaks to the primacy of the War. Other sectors also held power in this era. The American

justice system, for example, began dismantling racial segregation – including at elite schools (Purdy, 2018). The media also played an influential role in daily life. This is not to suggest that Mills *should* have chosen a different lens onto power, only that he *could* have. In other words, the reigning focus of the day seemed to be on the Cold War.

Importantly for this thesis, educational institutions were implicated in Cold War concerns. They were even integrated into foreign policy. Looking to expand American influence abroad, US President John F. Kennedy created the Peace Corps in 1961. In response to the Cold War, university academics had lobbied for such a programme, which sent US citizens overseas to help the developing world (Peterson, 2011). The Peace Corps thus linked the American educational system to the federal government. Kennedy's administration also passed the Fulbright-Hays Act in 1961. This placed international educational exchange programmes under the purview of the US Department of State. Then, the International Education Act of 1966 started, expanded and better funded various international educational activities. Effectively, it 'placed education at the very heart of our relations with the nations and the peoples of the rest of the world' (Butts, 1969, p. 34). Education thus became a core pillar of US foreign policy.

In parallel, American education in the 1960s became increasingly integrated with the military. Domestically, scientists shaped a new science curriculum for secondary schools in response to the Cold War environment (Rudolph, 2002). Internationally, American schools abroad proliferated. By 1969, the US Department of State sponsored 129 schools in 83 countries. The US Department of Defense sponsored another 312 schools in 27

countries. Together, these institutions enrolled almost 185,000 students (Brembeck, 1969).

LAS was part of this landscape, as an American school abroad and particularly as one started by someone (F. Ott) who worked for the US military, as I later explain. However, LAS's location was an inconvenient one. This had been anticipated. One LAS Board report noted, 'It was definitely foreseen that difficulties would be encountered in adapting American standards and practices in school operation to legal requirements, customs, and environment of Switzerland' (Board Report, 1964, LASC). Five years after LAS's opening, these difficulties were enumerated by the Board:

... recruitment, selection and adjustment of American staff; labor shortages and recently enacted laws curtailing employment of foreigners; language and communication difficulties; cantonal requirements pertaining to the operation of schools in general and of private schools in particular; official pressure that business management be in the hands of a Swiss, preferable a Vaudois; the sharp rise in food and other costs; the many legal ordinances to which non-Swiss are subject. (Progress Report, 1966, LASC)

Yet, F. Ott persisted with setting up the school.

He seemingly did this because Switzerland offered material advantages. The canton (Vaud) had granted the school five tax-free years from the time of its incorporation (Board Report, 1964, LASC). The Board also considered the country 'perhaps Europe's best and most favored location for educational institutions such as ours' (Progress Report, 1966, LASC). There is no further explanation as to *why* that is. However, an earlier letter from members of the planning committee noted, 'The location of our school, and the educational program we will be offering, appear to be a much desired answer to the needs of an ever increasing number of American families at home and abroad' (F. Ott, Ward & Schäfer, 1960, LASC). Thus, LAS was set

up abroad to serve American families, despite that not being an easy task, because doing so filled a need.

It is against this backdrop that LAS came into being. Over the next two sections, I demonstrate LAS's links to American Cold War priorities through its objectives and its founder's biography. Following that, I show that financial concerns challenged this alignment. As a result, LAS ultimately could not be the kind of school that F. Ott intended to create.

The Objectives of the School

A school's mission statement articulates its envisioned purpose and value (Bittencourt & Willetts, 2018). LAS's first objectives were printed on a pamphlet announcing the opening of the school. This signals their centrality to the school's identity and marketing. I did not find information about the provenance or draft language of these objectives. Therefore, discussions or disagreements behind them are unclear. Their final version, however, illuminates how LAS leadership intended to position the school:

To provide youth, by a synthesis of best American and European pedagogic means, with effective tools to carve successful careers.

To guide youth, by quality in education, toward a cultural aristocracy within the framework of responsible citizenship.

To inspire youth, in the free atmosphere of an incomparably beautiful country, with ideals for lives of useful service.
(Opening Announcement, before 1961, LASC)

The objectives spoke to (a) creating elite professionals, (b) serving the American nation and (c) the touristic nature of an education abroad. With such undertones, they connected LAS to American Cold War needs.

The First Objective

The first objective was 'To provide youth, by a synthesis of best American and European pedagogic means, with effective tools to carve successful careers.' This suggested that an LAS education would produce elite professionals, recalling Mills's focus on a power elite defined by their careers.

During the Cold War, a direct path from education to a career was seen as critical in the US. The US government wanted American schools to produce future leaders who would win the war. This was in part due to an increased demand for such leaders, as the national government was expanding (Potter, 1962). It was also due to a decreasing supply. Young people graduating from prestigious secondary schools in the US were losing interest in government roles (Saveth, 1988). Seeing this, Henry Commager warned the nation to 'tilt the balance [from the private sector] back to public enterprise' (1961, p. 668). This could be accomplished, he suggested, by engendering 'in the young an avid sense of duty and of civic virtue' (1961, p. 670). In other words, schools were put on the frontline of creating future civil servants.

F. Ott, LAS's founder to whom I return in the next section, was a part of this landscape. He opened schools abroad for the US military. He also compared LAS to the prestigious American secondary schools mentioned above (Progress Report, 1966, LASC), seemingly envisioning them as LAS's peer group. That those schools were not preparing their students to serve the American nation may have helped F. Ott imagine LAS's market niche as a school that *was*.

LAS was advertised as an American school linking to this Cold War emphasis on careers to families that were already living that notion. The school leadership sent marketing materials to US firms with overseas business offices, US embassies and governmental agencies abroad (Board Report, 1960, LASC) – in other words, to Mills’s business, government and military professionals. Moreover, the leadership created a fee structure that made the school affordable primarily to those groups. In 1961, when the median income of US families was \$5,700 (Bureau of the Census, 1963), LAS charged \$1,980 per year (Catalogue, 1965, LASC). Both the US Department of State and multinational companies, however, subsidised boarding school fees for the children of overseas employees. The State Department, for example, offered an allowance of \$1,200 in 1961 (Board Minutes, 1968, LASC). Families connected to the US government therefore paid \$780 out-of-pocket for an LAS education, which was less than half the advertised cost.

The LAS student body reflected these recruitment and fee strategies. In 1963, it was 97% American, though drawn from 30 countries (Board Report, 1963, LASC). In the 1963 yearbook, 98 of 110 students listed their home address. Of those, 34 were ‘in care of’ an organisation. Over half of the 34 organisations were diplomatic efforts (seven US embassies, eight US governmental organisations and four non-governmental organisations), over one third were commercial enterprises (seven oil companies and six assorted others), one was a university, and one was a military base. This means that LAS recruited from a Millsian elite while also proposing to create one.

The Second Objective

The second objective was 'To guide youth, by quality in education, toward a cultural aristocracy within the framework of responsible citizenship.' This emphasised that the professionals whom LAS would produce (objective one) would serve their country.

The notion of a 'cultural aristocracy' echoed an idea of Thomas Jefferson, Founding Father and former President of the US (1801-1809). Jefferson believed in producing a 'natural aristocracy' by educating young people for future American leadership (Cappon, 1959). At the time LAS was founded, a 'cultural aristocracy' may have further called to mind 'the best and the brightest' (Halberstam, 1969, 1993). This phrase referred to the intellectual elite recruited to advise US President Kennedy on foreign policy. Both of these notions tied education to US government leadership.

At LAS, the idea of linking students to government service was also put into practice. In 1963, for example, Roger Tubby gave the school's graduation speech (Yearbook, 1963, LASC). He was the US Representative to the European Office of the United Nations. The 1964 yearbook was dedicated to US President Kennedy, who was assassinated earlier that school year. Two American ambassadors to Switzerland visited the school in 1969 and 1970 (Yearbook, 1969, 1970, LASC).

The graduation speaker in 1964 illuminates LAS's links not only to government service but also to a Millsian conception of that. The speaker was W. True Davis, Jr., US Ambassador to Switzerland (Yearbook, 1964, LASC). As Ambassador, Davis was in close contact with LAS. The next year, for example, the *Stars and Stripes* American military newspaper reported a

scandal¹¹ at the school (Leetch, 1965, LASC). This prompted a phone call from one of Davis's staffers to learn more about the situation (S. Ott, 1965, LASC). However, Davis may have spoken at graduation as a relative of a graduating student. One student's family name was Davis, though the first name does not match those of Davis's children.

Davis exemplified a Millsian elite in that he was not a career diplomat. In his obituary, *The Washington Post* described him as a 'multimillionaire businessman' (Barnes, 2003, para. 4). The article re-reported his comments from 1972 about being chosen as Ambassador to Switzerland: 'Kennedy felt that economic intelligence flowed more freely between companies than between countries, and he wanted me for my international connections' (Barnes, 2003, para. 5). Davis was thus both corporate officer and statesman.

However, a number of LAS students already embodied this link. As alluded to previously, 14% of students in 1963 listed their home residence as either an American embassy or US governmental organisation. Echoes of American government policies also slipped into the yearbooks. The 1966 yearbook, for example, pictured a student speaking at a podium with an American flag in the background. The photograph was captioned, 'There are exactly 57 -- known Communists in this school!' (Yearbook, 1966, LASC). This apparent joke¹² depended on the audience's familiarity with McCarthyism in the US in the 1950s – when Senator McCarthy investigated what he saw as communists' infiltration of the US government. LAS students were thus in tune

¹¹ The sitting headmaster was arrested for fraud and forgery. This will be discussed in a later section.

¹² This section of the yearbook paired amusing captions with school photos, so one can assume that this statement was meant to be funny.

with the language of the American government, even equating the school with that government.

This means that LAS leadership apparently aimed to produce the same kinds of subjects from which it recruited. It hoped to create professionals who would serve the American nation, even creating links between students and members of a Millsian elite. At the same time, many LAS students' parents already did this. There was thus an alignment between the school leadership's production goals and recruitment strategies.

The Third Objective

Finally, the third objective was: 'To inspire youth, in the free atmosphere of an incomparably beautiful country, with ideals for lives of useful service.'

Referencing the beauty of Switzerland associated LAS with notions of tourism. That students could be visitors (rather than immigrants) suggested that they could also retain their American allegiances (rather than developing Swiss loyalties).

Switzerland has a long tradition of touristic advertising. In the 17th and 18th centuries, for example, visiting Switzerland was the prerogative of the British upper classes, on their Grand Tours of the continent (Tissot, 1995). Then, the rise of guidebooks, railways and travel agencies from 1850-1914 moulded the country into a touristic destination for both middle- and upper-class British travellers (Tissot, 1995).

At LAS, adopting Switzerland's touristic resonances was intentional. The pamphlet that stated the school's objectives also listed the first Board of Directors. On this Board sat the founder of the school, an American financial

manager, a figure in international relations and two men steeped in the Swiss tourism industry (Opening Announcement, before 1961, LASC). A connection to tourism thus wove through the initial fabric of the school.

One of those two men was Hunziker. He was the head of a new seminar for tourism at the University of St. Gallen and co-founder of the International Association of Scientific Experts in Tourism. Two years after LAS opened, he also started the International Bureau of Social Tourism. Hunziker had worked to convert Leysin, LAS's village, from a resort for tuberculosis patients into a tourist destination (Schumacher, 2002). To this end, he established the tourism company *Leysintours* in 1956 (Memo, 1974, LASC). This company rented LAS's first building to the school and even bought shares in it (Board Report, 1960, LASC). As will be described later in this chapter, LAS was a for-profit shareholder school.

This rental arrangement came about through the second Board member connected to tourism: Tissot. Tissot was a hotelier and entrepreneur who worked with Hunziker at *Leysintours* (Board Report, 1960, LASC). He approached S. Ott in 1960 with a potential real estate deal in Leysin. At the time, she was running a summer camp there. According to the family biography, S. Ott thought about the possibility of a school when she saw the building (S. Ott & K.S. Ott, 2017, p. 150, LASC). Hence, both the school's initial physical space and part of its financing were tied to the tourism industry.

It was an intentional choice to forge these connections. According to a letter between members of the school's planning committee, Hunziker and Tissot were brought onto the Board for their expertise in 'Swiss education, economics and tourism' (F. Ott et al., 1960, LASC). This decision had

precedent. As previously mentioned (page 119), in the early 20th century, Swiss tourism materials were produced in collaboration with the Swiss Private Schools' Association. These materials 'defined, idealised and commodified the educational product', meaning educational institutions (Swann, 2007, p. 37). As I explain, this filtered down to LAS students' mindsets, the LAS atmosphere and the school's relationship to its wider environment.

LAS students took to their positioning as tourists. In 1966, for example, the yearbook dedication read, 'Uncle Sam wishes to remind you of and thank you for the many gay times when this tiny American community "traveled" through new experiences to a deeper understanding of other people and their customs.' A two-page spread in that same yearbook was entitled, 'We learn to live with the Swiss', distinguishing between 'we' and 'the Swiss'. Students portrayed themselves as moving *through* their host country, rather than integrating *into* it.

The atmosphere at LAS also retained an American spirit. Photographs in the 1965 yearbook show an American flag in the headmaster's office. They also picture American and Swiss flags flying side-by-side outside the school's entrance. According to the 1968 yearbook, both American and Swiss flags hung against a wall at graduation. In the 1971 yearbook, a student is pictured with an American flag wrapped around him. The 'Sports' section of that yearbook opens with a photograph of a young man with an American flag patch on his jeans and an American football in his hand, though this was not a school-sponsored sport. Thus, campus visuals were clearly American.

Finally, the LAS leadership did not seem to cultivate relationships with either its community or nearby schools. In 1968, a Board document described

the school as 'a very marked island within the Leysin Community' (Progress Report, 1968, LASC). Although it suggested rectifying this position through local community service events and public concerts, these ideas never resurfaced in the surviving documents. Moreover, in our interview, S. Ott framed the school as an outsider amongst other educational institutions. She recalled, 'We met some of [the other] school directors ... we worked with them in that way, but it wasn't a strong relationship.' Because LAS was American, she felt, 'we were absolutely dependent on ourselves for everything ... the operation was actually from scratch.' LAS thus represented a bubble of American schooling in Switzerland.

Framing students as tourists may have been a strategic move. It implied that these young people could retain their American identity while being educated in another country. In this way, LAS leadership overcame the paradox of marketing a school as serving the American nation, abroad.

Taken together, LAS's founding objectives thus aligned the school with American interests at the time. They first linked to an American Cold War focus on careers, then claimed to create professionals who would serve the nation and finally reassured prospective families that this could be carried out overseas. This cohesion across the objectives seems to have fostered a unified cultural logic (Ong, 1999, p. 5). It brought together the groups from which LAS recruited (those connected to US initiatives abroad), the public figures who visited the school (US diplomats), the optics of the school (American flags and footballs) and students' language (around McCarthyism and tourism). Hence, it aligned the LAS leadership's stated goals with its students' lived experiences.

The Founder

In *Class Choreographies*, Kenway et al. (2017, Chapter 5) explore the primary role of school principals and, moreover, their biographies in positioning educational institutions. As actors who mould their schools, their students and their own performative identities, Kenway et al. argue, principals are ‘the chief choreographers of class’ (2017, p. 108). With this significance in mind, this section examines the life story of LAS founder F. Ott. It primarily draws from the Ott family biography and from F. Ott’s CV. For a critical discussion of these sources, please see pages 90-91. I here argue that F. Ott’s personal and professional history linked LAS to the American Cold War.

Public documents and personal letters place F. Ott as the founder of LAS.¹³ He is named the Chairman of the Planning Committee and the Executive Director of the school’s shareholder company, discussed in the next section. The 1968 yearbook describes F. Ott as LAS’s ‘founder and chairman’. A personal letter addressed to him further recounts ‘when you planted the seed after briefing us of your plans [for the school] in 1959’ (Wagner, 1974, LASC). Despite being the architect of LAS, F. Ott was absent from its daily life. He and his wife, S. Ott, did not move to Leysin until 1966 – five years after LAS opened. I later explain why. Yearbooks before 1979 only mention the two in the context of their handing out diplomas. This suggests that F. Ott was not involved in running the school’s everyday affairs.

As a result, there were so-called ‘headmasters’ who ran day-to-day school operations. Internal reports suggest that they held little influence over

¹³ For a discussion of why I do not focus on F. Ott’s wife, see page 86.

the broader direction of the school (i.e., F. Ott, 1973a, LASC). This is supported by rapid turnover in the position. LAS went through 10 headmasters in its first 10 years. The first headmaster, Davies, resigned before the 1961 school year began; Kennedy¹⁴ replaced him (Board Report, 1961, LASC). She was then replaced in January 1962 by Kruglak (Yearbook, 1963, LASC), who was then replaced by Parsons for the 1963 academic year (Yearbook, 1964, LASC). In 1964, Martinez took over the position (Yearbook, 1965, LASC). In 1966, he was arrested for fraud and forgery, to which I come back later. The position was handed over to Arnold mid-year (Yearbook, 1966, LASC). In 1968, Semonite became headmaster 'after the unexpected departure of Mr. Charles H Minnick in the spring of the year' (Yearbook, 1968, LASC). For the 1969 cycle, a new headmaster was hired but then resigned. Semonite stepped in for the rest of the year. Another new headmaster then started the 1970 academic year (Annual Report, 1970, LASC).

Such turnover signals that the everyday leadership of the school lacked continuity. As a result, although F. Ott was not physically present, his ideas would have been the consistent ones. I now turn to his story.

According to his CV, F. Ott was born in the German-speaking region of Basel, Switzerland on 28 August 1914. In 1925, his family migrated to New York City. Just four years later, the Great Depression hit. F. Ott's father's business folded and the family moved to Saskatchewan, Canada. There, in 1931, F. Ott attended a private boarding school for his final year of secondary education. This seemed to be his first exposure to boarding schools.

¹⁴ Kennedy is the only female headmaster in the history of LAS. It is unclear what official title she was given – she is referred to simply as 'Mrs Kennedy' in the documents. Male headmasters, however, were also just referred to as 'Mr'.

F. Ott then earned a university degree in the US, in Germanistics and Philosophy. During this time, he studied abroad at the University of Basel. In his CV, between mentions of his university extra-curricular activities (the arts and journalism) and his academic merits, is the comment, 'In Germany during the early Nazi period, Fred was harassed for his outspoken anti-Nazi sentiments.' This statement's ad hoc placement suggests a desire for it to appear somewhere, rather than for it to provide relevant context.

It seems that F. Ott wanted to assure readers that although he was a German-speaker and -scholar, he was not a Nazi sympathiser. Stories similar to the statement above appear in a number of school marketing materials. For example, one story recounts F. Ott's encounter with Nazis at a German tavern in 1934. He told them that his favourite cultural figures were a Jewish composer and a Jewish writer. He was apparently then kicked out of the tavern. This story is retold in the family biography, the 2011 yearbook and the school's 50th anniversary book. Going even further, the family biography hypothesises that F. Ott's father helped British spies during WWI. This frames active opposition to German hostilities as a family affair. Such tales and, moreover, what they convey, contribute to how F. Ott constructed an image of being 'a fiercely patriotic American who loathed Nazism' (S. Ott & K.S. Ott, 2017, p. 102, LASC).

This image was also part of F. Ott's day-to-day life. For example, LAS's document collection houses numerous papers written in German. Most of those are letters written to F. or S. Ott. Yet, I found none penned by F. Ott. He wrote English responses to German letters. In one letter to a German national, F. Ott apologised for writing in English. 'I am finding it increasingly

more difficult to write in German,' he explained (F. Ott, 1975, LASC). F. Ott thus distanced himself from his linguistic roots even in everyday practices.

This distancing must be understood in its historical context. After university, F. Ott completed a master's degree in Educational Administration in the US. He then worked as a secondary school principal from 1938-39 and a junior college instructor from 1939-42. In early December 1941, Pearl Harbor was bombed and America entered WWII. According to the family biography, F. Ott was then asked by his boss whether he was a Communist or a Nazi. He was told, 'In our school and city, we worry about you!' (S. Ott & K.S. Ott, 2017, p. 79, LASC). To protect his job and reputation, F. Ott 'composed and presented' a pageant entitled *I Pledge Allegiance* (S. Ott & K.S. Ott, 2017, p. 79, LASC). This took place within weeks of Germany and the US declaring war on each other. Although the family biography does not discuss the pageant's reception, it is perhaps telling that F. Ott left his job the following year.

In 1942, F. Ott became the Director of Education at the Washington State Penitentiary. He held this position until 1944, at which point he was drafted into the war.¹⁵ He was first assigned to a Prisoner of War camp in the US for captured German troops. Then, after May 1945, he was transferred to the Office of Military Government for Germany. This means that, in the span of just a few years, F. Ott was a native German speaker first in WWII America and then in the US armed forces in Germany.

¹⁵ Various Board documents label F. Ott as a US citizen. A note attached to his CV also references his acquiring American citizenship. This note suggests, 'Mention when and why he became an American citizen' (CV, 1985, LASC). To me, this remains unclear.

F. Ott was discharged in 1947. According to the family biography, he began looking for work that was 'educational and touristic' in nature. He also hoped to take advantage of American money flowing into Europe (S. Ott & K.S. Ott, 2017, p. 105, LASC). The Fulbright Act of 1946, for example, financed international educational exchange programmes, while the Marshall Plan of 1947 invested American capital in the recovering continent. F. Ott started a service connecting Swiss boarding schools with Americans posted abroad. Through this, he would have built a market-based understanding of overseas Americans' interest in Swiss schools. In 1951, he closed this service. Surviving documents do not explain why.

That same year, F. Ott took a job as Director of Plans and Programs for the Dependent Schools of the US Air Force. He was in charge of Europe, North Africa and the Near East. The US government started this programme in 1946, after the military allowed servicemen to bring their families abroad. These schools employed American teachers to educate American children in an American curriculum. In his role, F. Ott planned and established elementary and secondary schools abroad. Perhaps this contributed to his own vision for such a school.

F. Ott remained in this position until 1966, when he and S. Ott moved to Leysin. This means that he planned and opened LAS in 1961 while still working for the US military, planning and opening *its* schools. In a letter to an early shareholder, F. Ott and other planning committee members described having 'discuss[ed] our plan with well-qualified educational administrators and professional advisors' in Washington, D.C. and New York City (F. Ott et al., 1960, LASC). Conceivably, F. Ott tapped his professional contacts through

the military to make these connections. Additionally, as mentioned previously, S. Ott noted in our interview that LAS was the only American school in the area when it opened. F. Ott must have been aware of this, given his consultancy and military jobs.

Significantly, then, F. Ott opened his own profit-making school (explained in the next section) that benefitted from US State Department subsidies for boarding school fees (discussed in the previous section) while still employed by the US government. Moreover, he seemed to use contacts from his job to do this. While the ethics of this may be questionable today, internal documents from the time did not flag this arrangement.

There were, however, tensions that arose from differing opinions of the US and its military. Although LAS leadership aimed to serve American needs, the school was still located in another country and continent. Some members of that leadership team came from the local environment. They did not always share F. Ott's American-centric perspective. One example is Schäfer. He was a German member of the school's planning committee and a shareholder who would later become President of the Board.

In 1964, Schäfer wrote to S. Ott expressing his concern about the school's directors and, particularly, about F. Ott's connection to the US military. This stemmed from Schäfer's opinion of Americans in general: 'The American cannot bring himself around to ask any advice of any non-American, American ways of doing things are better than anything elsewhere. You will find this anywhere in politics abroad or at home or wherever you may look' (Schäfer, 1964, LASC). Schäfer continued his letter with a personal note about upcoming holidays and family. He then closed by commenting on a

memo from F. Ott: 'Fritz is using a rather militant tone there which fills me a little with dismay especially because everyone knows that he is attached to the military through his job' (Schäfer, 1964, LASC).¹⁶ This letter thus both derided the American 'way of doing things' and reprimanded F. Ott for *his* way of doing things, highlighting tensions within the school governance.

F. Ott's story is therefore one of an American immigrant who embodied patriotic citizenship. He joined the US military, distanced himself from his native language and even started an American school in his home country. LAS's 'cultural logic' (Ong, 1999, p. 5), noted in the previous section, thus also reflected the life history and values of its founder. The values of the school's everyday community thereby aligned with those of its overarching leadership. In these ways, F. Ott can be seen as a 'chief choreographer of class' (Kenway et al., 2017, p. 108). I would, however, highlight that he, too, is choreographed. His cultivated and performed identities were contoured by the concerns of the day.

Financial Needs

The final section of this chapter examines the commercial imperatives woven into the fabric of LAS. I analyse the school's competing educational goals and financial obligations, and how this tension played out over time. I also investigate the evolving friction amongst stakeholders, including Board members, shareholders, staff and students. Ultimately, I argue, practical

¹⁶ In fact, by the end of the decade, a military historian would observe that 'the line between soldier and civilian [in the US] has become even more blurred than in Europe; almost a hybrid mind has resulted' (Barnett, 1969, p. 212).

financial needs circumscribed F. Ott's ability to make LAS the kind of school he wanted it to be.

F. and S. Ott did not have enough personal financial capital to open LAS on their own (S. Ott & K.S. Ott, 2017, p. 151, LASC). As a result, F. Ott created a shareholder's association to run the school. The Leysin American Schools Société Anonyme (LASSA), as it was called, was incorporated on 9 July 1960. It had a basic capital of 350,000 SFr. (about 1.4 million SFr. / £1.2 million in 2020), which was divided into 350 shares (Articles, 1960, LASC). These were sold to 26 different shareholders. According to the Articles of Incorporation, Americans had to hold at least 60% of the shares. This clause was apparently meant to preserve the American spirit of the institution.

However, this sentiment also engendered logistical issues. For example, American shareholders encountered problems when preparing their US taxes. The Ott's' advice was to hire a tax expert (S. Ott, 1968d, LASC). American shareholders also complained about receiving financial reports in German (Kennedy, 1966, LASC; Bruggeman, 1966, LASC). According to one letter from a Board member, Swiss law required that official records be kept in either French or German. As 'over 60% of shareholders' understood German, that was the language elected (de Mercurio, 1966, LASC). S. Ott wrote another letter eight months later, stating that LASSA could not afford to hire a certified translator to translate the documents into English (S. Ott, 1966, LASC). However, there seems to have been confusion around the question of language. According to a letter from a local notary, official documents should have been in French or English (Ansermoz, 1968, LASC).

Having American shareholders thus presented a number of difficulties and yet was prioritised. Perhaps the Otts thought that Americans inherently believed in the worth of an American education. This would have made Americans the most desirable investors.

Sometimes this worked as intended. For example, in a letter to the Board of Directors, an American shareholder expressed concern that the business director held too much authority over academic matters (Strasburg, 1964, LASC). It is unclear what prompted this letter but soon thereafter the business director's title was changed from 'Directeur de Société' ['Company Director'] to 'Directeur administrative' ['Administrative Director'] (de Mercurio, 1965, LASC). This narrowed the scope of the role.

At other times, however, this logic did not work. Simply being American did not always translate into prioritising LAS's educational values over its financial profits. As a group, in fact, American shareholders were characterised as motivated by capital gains. In a shareholder meeting in 1964, for instance, F. Ott announced that 'the majority of American stockholders are mainly interested in dividends.' F. Ott was pushing his own agenda with this statement. He was trying to shore up support for financially-driven decisions. A Swiss board member, however, pushed back. She stated that she 'would like to see a good school' first, and dividends second (Shareholders Meeting, 1964, LASC).

Although F. Ott's comment above had personal motivations, he was also under pressure from some American shareholders to deliver dividends. In 1966, for example, an American shareholder living in New York City wrote to F. Ott, 'It will be to your advantage to think in terms of your investors before

using such monies that may be due investors for further expansion' (Bruggeman, 1966, LASC). This tug-of-war between educational and financial priorities characterised much of LAS's early internal documentation.

This tension was exacerbated by financial losses. Those losses started as early as 1963. That year, LASSA opened the American College of Switzerland (ACS), a two-year programme of higher education. Because some secondary school graduates had applied to LAS, F. Ott thought there would be a market for post-secondary schooling (Progress Report, 1966, LASC). Only 45 students enrolled at ACS in its first year. This caused a financial loss of 56,000 SFr. (199,000 SFr. / £165,000 in 2020; Annual Report, 1966, LASC).

During this time, the headmaster of LAS was also defrauding the bank. This came to light in 1965, when losses had already totalled over 130,000 SFr. (461,000 SFr. / £382,000 in 2020; Annual Report, 1966, LASC). At least one shareholder held the Board responsible for this. The Board did not, he wrote, exercise 'proper financial controls' (Kruglak, 1965, LASC). With the benefit of hindsight, we see that there were clues to mismanagement. In 1963, the bank transferred funds without the required signatures. This led the Secretary of the Board to request that he no longer be a signatory for LASSA (McCausland, 1963, LASC). In 1964, over 300,000 SFr. were 'transferred without the proper authority' (McCausland, 1964, LASC). In 1965, a number of cheques were 'lost' (Board Minutes, 1965, LASC). It was as a result of this situation that F. and S. Ott finally moved to Leysin in 1966.

Though LASSA managed to turn a profit for the first time in 1965 (Board Minutes, 1966, LASC), relations between shareholders and the Board

had clearly become tense. In 1968, for example, the shareholder Strasburg demanded greater financial transparency from the Board. Strasburg was an American living in Wiesbaden, Germany. According to his letterhead, he was the General Manager of the Investors Planning Corporation of America, International Division. In other words, he was a financial professional. Strasburg complained that annual or biannual updates from the Otts were 'inadequate to major shareholders (me)'. He then enumerated 13 financial questions. These ranged from enrolment numbers to detailed account information, such as, 'Where is the 637,240 SF being held, at what rate, and for how long has the bulk of it been there and is it planned to keep it there?' (Strasburg, 1968a, LASC).

This letter started a chain of correspondence. In her capacity as Secretary of the Board, S. Ott responded a week later (S. Ott, 1968a, LASC). Unsatisfied, Strasburg wrote back to request further clarification. He highlighted that S. Ott did not answer his question about the 22,415 SFr. charged to 'Board of Trustees Expenses' (Strasburg, 1968b, LASC). S. Ott then replied not with details but with general assurances that the accounts 'have been reviewed by the auditor and passed as "in order" by both Board of Trustees and General Assembly of Shareholders.' Later in the letter, she reiterated this ('I can again only assure you that the auditor found no irregularities') (S. Ott, 1968b, LASC). Strasburg then responded again, defending his inquiries: 'I am not accusing, understand me well; I want clarification, that is all. ... The figures do not tally. I want them broken down carefully' (Strasburg, 1968c, LASC).

S. Ott sent a copy of her intended reply, the final letter I found in this series, to LASSA's attorney. She expressed frustration that Strasburg 'thinks' he 'has the right ... to know in detail how funds are dispersed.' In this letter, she included a breakdown of the Management Account but not the Board's expenses. S. Ott provided such details 'this time only... as a favor' (S. Ott, 1968c, LASC). The attorney was asked to review, sign and mail the letter if he found it appropriate.

This exchange is an insightful one. It reveals shareholder doubt in the Board's ability to manage company finances. It also exposes questions around the Board's personal use of shareholder-backed funds (i.e., the charge to the Board of Trustees expense account). The exchange also shows that S. Ott, on behalf of the Board, did not trust shareholders with detailed financial information. She was displeased that a shareholder would even ask for it. Both parties – shareholders and the Board – thus appeared to be invested in LASSA despite one another, not because of one another.

From 1970 onwards, this mutual distrust intensified. Shareholders felt marginalised. In writing to F. Ott, for example, Strasburg evoked the past – a time when '(before the schools made any money) we shared in nearly all the major decisions, we discussed nearly everything before and after.' This appeal to nostalgia was part of a campaign to end what Strasburg saw as F. Ott's 'unilateral' decision-making (Strasburg, 1970, LASC). In a meeting, another shareholder declared feeling 'like a strawman' when voting (General Assembly, 1970, LASC). Grievances were also aired to the wider community. According to a memo written by F. Ott, the President of the Board made 11

public statements that portrayed F. Ott as acting independently of the Board and the shareholders (Memo, 1970, LASC).

This led to the first of many steps taken over time to keep LAS control within the Ott family. On the one hand, F. Ott downplayed this incident. In an official memo, he called one of the statements 'a rather pathetic appeal' (Memo, 1970, LASC). On the other hand, he also took new measures to control the narrative. He first declared that internal disagreements must remain internal (Memo, 1970, LASC). He then hired his son, K.S. Ott, as LASSA Business Manager. In part, this was a matter of timing. K.S. Ott had just finished his PhD and was looking for a job. Also in part, however, it seemingly doubled as a means to keep issues not just within the company but also within the family.

Tensions between shareholders and the Board continued. At a meeting in 1971, Strasburg was blocked from bringing up a topic that was not on the agenda. Resulting from this incident, the following meeting was described as 'traumatic' in the official record (General Assembly, 1972, LASC). In a later letter to the President of the Board, Strasburg assessed the meeting as 'the logical and inevitable result of abuse of the shareholders – and the Board – by the Otts, as well as of the failure by the Board to control effectively their unilateral and arbitrary management policies' (Strasburg, 1972, LASC).

Shareholders then tried to regain control. Two months later, six shareholders demanded a signed and notarised agreement from F. and S. Ott stating that the two would not, at any time, represent more than 33% of votes (including proxies) at a General Assembly (Eickhoff, 1972, LASC). Judging from the document collection, however, this never materialised. Shareholders

also tried to shift the balance between financial and educational priorities, which had tipped in favour of the former. In a letter to the Board in 1974, for example, Strasburg criticised the election of a bank director to the Board: 'As a businessman, [he] is a welcome addition to the Board, though of course he cannot be considered without his special interests. Don't you think it is time for a real educator to be on the Board?' (Strasburg, 1975, LASC). The current Board was seen as putting economic concerns before educational ones.

As was the case in the 1960s, LASSA's poor financial outlook exacerbated these tensions. Student enrolment at LAS decreased. Official communication to shareholders attributed this to external forces. These forces included other 'US-type schools' opening in the LAS market area and the worsening USD to SFr. exchange rate, which priced out many American families (Annual Report, 1973, LASC). These families may have been further affected by the New York Stock Exchange crash and the OPEC oil crisis, both in 1973. Such explanations implied that declining enrolment resulted from dynamic external factors.

Other internal documents, however, pointed to the worsening educational quality of the school. At the end of the 1972 school year, two documents were sent from the headmaster to the Board: 'Testimony of the Dissatisfaction Felt by the Faculty of the High School' and 'Statement of Student Body Views'. These documents were unsigned. It is thus unclear whom, specifically, they represented. However, they must have been taken seriously enough to make their way to the Board.

In the Testimony, staff members waged complaints against the business office run by K.S. Ott. The staff felt that this office was not

'subordinate' to the school's educational goals (Testimony, 1972, LASC). In the Statement, students argued for better residential facilities, food and recreational spaces (Statement, 1972, LASC). Student frustration was also made public in the 1972 yearbook. A picture of four students drinking from beer steins was captioned, 'We, the only remaining four year survivals of Leysin American School, will a democratic, non-profit institution devoted to higher education that lives up to the propaganda sent to unsuspecting parents..... to L.A.S.S.A.' It is unclear exactly how this photo and caption made it to publication. It seemingly either slipped by the staff member in charge of the yearbook or, given staff disgruntlement, was tacitly allowed to go through.

In response to these documents, F. Ott set a new school policy: employees must 'oppose actively all attempts on the part of students, faculty or administrators to force changes in the policies, rules, and regulations.' Violating this policy exposed an employee 'to dismissal without notice, to suit for breach of contract and/or damages, and to withholding of such salary as may be due' (Memo, 1972, LASC).

This moment demonstrates a few important points. One is that financial needs had overridden educational goals so much so that daily life at the school was affected. Another is that shareholders were not alone in their frustration. Staff and students were also disappointed with the institution. This atmosphere led to real consequences. In 1973, for example, the outgoing headmaster wrote in his final report, 'I am sad that conditions here are so unhappily infiltrated with suspicion and mistrust, one toward another, that teamwork has become very difficult' (Board Report, 1973, LASC). A third and

final point is that F. Ott censored complaints rather than address them. This suggests that things would not improve.

As mentioned above, student enrolment at this time was dropping. In 1971, it was at a high of 185 students, after years of steady increase. In 1972, there were 135 students; in 1973, 101 students; and in 1974, 92 students (Annual Report, 1974, 1978, LASC). Over three years, then, LAS lost half of its students. Concurrently, the fees increased. In 1972, LAS charged 14,320 SFr. per year (38,000 SFr. / £31,000 in 2020; Memo, Oct. 1972, LASC). This was roughly a 45% increase from 1961 when adjusted for inflation. The US Department of State had also increased its subsidies for boarding school fees (Board Minutes, 1968, LASC). LAS was thus still affordable to families connected to the State Department. However, it also cost 25-35% more than 'comparable schools' in the US (Annual Report, 1974, LASC). Officially, this was because of the increasing cost-of-living index and poor exchange rate between SFr. and USD (F. Ott, 1973b, LASC). Unofficially, it seemed sparked by the need for more capital from fewer students.

As a result, F. Ott wrote in a letter to a shareholder, LAS entered 'the "jet-set" category available only to the affluent, while virtually eliminating a most desirable group of students, i.e. those whose fathers have to work for a living' (F. Ott, 1973b, LASC). This statement delineated between the 'desirable' and the 'affluent' – or, just 12 years after LAS opened, between those whom LAS leadership wanted to recruit and those whom it needed to recruit. It also foreshadowed a shifting political and economic climate. In the 1970s, the US military's defeat in Vietnam would chip away at the country's geopolitical power, while its aggressive economic policies would assert its

global financial power (Saul, 2007). LAS leadership, too, would gradually and unevenly switch tacks from framing LAS as an elite school for the American Cold War to framing it as one for the global financial elite – a story taken up in the next chapter.

Tensions between LAS's educational goals and financial needs thus informed the school's first decade. This gave rise to an uneven institutional identity. The cohesive 'cultural logic' (Ong, 1999, p. 5) constructed over the previous two sections – one that aligned both LAS's objectives and F. Ott's biographical narrative with American Cold War priorities – thus came up against the very real financial pressures of being a for-profit school. This clash between ideals and reality shaped what was 'thinkable, practicable, and desirable' (Ong, 1999, p. 5). It also caused LAS leadership to re-orient from the students it wanted (the 'desired'), to those whom it needed (the affluent).

Conclusion

This chapter examined F. Ott's intention to align LAS with American Cold War priorities, as well as the financial difficulties that constrained this. I first discussed these priorities in terms of Mills's elite and the role of educational institutions in US foreign policy. I then analysed LAS's stated objectives. These objectives implied that LAS could produce a professional elite who would serve the American nation-state, despite being located abroad. The section following this considered F. Ott's biography. I argued that linking the school to Cold War priorities grew out of his personal and professional history. Finally, I drew out tensions engendered by LAS's financial realities. I argued

that these realities circumscribed F. Ott's ability to make LAS the kind of school that he wanted it to be.

This chapter demonstrated that in LAS's first decade, there was an uneven alignment between what F. Ott wanted and what was possible. An implication of this mismatch can be understood through what Ong describes as how things become 'thinkable, practicable, and desirable' (1999, p. 5). LAS's objectives and F. Ott's narrative fostered a 'cultural logic' (Ong, 1999, p. 5) around American Cold War needs. However, as tensions arose between the school's educational goals and its financial reality, this alignment was challenged. What was desirable was not practicable. This forced F. Ott to reconsider what might be thinkable.

Importantly, this suggests that Kenway et al.'s (2017) theory of 'choreography' does not capture the evolution of LAS. F. Ott wanted to create a particular kind of young person but was met with constraints. Unlike at the schools that Kenway et al. studied, F. Ott was not in the director's chair. Instead, he needed to adapt to a shifting framework, to make it work for LAS. This demonstrates that different kinds of elite schools face different kinds of processes and, moreover, limitations.

The next chapter continues this argument. It examines how LAS developed over the next forty years, until it was rebranded in 2011. I argue that the next generations of leadership further adapted LAS to changing wider forces and, in doing so, came to orient the school towards a new kind of student.

Chapter 7

A School for the World

Introduction

This chapter starts in the mid-1970s, where the previous chapter left off, and ends in 2011, when LAS was rebranded as a school for 'high-end clientele'.

The four sections of this chapter correspond to those in Chapter 6. First, I analyse how the financial situation at LAS unfolded over this period. I demonstrate that to stay financially solvent, LAS leadership unevenly shifted the school's clientele from an American Cold War elite to a global monied elite. This, I argue, followed changes that were already happening in the student body. I then turn to leadership changes at LAS. I show that successive leaders' visions for the school differed from F. Ott's but aligned with the changing times. I contend that this facilitated LAS's shift over time. The third section examines the evolving mottos of LAS. The school's objectives were re-written in 1981 and 2007. I claim that these were key moments to re-articulate the school's goals. Finally, in the fourth section, I investigate the notion of a financial elite. By newly linking to this group, I suggest, the LAS leadership could continuously serve an evolving elite.

Like the previous chapter, this chapter shows that the leadership at LAS needed to adjust the institution within a changing framework. Over time, the school's identity as one serving American Cold War needs (Chapter 6) became misaligned with the broader climate. By the 1970s, the US was losing geopolitical power but pursuing an economic unilateralism that would secure its status as the financial leader of the capitalist world (Saull, 2007). By the

1980s, that economic stance would morph into US President Ronald Reagan's neoliberal policies, which encouraged privatisation, deregulation and free trade (D. Harvey, 2007). During this era, LAS's next generation of leadership re-oriented the school to this landscape of international capitalism. Building from Ong's approach of 'bring[ing] into the same analytical framework the economic rationalities of globalization and the cultural dynamics that shape human and political responses' (1999, p. 5), this chapter explores how and why LAS leadership pursued links to new flows of financial power at the expense of altering the institution's identity and community over time.

Like Kenway et al., this chapter thus investigates how an elite school was 'caught up in older social and educational solidarities and how these are expressed in present-day, global times' (2017, p. 8). In other words, I examine how it came to be that LAS was re-imagined and re-packaged as still an elite school but for a different kind of elite clientele. However, while Kenway et al. focus on what this means for 'invent[ing] new solidarities' (2017, pp. 8–9), I highlight what it meant for attracting a new sort of student. I demonstrate that as economic realities evolved, LAS leadership learned to serve an emerging global elite whose status had already been brought into being by international capitalism. This speaks to my proposed theory of 'interpretation'. It suggests that the LAS leadership's abilities to bring together certain young people was constrained by outside forces. Thus, while the recruitment from and production of an elite are both forces to which elite schools attend, such institutions may emphasise one or the other to varying degrees. LAS leadership, I show, focused on the former.

Following the Money

Over time, financial considerations pushed LAS leadership to shift its target clientele. The leadership thus dynamically and unevenly re-oriented the school from corporately-subsidised American students to privately-paying global ones. This paralleled broader changes. In the 1970s, America was losing geopolitical influence following its military defeat in Vietnam. Yet, it was gaining economic influence over the capitalist world by, for example, ending both USD-gold convertibility and capital controls (Saul, 2007). Those policies would eventually morph into what Saul calls ‘the project of neoliberal globalisation’ (2007, p. 153). Adapting LAS to this emerging landscape meant keeping the school financially solvent. However, it also meant shaping a different kind of school than F. Ott intended to create. This section traces that change over time.

By the early 1980s, there were primarily two factors that threatened LAS’s financial health. The first was declining student enrolment. The previous chapter (page 173) saw the beginning of this trend: a high of 185 students in 1971 gave way to 92 students by 1974 (Annual Report, 1974, 1978, LASC). This trajectory continued. In 1981, there were only 32 enrolled students at the school. This caused a financial loss of over 665,000 SFr. (1.15 million SFr. / £1 million in 2020; General Assembly, 1981, LASC).

One reason for this decline was the poor educational quality of the school – a theme continuing from the last chapter (page 171). According to the headmaster in charge of day-to-day operations at the time, ‘obvious’ issues included ‘condition of the facilities, academic standards, school discipline, and faculty morale’ (Board Report, 1977, LASC). The following

year, the same headmaster reported, 'This school is not, and from all the evidence I have been able to gather during the past year has not been for many years, a quality educational establishment' (Annual Report, 1978, LASC). LAS had thus been deteriorating over time.

These issues were intensified by the second factor: financial and legal problems with ACS. As introduced in the previous chapter (page 167), ACS was a two-year institution of higher education started by LASSA in 1963. It became independent of LASSA in 1976. Critically, however, it remained tied to the shareholder corporation through a 10-year contract for facilities, catering and other services. This contract was discontinued in 1980 due to 'non-payment and gradual erosion of contractual conditions' (Annual Report, 1980, LASC). LASSA then sued ACS for all outstanding payments (Board Minutes, 1981, LASC).¹⁷ Internal documents linked issues with ACS to those of LAS: 'The problems with the college [ACS], during these past years, had demanded so much attention from the Board and the administration of LASSA, that the high school [LAS] definitely was neglected' (Annual Report, 1981, LASC). As seen in Chapter 6, however, issues at LAS pre-dated this episode, though they may have been exacerbated by it.

These two problems – declining enrolment and financial struggles with ACS – pushed LAS to the edge of bankruptcy and liquidation (Annual Report, 1982, LASC; F. Ott, 1980, LASC). Under Swiss law, Board members would have been financially liable for such an outcome (S. Ott & K.S. Ott, 2017, p.

¹⁷ This is where the LASSA/ACS story ends in this thesis. ACS 'unexpectedly moved' in June 1980 (Annual Report, 1980, LASC), though it is unclear to where. It returned to Leysin in 1985. In 1989, it was bought by Schiller University. In 2008, it permanently closed.

205, LASC). F. Ott therefore took out a 250,000 SFr. personal liquidity guarantee to prevent this (460,000 SFr. / £381,000 in 2020; F. Ott, 1980, LASC). Doing so did not alleviate shareholders' mistrust of the Otts, a feeling continued from the previous period (Chapter 6). In fact, shareholders had grown increasingly vocal about their misgivings. When S. Ott proposed to double the honorarium per member per meeting, for example, the shareholder Strasburg publicly declared her proposal to be 'wrong, and really unethical' (General Assembly, 1977, LASC).

After F. Ott took out the guarantee, the Board unanimously voted to force him and his wife into retirement (Protokoll, 1980, LASC). This did not, however, lead to a clean cut between LASSA and the Otts. The couple continued to be involved with the corporation precisely because of the guarantee. In a letter to the President of the Board, S. Ott made their position clear: 'While we are here, and as long as we have so much financial interest to protect, we will be here, we will work with the Board as in the past, but we must restore equanimity and harmony' (S. Ott, 1980, LASC). Her plea for cooperation and goodwill reveals that relations continued to be strained.

Iterations of this plea wove through the couple's correspondence with the Board. One month after their forced retirement, F. and S. Ott wrote a memo to the Board stating, 'All personal recrimination, rumormongering, and accusations involving the Otts must cease. In this respect, Board records show that all decisions in the past were made by formal meetings and by majority vote' (Memo, 1980, LASC). It seems that the Board blamed the Otts for poor decisions, while the Otts, in defence, invoked procedural rules as justification for the actions taken. Another memo that F. Ott wrote a week later

emphasised, 'We have not "exploited" the school, the staff, or the company for personal advantage, as was suggested in a recent meeting' (Memo, 1980, LASC). Four months after that, F. Ott walked out of a meeting. 'It is my hope,' he followed up in another memo, 'that in the future meetings can be conducted with appropriate dignity and in a business-like manner' (Memo, 1981, LASC). The Board and the Ott's continued to find fault with one another.

In the midst of this, the Board tried to sell the school (Annual Report, 1981, LASC). In 1982, having not yet found a buyer, the Board approached K.S. Ott about taking over the institution. As introduced in Chapter 6 (page 170), K.S. Ott was F. Ott's son and, by this time, LASSA's former business manager. I return to his biographical narrative in the following section. K.S. Ott agreed to the Board's proposed takeover under two conditions: (1) the existing shareholders and Board 'no longer play a role of any importance', and (2) he be given both complete 'authority' and the majority of shares (Memo, 1982, LASC). LASSA took the deal.

When K.S. Ott stepped in, in 1982, LASSA had a loss carry-over of 1.2 million SFr., a debt of 300,000 SFr. and a capital of only 700,000 SFr. (£1.7 million, £400,000, and £900,000 in 2020; Board Minutes, 1982, LASC). K.S. Ott turned to a bank for help. The bank offered a loan with lowered interest rates on the condition of a recapitalisation plan. Such a plan is meant to eliminate the debt balance and bring in new capital. To do this, K.S. Ott reduced the existing LASSA shares to 10% of their original value and sold the other 90% (Board Minutes, 1982, LASC). In practice, then, someone could have bought one LASSA share and, accordingly, one vote for 1,000 SFr. in 1961. In 1982, that same share was diluted to the equivalent of 1/10th of a

share and a vote. Thereafter, someone could again purchase one share and one vote for 1,000 SFr. This means – and this is the point of the financial exercise – that newly-invested money carried proportionally more weight: 10 times more per Swiss Franc. Such a move both attracts new investors and mitigates the influence of existing ones.

At LASSA, the new investors were primarily members of the Ott family. F. and S. Ott bought 36% of the new shares. K.S. Ott and his wife purchased 40% (Shareholders List, 1984, LASC). As a group, the former shareholders now controlled 10% of shares, compared to 100% previously. Significantly, then, the Ott family consolidated its power and influence over the corporation and, by extension, over LAS.

The above description of events from 1980-1982 is detailed but important. This period of crisis set the scene for changes to come. Peter Burke (2005) argues that communities with internal conflicts are more open to change. This seems to be the case here. The educational, social and financial fabric of LAS and LASSA was fraying. Multiple stakeholders were unhappy: the Ott family, shareholders, administrators, teachers and students. This gutted much of LAS. Students left, F. and S. Ott were thrown out and shareholder power was eliminated. This atmosphere of personal conflict and financial desperation, I suggest, meant that K.S. Ott not only could but also needed to restructure the institution. Under these unique circumstances, he changed what kind of school LAS was, over the next 25 years.

K.S. Ott oversaw LASSA's financial recovery. LAS recruitment had come to focus on American students living in the Middle East. In 1981, for example, of the 32 enrolled students mentioned above, 10 were Americans

living in the Middle East (Board Report, 1981, LASC). K.S. Ott leaned heavily on this region. He was familiar with it, having lived there as will be discussed in the next section. By 1985, enrolment had increased to 130 students (Summary, 1985, LASC).

K.S. Ott also worked to diversify LAS's recruitment areas. He opened an admission office in the US to 'stabilize the market; i.e., away from the volatile Middle East to the stable US' (Board Report, 1986, LASC). A year later, K.S. Ott opened two more offices in the US (Shareholders Newsletter, 1987, LASC). Interestingly, they were unsuccessful. LAS did not seem to appeal to Americans living at home in the way that it did to Americans abroad. K.S. Ott therefore closed the offices the following year (Shareholders Newsletter, 1988, LASC). He then turned back to LAS's traditional clientele: Americans abroad.

Increasing enrolment at LAS and regaining financial stability was not enough to appease the original shareholders. Strasburg, for example, wrote to K.S. Ott, 'I want you to know that there is a lot about what you are doing that is resented by many shareholders. After the years of your parents, we had hoped for more honesty and humaneness from you' (Strasburg, 1983, LASC). It is unclear to what this referred and how these relationships developed, given that no further related correspondence survived. As mentioned in Chapter 4 (page 90), communication may have shifted from letters to phone calls at this point, or documents may not have been kept by K.S. Ott, as they were by his parents. K.S. Ott also started to rewrite the historical narrative. For example, he would later declare, 'The retirement of my parents in 1979 put LAS into a tailspin with enrolment dropping year by year' (K.S. Ott, 1995,

LASC). Therefore, archival considerations and this revisionism means that some threads of the past have been lost to history. The primary voice and particular perspective that we have moving forward is that of K.S. Ott.

Under K.S. Ott, enrolment numbers stabilised. The composition of that enrolment, however, fluctuated. Over the next few years, the pipeline of overseas American families to LAS was disrupted. In 1988, the US government stopped subsidising private boarding school fees for overseas employees (see page 151; Shareholders Newsletter, 1989, LASC). Already in 1981, the Board knew that cost was the 'most important factor' for American families choosing a school. These families preferred schools whose fees were covered by their employers' subsidies (Board Report, 1981, LASC).

Unsurprisingly, then, 10 students connected to the US Department of Defense withdrew the year that subsidies ended (Shareholders Newsletter, 1989, LASC). Additionally, multinational companies decreased the number of employees posted in OPEC countries, particularly Saudi Arabia (Shareholders Newsletter, 1988, LASC). In 1989, the number of LAS students normally resident in Saudi Arabia fell for the first time after seven years of growth (Shareholders Newsletter, 1989, LASC).

Wider social, political and economic structures were also shifting during this time. In the 1980s, Saull (2007) argues, US President Reagan (1981-1989) intensified America's use of the military in the Cold War. This restored some of the US's world political leadership and, consequently, allowed Reagan to push for international economic policies that benefitted the country. Building from the policies of the 1970s, he pursued neoliberal discourses of privatisation, deregulation and free trade (D. Harvey, 2007). UK Prime

Minister Margaret Thatcher (1979-1990) also embraced these values. International organisations, including the OECD and the World Bank, scaled these interests to a global level (Resnik, 2016). Simultaneously, the EU paved the way for a single market. This facilitated the movement of capital across borders and the opening of new markets. What is now called the World Economic Forum was established in Switzerland, annually bringing together global business leaders. In other words, 'the more hostile international atmosphere, which [the US] had helped to create, consolidated its leadership of the capitalist world' and the so-called 'project of neoliberal globalisation' began (Saull, 2007, p. 153). At the same time, the Cold War thawed.

In parallel, K.S. Ott experimented with taking LAS in an international direction. In 1989, the Kumon Institute of Education approached K.S. Ott with the idea of co-starting a Japanese boarding school in Switzerland. In 1990, the Kumon Leysin Academy of Switzerland (KLAS) was born in Leysin as a joint venture (Shareholders Newsletter, 1989, LASC). According to K.S. Ott, this new school prepared students for a future 'most strongly ... influenced by the European Community, North America, and Japan' (Board Report, 1991, LASC). At the time, West Germany and Japan were seen as global economic powerhouses (D. Harvey, 2006). This vision, then, tied KLAS and LAS to the evolving global marketplace.

This tie became even clearer in 1991. That year, the same in which the Cold War is widely considered to have ended, LAS adopted the IB programme (see page 137 for a discussion of the IB). The curriculum signalled both LAS's increasingly international outlook and its coming recruitment from an international clientele. In 1995, just four years later, K.S.

Ott made a 'concerted effort' to build LAS's international markets. He reasoned that as 'more and more countries liberalize trade', parents in a variety of countries would want to educate their children abroad, in Switzerland (Board Report, 1995, LASC). In other words, he looked to capitalise on changing political and economic situations.

K.S. Ott's tapping of new markets, however, was an uneven effort. It was moderated by his lingering American ethnocentrism. For example, he imposed an upper limit on the number of Japanese and Russian students allowed at LAS (10% of the student body). As justification for this, K.S. Ott explained, 'Too much success in one market (excluding the US/Canada) could *color* the student body too much' (K.S. Ott, 1995, LASC emphasis mine). The racial undertones are clear. K.S. Ott wanted an uncoloured (white) student body and North American money. Thus, even as he looked to new geographies, he retained an image of the ideal student as white and Western.

KLAS (the Japanese school) and LASSA divorced in 1997 due to growing managerial disagreements between them. K.S. Ott then refocused on American students. His perspective had changed: 'Being successful in the U.S. is of greatest importance,' he wrote. 'LAS needs to remain an *American* international school' (Board Minutes, 1998, LASC emphasis in original). His pursuit of an economically-growing international elite was therefore tepid. This recalls Michael Apple's (2006) argument that in moments of conflict, traditional values come to the fore. When adapting to external forces did not go as expected, K.S. Ott returned to LAS's traditional client base.

He was again faced with changing circumstances at the end of the 1990s. Saudi Arabia allowed international high schools to open in the

Kingdom. As a result, the number of LAS students who were normally resident in Saudi Arabia plunged. In one year, from 1997 to 1998, LAS lost 20 such students (from 78 to 58; Board Report, 1998, LASC). By 2000, just two years later, there were only 32 enrolled students living in Saudi Arabia. As a whole, Americans comprised just 24% of the student body at that point (Board Report, 2001, LASC).

Meanwhile, fees had risen. In combination with the demographic changes, this engendered what K.S. Ott described as ‘a more international, rather than American community, with a greater number of “rich kids” than when there was a greater number of expatriate students’ (Board Minutes, 2000, LASC). The informality of and quotation marks around ‘rich kids’ contrast with the formality of ‘expatriate students’. Effectively, this politicised both terms, giving more respect to the latter than the former.

Yet, K.S. Ott had taken at least two practical steps to actively shift LAS’s target clientele. One was through recruitment practices. The Board contracted agents ‘wherever possible’ across the globe (Board Report, 1998, LASC). These individuals recruited students and earned a commission per enrolment. In 2002, the Board found that a competitor school had ‘a far more pervasive and successful agent network’ (Board Minutes, 2002, LASC). In response, it devised undisclosed strategies for agents operating in Russia, Kazakhstan and the so-called ‘small markets’ of Ukraine, Belarus, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and the Baltics to attract more students (Board Report, 2004, LASC). Hence, the Board deepened its engagement with a market-like structure of recruitment.

The other step that K.S. Ott took was in image management. In 1998, LAS became the first school to ever apply for ISO 9001 status, a worldwide business standard. The family biography describes pursuing this award as a way to 'further validate the LAS name to their global market' (S. Ott & K.S. Ott, 2017, p. 244, LASC). K.S. Ott therefore framed LAS as a business as a way to legitimise its education, thereby further linking the school to international capitalism.

Not everyone agreed with this financially-oriented direction of the institution. In 2000, for example, the headmaster wrote to the Board,

I am well aware of the exigencies of being a tuition driven school, but I am also aware that making decisions in school life cannot be so starkly driven by money. If we are to determine whom to accept and whom to keep based solely on money, then we are not being true to our professed ideals. Our mission is excellent education. That mission should guide our decisions. (Board Minutes, 2000, LASC)

As we will see, tensions between the rival forces of finance and education would continue to play out over the next decade.

Students' everyday experiences seemed to reflect LAS's uneven transition from an American clientele to a globally wealthy one. The 1999 yearbook, for example, shows students in Japanese kimonos and Kazakh koileks, and at a Canadian Thanksgiving celebration and a Scandinavian-themed dinner. This is all before a four-page spread highlighting 'international activities' that also revolved around dress and food. Sections showcasing international events at LAS appear in every yearbook from that point onwards. Yet, photographs of everyday life maintain a distinct sense of Americanness. Students wore t-shirts featuring the flags, sports teams and universities of the US but not other countries. The student experience thus appeared to be an American-oriented one, peppered with international special events.

In 2001, the global landscape again changed. Following the terrorist attacks of September 11, being American became a more fragile concept. Saull (2007) suggests that this terrorism grew out of the Cold War legacy in the Middle East. In contrast to the 'popular revolutions' in Eastern and Central Europe, which led to liberal democracy and capitalism, the Middle East instead saw 'the ascendancy of highly illiberal, reactionary social and political forces which had participated in the US-sponsored bloody and violent smashing of the revolutionary left' (Saull, 2007, p. 181). In other words, Saull argues, the Cold War 'bequeathed new forms of conflict and "resistance" to the global projection of US power' (2007, p. 182).

The effects of September 11 on LAS were not mentioned in Board reports. Yet, one can imagine that the terrorist attacks rippled through an American school abroad. The headmaster during the Gulf War (1990-1991), for example, remembered that as an unnerving time for American families in the Middle East. He told me that parents living in Saudi Arabia gave him their wills for safekeeping. He also recalled that LAS leadership considered dropping 'American' from the school's name, out of fear of being targeted for violence. One would think that September 11 engendered similar moments. Perhaps, however, LAS was no longer American *enough* to warrant the same reactions.

As of 2007, the Board still advocated for the recruitment of so-called 'corporate students'. These were students whose fees were subsidised by their parents' employers. US government subsidies for overseas employees had been reinstated at some point, though it is unclear when. Most but not all of those students were American. The LAS Board set a lower fee that aligned

with subsidy rates for this group. Such students apparently merited a discount because, K.S. Ott felt, they 'ensure[d] that the middle-class values are maintained' (Board Minutes, 2007, LASC).

Such a belief reflects what Ong calls 'graduated sovereignty'. This concept, introduced on page 63, refers to the demarcation of different groups, which are then assigned different 'rights and obligations' (Ong, 1999, p. 7). Here, K.S. Ott distinguished between social classes. He shifted the burden of financing the school to the wealthy and the duty of 'maintaining' institutional values to the middle class.

In early 2009, however, the global economy crumbled. Corporate student enrolment dropped and privately-paying students became essential to the school's survival. Despite the recession, those families could still afford LAS. Fees at the school were 67,000 SFr. at this point (£39,000; Board Minutes, 2009, LASC). The Board reflected, 'While this is influencing our school culture, financially it is more profitable to recruit private students' (Board Minutes, 2009, LASC). In other words, financial needs won out over institutional values. A later Board report asked and answered, 'Who is LAS now and in the Future? LAS is in [the] exclusive luxury niche-market of world boarding high school education' (Board Minutes, 2011, LASC). This question did not ask what LAS was. It focused on readjusting to a new trajectory within the emerging framework.

By 2011, LAS was 12% American. Americans were now the second-largest group behind Russians (14%; Academic Profile, 2011, LASC). This was a far cry from F. Ott's vision for a school that served the American Cold War. Yearbooks pictured students with luxury brand items, such as Louis

Vuitton handbags and Burberry scarves. Future documentation referred to 2011 as when LAS was rebranded from 'students of expatriate families' to 'high-end clientele' (Strategic, 2016, LASC). However, as this section demonstrated, that change was both gradual and uneven.

This section traced LAS's adaptations within broader structural changes over time. Following an institutional crisis, K.S. Ott moved the school away from his father's American Cold War values (Chapter 6) and towards a global monied elite. This paralleled a broader shift from the Cold War to international capitalism. Some of K.S. Ott's efforts were successful; others were not. Still, over time, the school changed. This was institutionalised in 2011, when LAS officially became known as a different kind of school – one for 'high-end' clientele.

Leadership Changes

This section explores the next two generations of leadership after F. Ott. K.S. Ott, F. Ott's son and the next director of LASSA, had different priorities than his father. He was business-oriented. Under his leadership, as we saw above, LAS increasingly educated the economically wealthy, though K.S. Ott turned back to the school's traditional customer base when necessary. When the next generation of Otts took control, LAS was officially rebranded. Each change in leadership thus introduced new visions for the school, each of which was increasingly further away from F. Ott's.

When LAS opened in 1961, the Ott family lived in Wiesbaden, Germany. K.S. Ott was a secondary school student at the time, though he was not enrolled at LAS. At his local German school, the family biography

recounts, he bought American jeans from his father's US military base and re-sold them to his classmates at a profit (S. Ott & K.S. Ott, 2017, p. 137, LASC). In 1966, F. and S. Ott moved to Leysin (page 167). K.S. Ott had already started university in the US. He remained there until 1970, earning both a bachelor's and a doctoral degree in engineering. During that time, in 1968, he met and married a Swiss woman, D. Ott¹⁸. They moved to Leysin together when he finished his education.

In Leysin, K.S. Ott taught at ACS for one year. He then became the LASSA Business Manager (page 170), a position he held for five years. During that time, he also served as the ACS Dean of Administration and the 'co-director and planner' of the International Business Institute (F. or S. Ott, 1977, LASC). The Institute was a short-lived master's degree programme started by the Otts in 1975. In 1980, it was sued by six former students for unspecified 'performance' issues (Board Minutes, 1980, LASC). There was no further information on this matter in the surviving documents. Hence, K.S. Ott seemingly developed wide-ranging familiarity with LASSA and its schools, from teaching to administration and from smooth internal operations to missteps with legal consequences.

K.S. Ott moved to Saudi Arabia in 1977. He had accepted a professorship in the College of Architecture and Planning at the new King Faisal University (F. or S. Ott, 1977, LASC). After two years, he left this position to work with his cousin in wastewater plant construction. This

¹⁸ See page 87 for a brief discussion of D. Ott in the archives.

cooperation soon dissolved over financial disagreements (S. Ott & K.S. Ott, 2017, LASC). That was in 1980.

At that time, as discussed above, LASSA tried to sell LAS. K.S. Ott pursued two potential buyers on the Board's behalf – a businessman and the foundation that owned King Faisal University (Memo, 1980, LASC). Islamic fundamentalism and hostility towards the West, however, were rising in the region. This, perhaps in combination with his unclear job prospects, led K.S. Ott to consider moving back to Switzerland (S. Ott & K.S. Ott, 2017, p. 201, LASC). His taking over LAS in 1982 was described in the family biography as 'investing' his and his wife's future in the school (S. Ott & K.S. Ott, 2017, p. 207, LASC) – clearly a financial metaphor.

K.S. Ott's approach to LAS seemed to be informed by his business orientation and his connections in Saudi Arabia. The Middle East became central to his recovery plan for the school. He distributed 600 catalogues and calendars to 'schools, clubs, Swissair exhibits and conferences' in Saudi Arabia. In comparison, he sent only 100 brochures and calendars to the US (Progress Report, 1982, LASC). What he called 'financial restructuring' at LAS included recruitment trips to the Middle East (Summary, 1985, LASC). The graduation speaker in 1984 was His Royal Highness Prince Mohammed of Jordan (Yearbook, 1984, LASC). Although this choice sharply contrasted with the American dignitaries invited by F. Ott's administration (page 152), recruiting in the Middle East was consistent with the long-standing goal of attracting American families living overseas.

In the early 2000s, the next generation of Ott's was incorporated into plans for the school. K.S. Ott's eldest son, M. Ott, had earned an MBA in

Switzerland in 1998. He then became head of the LAS admission office in the US. From 2003-06, he earned an EdD in Educational Administrative Practice in the US. In 2005, while writing his thesis, M. Ott returned to Leysin. There, he served as LAS Director of External Relations (S. Ott & K.S. Ott, 2017, p. 251, LASC). His combination of degrees – an MBA and an EdD – made him the first LAS leader to have a background in both business and education. F. Ott focused on the latter and K.S. Ott, the former.

The same year that M. Ott took a position at LAS, the organisation was restructured. In 2005, it became a partially non-profit institution. This was only partial because LASSA continued to exist within the newly created Foundation for the Advancement of International Education. The Foundation became the legal owner of both LASSA and 70% of the school's shares. LASSA owned the other 30% (Governance, 2016, LASC).

Launching such a foundation was not easy. It required 'more than a year of negotiations' with the Swiss government, including a 'clear threat' to move to a neighbouring canton (the threat presumably being the lost economic base) and 'a specialist auditor' for unspecified tax problems (Board Minutes, 2005, LASC). Yet, the same Board report that listed these issues also made the case for still pursuing this aim. I highlight two given reasons for doing so, which represent the driving motives behind this:

- Management control firmly remains in the hands of the Ott family through privileged shares and control of the Foundation board
- Marc Frederic and Christoph¹⁹ will be able to take over the school without the payment of excessive inheritance tax

(Board Minutes, 2005, LASC)

¹⁹ This is M. Ott and his brother, C. Ott. As discussed on page 88, they also have an unmentioned sister, Stf. Ott.

In other words, the Foundation set up political and financial structures that eased succession.

Regarding the first point above, there were now two Boards of relevance: the Foundation's and LASSA's. The first was chaired by D. Ott. Three out of five members on it were Ott's. The second was chaired by S. Ott. Three out of seven members on it were Ott's. LASSA shareholders were now K.S. and D. Ott (51%), the Foundation (40%) and a combination of Board members, 'others' and LAS (9% altogether). This last 9%, however, would eventually be acquired by the Ott's – they had the first right of refusal when shareholders sold their shares (Manual, 2017, LASC). Read in this way, the Foundation consolidated the family's control.

With regards to the second point, M. Ott took over from his father in 2007, just two years later. This was the same year that his grandfather, F. Ott, died. M. Ott intensified his control over the institution. He eliminated the additional headmaster position in charge of day-to-day operations and named himself both Executive Director and Head of School (Board Minutes, 2008, LASC). A Board report described this transition in financial terms: 'The fact that we are in the 3rd generation of Ott's is a substantial advantage in the markets. ... It shows ongoing family involvement, stability and a clear vision for excellence' (Board Minutes, 2010, LASC).

This became a marketing tool. In one school publication, for example, D. Ott describes herself as a 'mother' to the students. She continues, 'A Leysin neighbor and friend once observed about us, "The reason that the Ott's have been successful is that they don't run their school like a business; they run it like a family." That couldn't be more true' (*School*, 2011, LASC).

Importantly, one year before this publication, LAS's peer school Beau Soleil was bought by the for-profit organisation Nord Anglia Education (page 123). Thus, drawing a distinction between business-run and family-run schools, even ones that have shareholders, was a market strategy.

Given that 2011 is where this chapter ends, I do not follow M. Ott's tenure further. From the beginning, however, he brought his own style of leadership to LAS. His mixed background in finance and education, for example, could be seen in his Board reports. They continued his father's focus on world markets but also newly attended to student experiences and the curriculum. However, few signs of F. Ott's original vision for LAS remained. In a report from 2011, M. Ott wrote, 'All organizations must adjust to new market realities to survive – often the first lesson learned in business school' (Board Minutes, 2011, LASC). Each successive generation, then, shifted LAS further away from F. Ott's mission, in order to 'survive' in a shifting climate.

New Mottos for an Evolving Clientele

LAS leadership re-articulated the school's goals in key moments to align with a changing target clientele. This section first examines the updated motto unveiled in 1981. I compare its minimal changes to the school's original objectives (page 149), arguing that LAS's stated vision did not change significantly over its first 20 years. Then, I turn to the motto released in 2007. Its new form and content linked LAS to the international clientele it had already been serving. This section ends with a discussion of the title self-given in 2011: 'A School for the World'.

In the window between F. Ott's forced retirement and K.S. Ott taking over, the sitting Board of Directors ran LAS. This Board reworded LAS's original objectives (page 149). The revised objectives, with significant changes formatted in italics, were:

To provide, by a synthesis of European and American pedagogic means, *a sound education*;
[compare to: 'with effective tools to carve successful careers']

To guide youth, by quality in education, toward *worthy cultural standards* within the parameters of responsible citizenship;
[compare to: 'a cultural aristocracy']

To inspire youth, in the free environment of a beautiful country, with ideals for lives of useful service.
[no significant change]
(Catalogue, 1981, LASC)

K.S. Ott kept these objectives throughout his administration.

In the first objective, the phrase 'successful careers' was replaced by 'a sound education'. This began detaching LAS from an image of creating future American public servants, as discussed in the last chapter (page 149). Since F. Ott had just been removed from leadership, it seems probable that the Board was distancing the school from his vision. Additionally, the Cold War was seen differently by this point. In the early 1960s, when LAS opened, the US was enjoying Cold War successes and resultant world political and military leadership (Saul, 2007). As has been noted, however, the environment changed in the 1970s. The Vietnam War brought about a fractured domestic climate, the reduction of American geopolitical power and the expansion of the USSR (Saul, 2007). It was in this changed atmosphere that LAS's objective also changed.

While the first objective moved LAS away from the needs of the American Cold War, the second moved it towards that of capitalism. In this

objective, the phrase 'worthy cultural standards' replaced 'a cultural aristocracy'. The concept of an 'aristocracy' may no longer have resonated with prospective families. The 1980s followed two decades in which institutionalised social hierarchies were challenged in the US – for example, by the civil and women's rights movements. Given this climate, 'cultural standards' may have better captured the mood of the times. The phrase implied something that could be achieved – for instance, through the 'American Dream' of social mobility and home ownership – rather than something into which someone was born. In this way, it linked LAS to American economic imperatives.

The third objective remained almost intact. This is significant. It signals a consistent positioning of LAS as a touristic space (page 154). Internal school documents support this. In 1976, for example, an annual report described the tourist industry as 'includ[ing] private schools' (Annual Report, 1976, LASC). In 1978, the Board claimed that LAS was affected by 'the decline in the number of American tourists (and students) in Switzerland' (Annual Report, 1978, LASC). 'Students' were not only second to 'tourists' but also in parentheses. Similarly, in that same report, the headmaster wrote, 'LAS and its students are tolerated by Leysinauds for economic reasons. Beyond that we all live in a state of splendid isolation from local affairs' (Annual Report, 1978, LASC). This is also the language of tourism – supporting the local economy while remaining separate from the locals.

This positioning was consciously constructed. LAS was marketed as if it were a tourist destination. School pamphlets were packaged in Swissair folders and distributed to 'embassies, consulates, Swissair and Tourist Office

agencies' (Memo, 1978, LASC). A letter written in 1981 from the Director of Admission to a prospective family explained, 'Leysin American School offers the best of all possible worlds: lots of clean, pure air and sunshine, an American curriculum ... and the anticipated Alpine sports activities' (Miller, 1981, LASC). The concept of formal learning was sandwiched between touristic concerns: the climate and the entertainment.

The consistency of this objective is also significant because it was internally divisive. LAS's touristic image was conjured by the original Planning Committee (page 154). It was promoted by the Board and the Admission Department. However, one headmaster, for example, wrote in 1977, 'We have to get away from the widespread and erroneous opinion that LAS is a form of "holiday camp"' (Board Report, 1977, LASC). Still, this positioning remained until at least the early 1990s. Promotional materials continued to be sent to Swiss Tourist Bureaus (Board Report, 1993, LASC). In 1990, a student's yearbook page referred to his time at LAS as an 'extended holiday in Europe'. He continued, 'I've learned a lot in Europe, not so much in school, but from traveling' (Yearbook, 1990, LASC).

The LAS leadership may have maintained this language in the face of criticism because it showed consistency during a time of change. LAS leadership was gradually and unevenly shifting its target clientele. Perhaps a continuous touristic image projected stability during this process, despite also engendering tensions.

In summary, these new objectives distanced the school from F. Ott's vision in some ways, but not all. They also still paralleled the form and content

of the original objectives. This suggests that the Board wanted to signal the school's evolution but did not yet have a clear idea for the future.

It was not until 2007, when M. Ott became Head, that the school's stated mission changed again. Its new motto was:

Developing innovative, compassionate and responsible citizens of the world.

In Chapter 8, I discuss what this motto meant to the students I interviewed (page 208). Here, I focus on its significance in 2007. As noted, the leadership was again changing. Simultaneously, LAS faced a marketing crisis. According to internal documents, the leadership did not have a clear sense of what kind of school LAS was. The Board wanted to attract privately-paying students, who were better for the school's financial goals. At the same time, as discussed above, it wanted corporate students to maintain the school's 'middle-class values' (Board Minutes, 2007, LASC). The Board thus decided to 'rewrite our mission statement and in doing so create an LAS "brand"' (Board Minutes, 2007, LASC). That brand, I argue here, linked to international education.

LAS's new motto leaned on the language of the IB, an international curriculum (page 137). The IB developed its mission statement in 1998 (International Baccalaureate, 2017). This was almost 10 years before LAS changed its motto. The mission statement of the IB is: 'to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect' (International Baccalaureate, 2019). LAS's motto:

- replaced *inquiring* with *innovative*
- replaced *caring* with *compassionate*
- added the word *responsible*
- removed the word *knowledgeable*
- shortened 'young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect' to 'citizens of the world'

In the last instance, I say 'shortened' because these two phrases meant the same to LAS leadership. A Board report defined 'citizens of the world' as people who display both 'international understanding' and 'respect for others' (Board Minutes, 2007, LASC).

It is unsurprising that LAS leadership adapted the IB's motto for its own use. LAS students were no longer primarily Americans who lived abroad. Most students now lived in their home countries and studied abroad, at LAS. Moreover, although this new motto paralleled the IB's, it also spoke to F. Ott's objectives (page 149). Both highlighted ingenuity ('innovative' / 'tools to carve'), duty to others ('compassionate' / 'useful service') and responsible citizenship (a phrasing used in both). This suggests that the core values of the school changed less than the language to which they linked.

This is further supported by the work of Bittencourt and Willetts (2018). These scholars categorised key words from 46 international schools' mission statements into one of two discourses: ideological internationalism and market-driven multinationalism. They found that 44 of the 46 schools linked to both. LAS, I would add, also did. According to Bittencourt and Willetts's taxonomy, 'innovative' speaks to market-driven multinationalism while 'compassionate', 'responsible' and 'citizen of the world' speak to ideological internationalism (2018, p. 519). The authors conclude that schools linking to

both are navigating between these competing priorities. That also seems to have been the case at LAS.

By embracing the language of an international education organisation, the new mission statement appeared to better-align LAS with its changing clientele. This alignment became more material in 2011. According to a Board report that year, LAS had become like ‘all other private Swiss boarding schools’ – an institution ‘offering luxury-valued services’ (Board Minutes, 2011, LASC). Moreover, it had become *less* like the schools with which it used to compare itself: American ones. That same Board report continued, ‘Indeed, tuition costs in US \$ is now about twice that of the most expensive American boarding schools’ (Board Minutes, 2011, LASC). This Board report thus moved LAS into the Swiss boarding school landscape (see page 116), thereby normalising its high fees and justifying its shift away from Americans abroad. It moreover set the scene for 2011 to be declared the year that LAS became a school for ‘high-end clientele’ (Strategic, 2016, LASC).

That same year, 2011, LAS was self-titled ‘A School for the World’ (*School*, 2011, LASC). There are two particularly interesting things about this. One is that Rosey, an even more expensive boarding school in Switzerland (page 121), had a strikingly parallel slogan: ‘Une École pour la Vie’ [A School for Life]. LAS leadership apparently drew from this. It therefore must have envisioned the school as akin to Rosey. This reveals a drastic change of heart. In 2007, the Board wanted ‘enough’ corporate students not only to maintain ‘middle-class values’ (as above) but also to avoid becoming ‘another “Rosey” school’ (Board Minutes, 2007, LASC). Yet, by 2011, LAS acknowledged having ‘joined the “Le Rosey-class” of institutions’ (Board

Minutes, 2011, LASC). To then borrow from Rosey's slogan was to accept and even embrace this new taxonomy.

The other interesting point is that LAS was not a school for just any world. It served a particular world – a well-resourced one. Calling itself 'A School for the World' thus linked to a privileged notion of global circulation. Zygmunt Bauman, for example, distinguishes between tourists who 'move because they find the world within their (global) reach irresistibly *attractive*' and vagabonds who 'move because they find the world within their (local) reach unbearably *inhospitable*' (1998, pp. 92–93 emphasis in original). With students framed as tourists (discussed above), LAS's self-given title commodified their mobility. In other words, LAS leadership seemed to say: If you purchase our education, the world is your oyster. This was not just any kind of international education, then. This was an education for the internationally wealthy.

A Financial Elite

The previous chapter argued that F. Ott linked LAS to a Millsian Cold War elite when it was founded. With time, Mills's work was re-evaluated. As noted in the previous chapter (page 146), Saull (2007) contends that US economic and military policy was in sync from 1947. Saull also claims, however, that this alignment dissolved during the 1970s, when world capitalist economies faced a financial crisis and militarised containment was seen as too expensive. Mills's elite were thus no longer united in their goals. In the 1980s, with neoliberalism, power continued to shift into the financial realm. It has been

argued that sovereign nations lost influence, while transnational corporations gained it (Davis & Williams, 2017; Savage & Williams, 2008; Wedel, 2017).

In the 2010s, Savage et al. (2013) defined the 'elite' by their financial status. This was and continues to be an influential idea. As introduced in Chapter 2 (page 38), Savage et al. conducted a latent class analysis of the BBC's Great British Class Survey. The authors then constructed a seven-class model of British society. Unlike previous models, this included an 'elite' class characterised by its exclusivity and vast financial resources. It is to this group of people that LAS slowly linked on a global scale.

Economic structures offer just one way of framing elite groups. Not all elite schools are fashioned as places for the rich, even in an era of international capitalism. Courtois (2015), for example, shows that Irish elite schools construct themselves through traditional views of society and leadership. However, it was this economic framing that K.S. Ott, as seen above, pursued and eventually embraced. Hence, the LAS leadership gradually oriented the school towards a new, financial kind of elite.

Conclusion

This chapter demonstrated that over time, LAS leadership adapted the school to shifting wider circumstances. As the Cold War morphed into international capitalism, LAS's target clientele unevenly changed from an American Millsian elite to a global financial elite. The first section showed that the school's financial situation necessitated this change. The second section argued that each generation of LAS leadership brought its own vision to the school. This increasingly moved the institution away from F. Ott's original intentions for it.

In the third section, I demonstrated that rewording the school's motto in key moments outwardly aligned LAS with its evolving identity. Finally, the fourth section claims that LAS provides an example of an elite school whose leadership continually, if unevenly, learned to recruit from a new kind of class.

These changes are given texture by what Ong calls 'the economic rationalities of globalization and the cultural dynamics that shape human and political responses' (1999, p. 5). Over time, F. Ott's vision for LAS became misaligned with wider structural forces. K.S. Ott's gradual moving of LAS towards the priorities of international capitalism, however, engendered further tensions. Shareholders and administrators were frustrated. The sense of a shared cultural logic around the needs of the American Cold War (Chapter 6) dissipated. Eventually, M. Ott brought a new cultural logic into being by embracing the globally wealthy clientele that the school had already been serving. This was formalised when LAS was rebranded. It signalled that LAS once again was recruiting the kind of student it *wanted*, rather than *needed*.

Importantly, this demonstrates that LAS leadership reacted to evolving compositions of elite groups. Such a finding differs from Kenway et al.'s emphasis on elite schools as places that 'invent new solidarities' (2017, pp. 8–9), as quoted in this chapter's introduction. Although the reactive nature of recruitment at LAS does not preclude the active creation of a new class, it does suggest the primacy of a different kind of focus and process. It shows that the LAS leadership's abilities to bring together particular kinds of young people was contoured by a need to adapt within shifting frameworks – even to the point of shaping a different kind of elite school.

Having examined institutional changes over time, we now turn to a different actor in this story: LAS students. I investigate their experiences at LAS over the next two chapters. The next chapter explores how these young people understood LAS's claim to create 'citizens of the world' and made it their own.

Chapter 8

Citizens of the World

Introduction

This chapter examines the kind of young person that LAS leadership claimed to create as well as what kinds of young people LAS students were actually becoming (for the table of student participants in this study, see page 100). The first section explores LAS's motto of developing 'citizens of the world'. I investigate the school policies and events through which LAS leadership meant to bring this kind of young person into being. I also examine the friendship groups that students created and what this meant for their intercultural learning. I argue that such groups were shaped by their institutional environment – an economically-homogenous school with international students but an American culture. The second section then turns to the kinds of young people that LAS students were becoming, if not citizens of the world. I show that these young people drew upon their LAS networks both to position themselves within a global economy and to engender power hierarchies contoured by imperial legacies. In this way, these young men and women forged multi-sited understandings of themselves and each other. This section ends by reflecting on two important nuances to this argument.

To help describe the complex forms of belonging that emerge in this chapter, I deploy the term 'multi-scalar' (Howard & Kenway, 2015). This term, discussed in Chapter 3 (page 60), captures these young people's strategic linking to and from global and national scales. Furthermore, to help make theoretical sense of what was happening, I employ Ong's tools. As was also

examined in Chapter 3 (page 65), Ong (1999) frames mobility as simultaneously a strategy for wealth accumulation and a process that precipitates new hierarchies of status.

This chapter lends evidence to my overall argument that transnational class formation at LAS is being 'interpreted'. Although school leadership claimed to create particular kinds of subjects ('citizens of the world'), students interpreted that notion differently than the leadership intended. I show that these young men and women made this concept their own. They became, I suggest, citizens oriented towards the global economic world, rather than 'world citizens' as defined by LAS materials.

Citizens of the World

As discussed in the previous chapter (page 200), LAS leadership adopted the mission statement 'Developing innovative, compassionate and responsible citizens of the world' in 2007. According to the Board Report at that time, 'citizens of the world' embodied 'international understanding and the bridging of cultures, as well as respect for others and tolerance of others' (Board Minutes, 2007, LASC).

Thereafter, however, the phrase was used differently in different LAS materials. One brochure for prospective families, for example, describes 'citizens of the world' as 'actively engaged in promoting those principles defined by the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights' (Academic Year, 2018, LASC). Such principles were presumed to be self-evident, as they were not outlined in the document. This description associates LAS with the UN, another international institution in Switzerland and a well-respected one.

Probably, the idea was to lend legitimacy to an LAS education by extension. An LAS booklet used for fundraising, which is composed mostly of full-spread photographs, connects 'citizens of the world' to the statement, 'We celebrate differences, which add *color* and *flavor* to our lives' (Fundraising, 2018, LASC emphasis mine). The choice of words implies that diversity at LAS is symbolised by non-white skin and international foods – an understanding that is elementary but easy to evidence with marketing photographs. Different documents thus define this term in various ways, depending on what they are trying to accomplish.

It is therefore unsurprising that students at LAS did not echo any one definition of 'citizens of the world'. When I asked interviewees what the term meant to them, their answers ranged from self-sufficiency to having cross-border networks. Sometimes, they offered opposing answers. Fredek, for example, told me that being a citizen of the world meant 'not judging one culture by the action of one person'. Tanya, on the other hand, felt it meant knowing in any given situation that 'Spanish speakers would say this, while Ukrainians would react like this and Americans will say this about this'. There was thus little consensus around the meaning of the term, despite its being the goal of an LAS education.

The rest of this section thus explores how the aim of developing 'citizens of the world' filtered down to students' lived experiences. I examine four institutional policies and initiatives: roommate guidelines, faculty families, International Night and language use. I chose these four topics because they are often highlighted in LAS marketing materials and came up unprompted in my interviews and observations. This means that they were important to the

LAS leadership and relevant to the school's students. I then turn to the ways in which students shape their own kinds of belongings. Finally, I address the framework created by LAS within which this shaping occurs.

School Initiatives

This sub-section discusses roommate guidelines, faculty families, International Night and language use at LAS. Regarding roommates, almost all students at LAS lived in single-sex dormitories on campus. The exceptions were children of staff members who lived with their parents. Rooms were shared amongst two to four students. The heads of the dorms decided in which room and with which roommates a student was placed. LAS policy was that roommates must, when possible, speak different first languages. According to the LAS student handbook, this policy was meant to 'encourage cultural curiosity, understanding and appreciation' as well as, more practically, to help 'develop [students'] English language proficiency' (Handbook, 2019, p. 14, LASC). The latter goal assumed that students from different language groups would adopt English as their lingua franca.

Some students agreed that this encouraged intercultural friendships. Corli, for example, felt that living with someone naturally creates understanding: 'You're not only going to class with them, but you sleep next to them, you know?' she told me. 'You get that midnight cereal snack together. You just build bonds. ... It's crazy but the more you spend time together, the more you learn about their culture and they learn about yours and it's not intentional.' As an example, Olek, from Ukraine, befriended his American roommate and then also his roommate's American and British friends. Emily,

an American, was excited to have a roommate from Taiwan. 'I never thought I'd meet someone from Taiwan,' she told me. 'That's so cool.' There were instances, then, of this policy working as intended.

Other students were more sceptical of it. As Magnus explained, 'I don't think there's a way to go, "Okay, so if we make everyone room with someone of a different language, then that will definitely make people more globally aware or whatever." I mean, because I don't think that works.' Indeed, Ya-Hui and Guozhi offered examples of this *not* working. Ya-Hui recalled a Russian young woman who could not tolerate her roommate's non-heterosexuality (I return to the topic of homophobia below). Guozhi noted that tensions can arise from sharing a wall, let alone a room. With the caveat that he was stereotyping, he told me that some nationalities (i.e., Japanese) allowed their neighbours to sleep at night whereas others (i.e., Kazakh) did not. Next to them, Guozhi said, 'you can hear a football game happening in the middle of the night.' LAS's rooming policy thus also invited cross-cultural friction.

Another LAS initiative was 'faculty families'. These had been 'a central part of the LAS tradition for many years' (Handbook, 2019, p. 20, LASC) and one that is highlighted multiple times in LAS marketing materials. Faculty families consisted of 8-10 students from all year groups plus two staff members. Each family met weekly, sat together at all-school assemblies, went out to dinner occasionally and even had a designated weekend when they could leave campus and stay overnight somewhere. I was a so-called 'parent' in one of these families. The initiative meant to bring students of different ages and nationalities together, as well as 'to help students navigate the world of LAS' (Handbook, 2019, p. 20, LASC).

Corli highlighted faculty families as an opportunity to develop international understanding. As she saw it, ‘our “brothers” and “sisters” are from all these different cultures and countries and they speak different languages.’ Guozhi – who, in full disclosure, was one of my ‘sons’ – told me that it was through our family that he befriended a particular Russian student. Olek mentioned that he became friends with his ‘sister’s’ boyfriend through family events. I did not hear any explicit resistance to faculty families, although Natalia’s opinion seemed to be the reigning one: ‘It’s not something you want to do but you end up having fun, so it’s a forced, likeable activity.’ Faculty families thus seemed to accomplish LAS’s goal of building international connections amongst its students.

The school also sponsored special events intended ‘to foster a sense of community, school spirit and leadership development’ (Handbook, 2019, p. 21, LASC). These included a national flag parade through the gymnasium, for which students were encouraged to dress up in ‘traditional’ clothing. They also included International Night. At this event, every nationality at LAS was given a table at which students could showcase their culture. This was often taken to mean food. Students from Saudi Arabia, for example, traditionally flew in a roast lamb shoulder and rice from the Kingdom for the event.

Some young people cited these events as encouraging global awareness. Others, however, suggested that it reinforced nationalism. Irina, for instance, reflected,

I think the interesting thing about the community here is that at events like International Day, International Week, or just throughout the academic year, we see that many of the people are screaming, ‘We’re so patriotic. We love our countries’, waving the flags, wearing the clothes with symbolic things like flags and then promoting the attitudes which are common in their cultures.

This, she continued, went against the spirit of being a citizen of the world. When Irina tried to raise this issue amongst her fellow Russians, she was met with 'a monologue telling me, "Oh, you should be like us. You're Russian. Why aren't you helping prepare the Russian table for the International Night?"' Events like this thus imposed her nationality on her rather than fostering a belonging to the world.

Finally, there was the LAS guideline that students should speak English during the school day. This was informal and unevenly enforced. It aimed to ensure that students graduated with enough English proficiency to study at English-language institutions of higher education (Brochure, 2018, LASC). Typically, 75% of students went on to English-language geographies for university: 40% to the US, 30% to the UK and 5% to Canada. Still others would attend English-language programmes in other countries, particularly at public universities in the Netherlands or at private international institutions in Switzerland. The exact numbers varied between documents and from year to year but were roughly consistent. I consider the implications of these destinations in the next chapter (page 262).

Judging from discussions at all-staff meetings, however, this guideline was controversial amongst teachers. Some teachers felt that speaking in one's native language was necessary to feel comfortable at LAS, and thus to adjust to the boarding school environment. Others saw value in friends helping each other in their native language during class. However, there were also teachers who felt that students used their native languages both as an exclusionary tactic and to get away with something. My data support all of these perspectives.

Many young people at LAS seemed more comfortable around those who spoke their language than those who did not. This was evidenced by how they arranged themselves. At an assembly for the year group I studied, for example, five language groups sat amongst themselves: Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, Russian and Turkish. When I observed the library, six of seven tables had only one language group sitting at that table. In the cafeteria, on average over my observations there, four tables had a single language group at them, and two tables had multiple languages. Students seemed to socialise mostly with either their language group or an evenly mixed group of languages. They were not often in situations in which they were linguistically outnumbered. This supports the idea that speaking in one's native language was part of adjusting to the school's social dynamics.

It also seemed true that students found it useful to have academic content explained in their native language. Some needed help understanding the curriculum, which (save for language classes) was taught in English. According to Tanya, a young woman from Russia, 'When you're studying math, you're thinking not about math but about the words which are written there and for the first year, it was hard to understand it. You were more focused on English rather than on the subjects.' Her teacher was aware of this. She told me, 'If you look up the word "integrate", it's probably not going to tell you, when you integrate a function, it's the area under the curve... You become aware that the language that you're using is specific to your content.' Letting students help each other in their native languages was thus an invaluable aid in the classroom.

However, language was also deployed to exclude others from a conversation. In the classes that I observed, the majority of side-conversations happened in students' native languages. Of the 276 side-conversations that I recorded, 164 (59%) were between people of the same language group, in that language. Of those, 55% were in Russian, 19% were in Chinese and 14% were in English. The remaining 12% were in either Japanese, Spanish or Thai.

According to a number of interviews, using their (non-English) native languages allowed these young people to communicate privately, in public – because only a few others would understand them. Students admitted to gossiping, confiding in each other or cheating when they spoke in their native languages. As Corli later explained, 'Most people have two languages. English is the one that's international. The one that you speak between your friends is *your* language' (emphasis mine). English was thus the language of the masses, while other languages ('your' language) signalled belonging to a particular group.

LAS policies and events aimed at creating citizens of the world thus filtered down unevenly to students' lived experiences. School-sponsored initiatives were at various times embraced, resisted, seen indifferently or ignored. The rest of this section further investigates student practices and the institutional frameworks in which they occur.

Student Friendship Groups

Students' friendship groups impacted whether and to what extent young people at LAS built international connections. Guozhi, a student from

Malaysia, explained, 'In an ideal world, the point of LAS would be to bring students from all around the world together to create citizens of the world. That's the ideal outcome.' However, he continued, he instead saw 'students from Russia coming here and making friends with a student from Ukraine and going back without ever talking to students from Japan or ever knowing where Malaysia is.' Hence, if young people at LAS did not want to socialise with peers from different backgrounds, they did not. As Magnus put it, 'There's human free will.'

This means that students could – and did – remain socially rooted in their national and language groups. Guozhi's analysis of friendships at LAS encapsulated what I heard from others:

You can see that LAS students come from a lot of different places. People come from Albania. People come from post-USSR countries and Taiwan, Hong Kong – and, more often than not, they tend to clique with the people that speak and look like them. It's not always the case ... but you can always see there's a Spanish group and there's a Russian group and you can see, somewhere over there, there's the Japanese with the random Taiwanese guy. Yeah, so I think even though LAS is such a diverse community, people tend to clique.

A Taiwanese student found amongst a group of Japanese students was considered 'random' – meaning, according to the Oxford English Dictionary, 'haphazard or aimless'. Hence, what seemed socially odd to students were not only departures from national or linguistic cliques but also, foreshadowing the next section, friendships between colonisers and the colonised.

These cliques seemed to be influenced by primarily three factors: culture, loyalty and the effect of diversity. In terms of culture, Sergei explained,

I think we [Russians] understand that different cultures exist – that's for sure. ... But then, on the other hand, we don't want to embrace it neither because, looking back, you have your parents at home and, I mean, even if you say to your parents, 'Oh dad, you know, there's this guy doing this thing', he'll say, 'Well, don't do it.' ... I mean, if your father says you don't do something, you don't do it.

Therefore, although young people at LAS were exposed to other cultures' values, adopting them potentially gave rise to cultural conflicts at home.

Sergei did not give an example of what he meant. However, one that I pieced together is 'tolerance' of homosexuality. Three other students (one Russian speaker and two non-Russian speakers) referenced rampant homophobia amongst the Russian students at LAS. The school did, in fact, have a Gay-Straight Alliance Club. One young woman in the club, Ya-Hui, did not tell people that she was a member. 'There's just things that I learned to keep to myself,' she said, 'because I don't want to get attacked or I don't want to come off as aggressive or I don't want to get into any fights.' When it came to navigating conflicting cultural norms, in other words, there seemed to be neither an incentive nor an avenue for these young people to have an open dialogue. Instead, then, they stuck to their own values and with those who shared them.

The second factor, loyalty, was discussed by Natalia, a young woman from Mexico. Mexicans technically comprised 4% of the final year group but this statistic was misleading. Often, students from Mexico went to LAS for the penultimate year of secondary school and then returned home to prepare for Mexican university entrance exams. In that penultimate year at LAS, for example, Mexicans were the largest nationality (16% of the year group). Natalia came to LAS for that penultimate year but decided to stay for another.

Natalia enjoyed having a big group of Mexicans at LAS. Prior to enrolling at the school, she had attended summer camps abroad but had never studied abroad. She found it comforting to have a Mexican social circle. At the same time, she told me, 'I was also sad because I really wanted to expand and meet other people from different nationalities ... [but] the path is kind of predetermined for you by your nationality.' With further prompting, she explained, 'I like it because you kind of immediately have friends. ... It's very nice but it's also kind of hard to do your thing. If I wanted to sit with other friends, they'd [the Mexicans] be like, "Are you mad at us?"' Interestingly, Natalia actually was well-connected to other friendship groups at LAS. She competed on various sports teams and dated a British student, both of which afforded her access to other networks. Yet, she still felt that fostering new relationships risked her standing within her national group. Ambivalently, then, Natalia sacrificed a personal desire for international connections to satisfy her collective group's desire for national loyalty.

Finally, to illustrate the effect of confronting diversity, I turn to Jieun's story. Meeting people from other backgrounds emphasised that she belonged to her own. Jieun told me that after she came to LAS,

I felt more profoundly that I'm South Korea [*sic*] because before, when I'm surrounded by all the South Koreans, I don't really feel like I'm part of them, naturally. Actually, it's very ironic because when I'm with them, I should feel like, 'Oh, we're together. We're a unity', but when I'm outside, I feel more, 'Oh, this is where I'm from' and feel more confident.

In an international space, then, Jieun felt closer ties to her home country and its people. Like a 'fish in water' (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992), it was only when she was out of the water that she realised where she belonged – in it.

It is no wonder, then, that in our interview, Jieun focused on what she had learned about her own cultural practices while at LAS. For example, she described encountering a Western interpretation of her Buddhist religion:

I went to one of my friends' house last year and I thought it was very interesting that they had a Buddhist statue in the entrance of the house and she's Italian. So, I was thinking, 'Well, this is very interesting.' I found it so interesting. So, I asked her parents, 'What is this for?' and they're like, 'Oh, it's just...' and they didn't really answer clearly but according to my friend, it's more like a decoration. You know, like a greeting from Buddha. I thought it's great but since my dad is deeply, deeply Buddhist ... he won't put a statue in the house. So, I thought, oh it's very interesting. It's something to be found in a temple, not in a house in the entrance, next to shoes.

Buddhism was meaningful to Jieun. As she told me, 'It helps me a lot and it actually impacts a lot of what I've thought since I was young.' In the process of translation from East to West, however, the religious figure of the Buddha went from sacred statue to design ornament. The significance of removing one's shoes to show respect for a Buddhist shrine, for instance, did not seem to factor into its placement in her friend's vestibule. Jieun's takeaway from this experience was about Western secularisations of her religion.

Other LAS students learned about cultural differences within their own geographies. Many young people, for example, emphasised finding out about the multicultural nature of their own countries. They discovered regional differences in accent, slang, mannerisms and fashion. They also learned more about their global regions. Brian, for example, is a dual American and Japanese citizen who had lived in both countries. His closest friends at LAS were Chinese, Taiwanese, Malaysian and Thai. While texting one day, this friend group discussed the East China Sea dispute. This, Brian recalled, started as 'a civilised discussion and then devolved into this huge argument.' It also gave him a better understanding of his friends' national perspectives.

Thus, although in some ways students resisted becoming citizens of the world, in other ways, they gained exposure to cultural diversity within their national and/or global regions.

The Framework in Which This Occurs

This section has thus far shown that although LAS claimed to create ‘citizens of the world’, its young people did not always embrace the policies and initiatives aimed at doing so. Moreover, they created friendship groups based on shared languages and cultural backgrounds, though still built intra-national and -regional understandings. On a theoretical level, it is critical to investigate the ‘particular structures of meaning’ (Ong, 1999, p. 6) within which this occurred. I discuss two of those: the economic status of the LAS student body and the school’s history.

LAS fees meant that its students hailed from the very top of the economic ladder (the small number of scholarship students excepted). An important question, then, is what effect this shared class background had on becoming citizens of the world. Wei suggested,

Most of the kids in the school, when their family is super wealthy, they tend to enjoy similar stuff – as in, going to a club, shopping. So, culture is not a problem anymore because they don’t really have that. ... [The culture here] reflects wealth. It doesn’t reflect any culture from any country, I would say.

This implies that young people at LAS were connected to each other through their class-based tastes (Bourdieu, 1984). In other words, the similar ways in which they chose to – and could afford to – spend their time overrode potential tensions engendered by cultural differences. This notion will be

contested in the next section. Still, it carries an implication to which I return later in this sub-section. First, however, let me turn to LAS's history.

How the school's history survived into the present highlights the importance of the nation. At the time of my fieldwork, LAS advertised its international student body and yet, in practice, remained culturally American. When I asked students about the LAS culture, they often replied that it was American. They highlighted American structures, such as the class schedule, teaching style, grading system, college counselling department, traditions (Prom) and no-drinking rule. Students also noted that American popular culture infiltrated daily life at LAS. This was namely through the collective student body's preferred fashion styles, foods (burgers and fries), memes, movies, music and slang. There is also the name of the school. As Guozhi pointed out, 'I think there's quite a lot of American influence in Leysin *American School*' (emphasis his). LAS thus retained its 'Americanness' in feel and in name, despite internationalising its student body.

I now return to the 'implication' mentioned above. We see in Gaztambide-Fernández's ethnography that elite school students learn to 'construct and enact elite identifications' as members of an elite group (2009a, p. 12). However, they also 'negotiate other symbolic boundaries within the context of one elite boarding school' (2009a, p. 12). These 'symbolic boundaries', Gaztambide-Fernández explains, 'play an important role in how individuals identify with and differentiate themselves from other groups' (2009a, p. 12). In other words, young people at an elite school come to distinguish not only between their elite group and other 'non-elite' groups but also amongst groups of themselves.

This seems to be what students at LAS were doing. When wealth differentiated some from others, as with the scholarship students, this served to create distinctions. We saw this in Chapter 5 (page 136). However, as Wei pointed out above, the generally shared level of wealth amongst the other students created commonalities rather than differences. At Gaztambide-Fernández's school site (2009a, pp. 98–101), young people formed 'boundaries' based on such characteristics as popularity and extra-curricular activities. At LAS, they seemed to turn to language and nationality. I suggest that this choice grew out of LAS's salient connection to American culture. In other words, because the institutional culture appeared to align with one particular country, students aligned with their own. Hence, although LAS claimed to develop citizens of the world, its framework encouraged students to embrace their linguistic and national groups. How that came to bear on students' interpersonal relations is the topic of the next section.

Multi-Scalar Belongings

If students at LAS were not becoming citizens of the world, what *were* they becoming? This section turns to that question. I demonstrate that these young people navigated between global and local scales. They positioned themselves within the world economy whilst refracting geopolitical contestations of power in their interactions with one another. This connects to Rizvi's argument that globalisation needs to be historicised and, in particular, understood in relation to 'projects of imperialism and colonialism, which continue to shape the lives of people within not only the developing but also

the developed world, with a global geometry of power that is inherently unequal' (2009, p. 50).

I use the term 'refract' to indicate these young people's complex and multiple *adaptions*, rather than *adoptions*, of national pasts and presents (Bourdieu, 1993). In other words, to return to the metaphor informing this thesis, they did not 'perform' international relations but rather 'interpreted' them. Students' concurrent orientations to a global economy and to national geopolitics displayed what Ong calls 'a "convivial tension" arising from wining and dining with the cultural Other on the one hand, but fraught with the symbolic violence of political inequality and mutual distrust on the other' (1993, p. 746). Young people at LAS used each other for material gain while bringing new power hierarchies into being.

I explore these interwoven narratives in two arenas: Russian and Chinese geopolitical realms. Often seen as rising economic superpowers, these two contexts are relevant to understanding the current, and perhaps future, global economic elite. I do not directly examine the former British empire, though it comes up in this section, for both practical and theoretical reasons. Practically, although there were two British passport holders in the year group that I interviewed, neither of them lived in the United Kingdom. Theoretically, much of the extant literature in elite school studies addresses contexts related to the British empire (including, of course, that arising from Kenway et al.'s *Elite Schools* project). It is thus fruitful to explore other imperial arenas.

In Russia, household wealth grew rapidly at the beginning of the 21st century. In 2019, the country had the ninth-most individuals considered to be

of Ultra High Net Worth (UHNW). This refers to individuals whose net worth is over 50 million USD (£38 million; Shorrocks et al., 2019, p. 12). Similarly, China was seen as the 'principal source of global wealth growth' in 2019, with household wealth growing more than three times as fast as that of other countries (Shorrocks et al., 2019, pp. 2, 45). In 2019, China had the second highest household wealth and the second-most UHNW individuals in the world, after the US (Shorrocks et al., 2019, p. 12). The histories of these geopolitical regions are complex. They are discussed in this chapter only as required for context.

As these countries' economies gained traction, they enabled families to send their children to expensive schools abroad. Students from the post-Soviet states first enrolled at LAS in 1992, one year after the collapse of the USSR. The first students from China then matriculated in 1993. The numbers of students from these regions grew throughout the 1990s. According to school Board reports, by the year 2000, there were 21 students each from Russia and from China and Taiwan (combined in internal statistics). These two groups tied for the third largest at LAS. Each comprised 7% of the student body. Over the next 20 years, this growth continued, though Russian students soon outnumbered Chinese students.

When I did my fieldwork, there were 20 Russians in the year group of 94 students that I studied. This was the most well-represented nationality. Additionally, another eight students were Russian speaking, from Ukraine or Kazakhstan. My 19 participants included four Russians and one Russian-speaker, thereby reflecting their broader representation in the year group. Out of the 94, another nine students were from Mainland China, Taiwan or Hong

Kong. Behind Russians and Americans, they were, in combination, the third largest group of students that year. I interviewed two of these students, again roughly mirroring their broader representation in the year group. I also interviewed two students whose grandparents emigrated from Mainland China – one set went to South Korea and the other, to Malaysia.

The Post-Soviet States

Mobility was important to the Russian and Russian-speaking students I interviewed because they envisioned entering the global economy. Tanya, for example, felt that at LAS, she was cultivating not only a global mindset but also global business networks. She had classmates ‘who are at the same level as [me], so we have connections and you know, oh, this friend, he has his own company. ... It’s kind of cool.’ This was in contrast to her peers who stayed in Russia, her home country. They lived, she felt, ‘a super small life’. Tanya’s mobility and privilege thus meant that she related more to international, financially rich young people than to other Russians from a different economic background. A similar phenomenon was reported by Waters and Brooks (2011) amongst university students studying abroad.

Through this socialisation, Tanya was acquiring ‘cosmopolitan capital’, or the ‘propensity to engage in globalizing social arenas’ (Weenink, 2008, p. 1092). She told me,

I think you become more self-esteemed [from attending LAS]. ... [Now] when I walk, I can come to a random guy with whom I would never talk in my life and I’m like, ‘Oh my God! You have this [cell phone] case. I want to buy it! Where did you buy it?’ I have these random things going on in my life and I can speak with random people. And now, when I go to Moscow, I can go to a store and say, ‘I’m super open-minded about everything’ and I can easily communicate with strangers.

Socialising at LAS taught Tanya how to strike up conversations with ‘random’ strangers; although, these strangers are arguably not random. Tanya was comfortable talking about commercial goods – cell phone cases and store merchandise – in the context of capitalism. Her narrative revealed a learned ease with a financially-privileged, globally-connected future, in which she would engage with global consumerism and others who also had high purchasing power.

Tanya’s ‘cosmopolitan capital’ also helped her envision joining the global workforce. She planned to study hospitality:

[The] Russian market is a really huge one. It’s like they share a really huge percent of the world market. ... Mostly, Russian speakers, they don’t speak English and if they come to the restaurant and they don’t speak English and there is a Russian waiter, they will really like this restaurant because they have more help. I think Russians, they’re always in demand.

Tanya defined both her linguistic heritage and her English-language education as an asset in the global market. She saw herself as key to a business’s economic success by catering to the large and wealthy clientele to which she also belongs – the economic elite of Russia.

In some ways, then, young people at LAS were preparing for mobile futures that articulated with those of similarly-wealthy peers from around the world. At the same time, I will show, they refracted geopolitical contestations amongst each other. This, I suggest, produced power relations within their economically-elite group.

Olek, from Ukraine, and Fredek, from Tatarstan, both encountered and resisted attempts at cultural expansionism by their Russian classmates. As a very brief overview, the annexation of Crimea and the War in Donbass have shaped and strained relations between Ukraine and Russia (“Along the

Contact Line: Peace in Eastern Ukraine Seems as Faraway as Ever,” 2018). Tatarstan, an ethnically-distinct region in Russia, has navigated an uneasy position between cultural independence and belonging to Russia (“The Survivor; Tatarstan,” 2007).

Olek recalled an incident when he and Fredek acted as school representatives to welcome new students:

There was a guy from Moscow, and he was speaking to me and [Fredek] and he asked us, ‘Where are you from?’ And I was like, ‘I’m from Ukraine’ and [Fredek] said he was from Tatarstan and for [Fredek], it’s a big issue because he’s Tatar. ... And when this guy said, ‘Oh, so you’re both Russian,’ [Fredek] was like, ‘No, I’m Tatar’ and I was like, ‘No, I’m Ukrainian.’ ‘So, Russian.’ ‘No. It’s a big... [trailed off].’ And we started, ‘Russian-*speaking*. We are Russian speakers, but we are not Russian.’ (Emphasis his.)

Olek and Fredek needed to negotiate their national identity with this new Russian student – even though, as school representatives in an older year-group, they should have been in positions of authority. Furthermore, this was a controversial subject. Fredek, for example, told me, ‘I’m not a big fan of Russia. I would never call it home.’ He even felt ‘offended’ when people called him Russian – although, by his passport, he was. Olek was more sympathetic to the Russian students at LAS. Although there was ‘a big issue between Russia and Ukraine and many people in Russia start arguing that Ukraine is a part of Russia,’ he considered himself ‘part of the [Russian] crew’ at school. Olek and Fredek settled the situation above by conceding their shared language. Notably, language is a tool that arguably enacts power over, gives power to or resists power, particularly in educational settings (Kenway et al., 2017, Chapter 6).

This did not appear to be an isolated example of geopolitical aggression through interpersonal interactions. Russian students at LAS

explicitly told me that ‘Russian’ referred to all Russian speakers. Sergei, to whom I return shortly, said that in his mind, Russia encompassed ‘a vast part of Europe’, starting from Poland. He felt that representing Russia ‘unites us in the school. That’s what gives us kind of the diaspora feeling of all the people from Russia, Kazakhstan, Ukraine – coming in together and being your kind of sole group in large amounts.’ Sergei did not seem to acknowledge that his imagined diaspora impinged on modern borders and national identities.

This conflation of language and identity was not shared by Russian *speakers* from other countries. Olek, for example, explained that he socially integrated into the Russian clique not to represent Russia but to speak a language he knew. Protecting his cultural identity, in fact, was so important that it shaped how he understood the concept of ‘citizens of the world.’ He took this phrase to signify members of different nations peacefully co-existing:

I would say it’s the idea of everybody being equal so there is no... [trailed off] that we’re all the same. That you consider yourself to be Ukrainian, others consider themselves to be the Russians, others, Americans, but at the same time, we’re all people and it doesn’t really matter. There’s only the borders on a map but in reality, there’s a huge landmass which is not supposed to belong to anybody.

I asked all of my participants how they understood the term ‘citizens of the world’. Olek was the only one to reference either the right to one’s own culture or the decolonisation of land (‘which is not supposed to belong to anybody’). His demarcating of Ukrainians from Russians and Americans suggests that Olek’s personal outlook was palpably shaped by his country’s position between these competing spheres of influence. Ultimately, Olek envisioned a kind of world-belonging in which his national identity would be uncontested. This signals an ambivalent desire to be both globally and locally emplaced.

Some Russian young people who imposed a Russian identity on their classmates also feared having Western values imposed on them. Sergei, for example, was one. He considered himself to have ‘a very strong sense of the motherland’. When I asked whether this conflicted with studying abroad, he explained the following, which is worth quoting in full:

I don't feel like in order to be patriotic you have to go around your own country and bang your chest and shout that you're Russian, you know? I feel like being patriotic *is* traveling abroad, *is* the idea of presenting us, Russians, as people who... [trailed off]. I mean, the idea of a Russian person, a Russian male, has always been, since about the breakdown of the Soviet Union, the idea of someone who is a constant alcoholic, who barely can get his shit together, who works the ground and stuff and tries to figure out his household problems and never really does because then he starts drinking again. But I think that patriotism is actually traveling abroad and showing that that is not true – that, I mean, there's a new generation growing in Russia and that generation is as bright if not brighter as those coming from the US or from any part of the world and that what we have that they don't bring is this idea of protecting our country. Because, I mean, we've always been brought down by Europeans, by the Americans, by every country in the world – I mean, looked down upon. So, when we come abroad, I don't feel this disconnection. I feel like I'm kind of here to represent my country. ... I think you're supposed to go around, you're supposed to travel, you're supposed to get ideas and then come back to the country, see what's best for it. And then you build up, you build up and you build up. (Emphases his.)

Sergei's impassioned monologue reveals a complex relationship to self, nation and others. He had internalised a particular stereotype of the Russian male – that of a poor, lazy drunk – and devoted himself, as part of the ‘new generation’, to proving it wrong. He positioned himself primarily against Americans but also against Europeans. Sergei suggested that Russians have felt ‘brought down’ by them – a phrase that he corrected to ‘looked down upon’, perhaps to linguistically mitigate those regions’ power. Sergei framed traveling as a national service to promote his country abroad. It was this ‘idea

of protecting our country' that separated Russia from the rest, and that would eventually lead to its development.

The power relations emerging in this sub-section are complex and multiple. Young people at LAS appeared to refract geopolitical resonances in their ongoing negotiations over personal and national identities. Shifting hierarchies were re-enacted between those who used to rule and be ruled, as existing 'solidarities and hostilities' (Kenway et al., 2017, p. 5) were constantly renewed rather than made shared.

China and Its Territories

In many ways, the narratives arising from LAS young people from Mainland China, Taiwan or Hong Kong paralleled those from the post-Soviet states, above. This suggests that students from different geopolitical contexts engaged similarly with colonising and colonised pasts through their interpersonal relationships.

This group of young people envisioned globally-mobile futures, as did the Russian-speaking group. They framed such ambitions in relation to the opportunities afforded by the LAS community. Guozhi, a Chinese-Malay young man, for example, highlighted the future economic benefits of networking with his classmates:

The connections [students] make here would translate into, perhaps, future dealings with – perhaps, getting relationships with or building up – companies. So, this idea of 'citizens of the world' is for students to consider not their country but their entire world as their home place, their playground ... There's definitely benefits of making friends from all over the world, no doubt. The general profile of students here is that of upper class to high class families so, regardless, you'd be making powerful and wealthy friends and that's a plus.

Like Tanya, Guozhi saw an LAS education as fostering the necessary mentality and business contacts for competitive engagement with global capitalism. He emphasised that being mobile and having well-resourced peers begets 'benefits'. By this, he apparently meant access to and success in the worldwide marketplace.

S. Ott, wife of founder F. Ott, reinforced this framing in our interview. When I asked what students gained from an LAS education, she noted two things: university preparation and 'contacts that remain there for their lives throughout various parts of the world ... Now some are using them also, these contacts, for business or for education later on.' Guozhi's perspective thus seemed to grow from the school leadership's thinking about what LAS fostered – success in the so-called 'knowledge economy', in which social relations are converted into economic worth (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010).

Unlike Tanya, however, Guozhi's interest in a global future linked to imperial national pasts. As a Russian, Tanya was in a position of geopolitical power. As a person of Chinese descent in Malaysia, Guozhi was arguably not. His imagined possibilities were constrained by a legacy of British colonialism.

As British colonial rule over Malaysia started drawing to a close in the 1940s, the United Malay's National Organisation spearheaded a nationalist movement. They aimed to ensure that power was not only handed over to ethnic Malays but also taken away from groups that had immigrated to Malaysia through British labour policies, which included the Chinese (Balasubramaniam, 2007). When Malaysia gained independence in 1957, the new constitution put affirmative action policies in place for the ethnic Malay population (Jomo, 2004). These policies touched everything from jobs and

government contracts to educational scholarships and university admission (Balasubramaniam, 2007). Consequently, this law, it has been argued, divided the nation into insiders and outsiders, with Malaysian-Chinese falling into the latter category (Gabriel, 2014). Although this law was controversial, it was still in effect at the time of writing.

This contextualises why Guozhi felt like ‘a second-class citizen where, although not explicitly stated, there are limited opportunities for me to go back to – for example, job opportunities.’ Because of this, Guozhi said, ‘I would really not enjoy going back to Malaysia because I don’t see myself being useful and contributing in any way.’ He looked toward the global economy in part because he felt excluded from his national one. A colonised past thereby contoured the way Guozhi saw his classmates, whom he valued for the transnational opportunities they seemed to offer.

For other young people in this geopolitical group, internationality at LAS engendered enactments and contestations of cultural imperialism. Ya-Hui articulated the need to assert her Taiwanese identity against a Chinese identity:

I feel like our school is very, very [pause] higher end. And while you get to see all these different people from different countries, they all carry the same designer brand and go to the same kind of places because of their income bracket. ... I feel like, I mean, China, Taiwan – we’re so different in culture and values but I feel like we’re... [trailed off]. I don’t really know how to differentiate ourselves when we’re in this school, you know? Other than the fact that our background is different, but we speak the same language, we look similar and we kind of get reduced into the same thing. ... You don’t really get to see the whole picture.

Salient differences between China and Taiwan, Ya-Hui felt, were veiled by visible markers of financial class – fashion and lifestyle – in this economically-homogenous environment. Ya-Hui did not want her Taiwanese background to

be 'reduced' by shared economic privilege. She wanted it to be differentiated by her unique 'culture and values'. She thereby contested Wei's analysis, discussed in the previous section, that wealth functions as an overriding cultural form amongst the economically elite. Instead, she suggested, it falsely glazed over real differences. Additionally, Ya-Hui's comments carried geopolitical resonances. As in Olek and Fredek's narratives, language takes on political significance here. Ya-Hui contended that her Chinese language and 'look' cloaked her heritage, and therefore obscured 'the whole picture'. This picture included the contested nature of Taiwan's status vis-à-vis China. It was not just *her* heritage that was under threat, it was also Taiwan's.

This kind of layered enactment and contestation of power was also evident when a document, rather than language, signalled belonging. Jieun, for example, did not feel particularly attached to South Korea, where she was born and raised. Her family had moved there from China during the Korean War (1950-1953), in which China backed North Korea's invasion of South Korea. Although she connected with 'not only food and dress and culture but also how we think' in South Korea, Jieun explained that her family 'always wanted to go back [to China] to some extent.' Yet, she recalled:

When I first came to this school, I remember, there was a student ambassador who asked, 'Oh, where are you from?' and I didn't answer because I was looking somewhere else, in the mountains – like, oh my gosh, there's mountains – and she took my document and she's like, 'Oh, you're South Korean.' And I realised, hmm, yes, this is it. That's how people understand and perceive me when they first see me.

This incident happened years before we spoke but remained potent to Jieun. Her passport imposed upon her a clear national belonging with which she ambivalently identified. In Jieun's case, such an act signified complex geopolitical relations. Her family moved to South Korea as part of China's

expansionist project, and yet South Korea now resisted that history, re-appropriating power and exerting it over Jieun's identity through its passport.

Wei, a young Chinese man, also felt that his sense of belonging was under threat. Like Sergei, Wei feared the West. This parallel is significant. It suggests that young people from imperial countries in different geopolitical contexts similarly worried about the encroachment of other global powers.

Wei expressed both a strong desire to 'remain' Chinese and a dissonance between this and his own Westernisation. He explained,

I feel like I'm getting more used to the Western culture and it's not a bad thing – of course not – but it's something when I realise... [trailed off]. It's hard to say. It doesn't make me upset or anything like that but it's something that's in my mind that reminds myself, 'I'm Chinese. This is how Chinese do things. This is how I do things. It's different.' I'm supposed to be Chinese, but I don't want to do things the way they [the Chinese] do it because of my [Western] education.

Wei wanted to still 'be' Chinese, despite living and learning in Switzerland.

Doing things differently engendered an unease derived not only from a cultural ambivalence but also from a perceived need to differentiate between Oriental and Occidental values. At the same time, Wei told me that he wanted to escape what he called 'corruption' in China. He planned to pursue an academic career in Europe or the US because, compared to China, there would be more academic freedom, less pollution and, critically to Wei, more emphasis on *what* you know rather than *who* you know. Although Wei ultimately felt that 'it doesn't matter where you live, if you know the history of your own culture', he seemed caught between East and West, focused on their boundaries rather than their bridges.

Wei brought others' positionality into what he saw as these competing spheres of influence. He felt, for example, that some classmates should be 'more' Chinese – in particular, one from Hong Kong²⁰:

In 10th grade, [a classmate] regarded himself as from England because he's from Hong Kong. Which makes sense, right? Because Hong Kong was occupied by England and they're strongly influenced by them, just like Taiwan by Japan. But he surrounded himself with English people and he'd always hang out with the American crew. The idea of him not respecting his own nationality, which is Chinese, kind of gets me.

Wei refracted China's language of expansionism in a number of ways. One is that – greatly simplifying history – Hong Kong and Taiwan are both territories that China ceded to other nations (England and Japan, as Wei referenced) and that were eventually 'returned' to China. Another is that Hong Kong and Taiwan are often positioned as critical players in the ongoing struggle between China and the West for global influence. Finally, a third lies in Wei's description of his classmate. He first attributed his association with England to the 'occupation', highlighting that the UK took Hong Kong by force (it was returned in 1997, before either of these students were born). He then declared his classmate's nationality to be Chinese. This was a contentious claim, not only because of the complex political status of Hong Kong but also because that classmate did, in fact, have a UK passport. Still, to befriend the British and Americans was to choose West over East – an apparent insult that, Wei conceded, 'kind of gets me.'

²⁰ This research was concluded before the Hong Kong protests began in 2019.

Nuances to Consider

These young people thus developed orientations towards global futures whilst refracting geopolitical tensions amongst each other. Although I presented student narratives from two geopolitical arenas, Russian and Chinese, my broader data shows this phenomenon also occurring amongst students from other imperially-informed spaces. American students, for example, networked with their classmates in hopes of future material gains whilst asserting their language (native English) and culture as more globally-relevant and therefore significant than those of their peers.

I offer two nuances to my argument that are important to consider. One is Ong's contention that 'cultural messages that romanticize mobile capital can also ... promote a new kind of conformity to flexible accumulation' (1999, p. 157). Hence, it is possible that these students' orientations to both global markets and their nation-states emerged from the multiple systems of which they are a part. Bauman's theorisation helps to explain this. For Bauman, being 'global' (with money) means to 'set the tone and compose the rules of the life-game', whereas 'being local in a globalized world is a sign of social deprivation and degradation' (1998, p. 2). Perhaps, then, these young people learned to desire mobility because of the power it conferred, while also internalising the geopolitical language of their nation-states.

The second nuance is that my data captured a particular moment, whilst students were at LAS. Their identities may still change with time. At LAS, these students often constructed their positionalities in relation to one another – i.e., to both link to the global economy and to refract geopolitical tensions. In a different environment, these young people may come to

position themselves differently. This might result from facing international diversity for a second time, rather than the first time, or from having matured in their thinking. They also might need time to process their LAS experience. Brooks and Waters's (2011) text on student mobility in higher education, for example, shows that feelings of global belonging may develop only *after* a student has studied abroad. Although I can only speak to the data I have, investigating how these students' identities develop would be an interesting follow-up project to this thesis (see page 279).

Conclusion

This chapter demonstrated that LAS initiatives aimed at developing citizens of the world filtered down unevenly to students' everyday experiences. It further showed that students used their relationships with one another both to orient towards the global economy and to bring into being power relations contoured by imperial legacies. I suggest that these young people therefore were not becoming citizens of the world but were learning to navigate as national citizens in a global economic world.

Such a phenomenon can be theoretically understood with the help of Ong (1999). Ong argues that while mobility is a strategy for accumulating economic resources, it can also engender new power hierarchies. Young people at LAS evidenced both possibilities. Studying abroad at LAS, they built networks that would supposedly lead to global financial success.

Simultaneously, they constructed and resisted geopolitical hierarchies amongst each other. Displaying such 'multi-scalarity' (Howard & Kenway,

2015), these students linked to and from global and national realms as and when it was to their advantage.

These findings support my proposed theory of 'interpretation'. The ways in which LAS leadership put the school motto of 'developing citizens of the world' into practice can be seen as an institutional attempt to create such subjects. Yet, students dynamically and unevenly responded to this. Sometimes they embraced school initiatives; sometimes they outright resisted them. They then created friendship groups based on language and nationality. These students negotiated their interpersonal relationships not as 'citizens of the world' but as young people orientating towards global futures from national pasts and presents. They were, then, 'citizens' who were also 'of the world', in the sense of looking to the global marketplace, but they were not 'world citizens' in the sense of understanding and respecting other cultures. Significantly, this suggests that they interpreted a framework provided by LAS in ways that worked for them.

The next chapter examines these students' envisioned future mobilities. I demonstrate that young people at LAS circumscribed the notion of 'global mobility' to work for their particular identities. This continues to support my theory of 'interpretation' but also suggests a point of convergence between this theory and that of 'choreography' (Kenway et al., 2017).

Chapter 9

Future Mobilities

Introduction

This chapter examines how young people at LAS interpreted the notion of global mobility. In the first section, I evaluate the idea of global mobility as it was presented by LAS. I also investigate one way students were prepared for this mobility: English-language learning. However, focusing on English, I show, caused students to lose command of their native languages and thereby be displaced from their national circles. The following section explores factors that influenced how these young people envisioned futures outside of their national realms. I argue that their particular routes forward articulated with their economic class, their race and nation and/or their gender. Finally, the last section of this chapter discusses these young people's mobilities in relation to historical paths of migration. Their planned routes reflected traditional flows of people and resources from the Global South to the Global North as well as the movements of their diasporic communities. This established pattern brings to the fore a convergence between 'interpretation' and 'choreography' (Kenway et al., 2017).

This chapter attends to an important question posed by Koh: 'Do elite students have agency over their destiny or does wider societal structure pose as obstacles to their elite destination?' (2018, p. 185). Koh concludes that although elite young people's mobility is 'by no means a linear and straightforward one' (2018, p. 194), they still zigzag 'to a secure future' (2018,

p. 186). I, however, pose that the mobilities of young people at LAS articulated with the constraints of social structures. This can be understood with the help of Ong's theoretical tools. According to Ong (1999), as discussed on page 65, power that results from privilege (Bourdieuian capital) can only be activated when that privilege is recognised by others. Notably, recognition depends on the context (Bourdieuian field). Norms around race and gender, for example, differ from space to space. As a result, mobility can put one's privileges at risk. Applying this to LAS, the class, race and gender of young people there can be seen as sometimes enabling and sometimes acting as a barrier to particular paths.

This chapter supports my argument that these young people 'interpret' LAS's framework. For the most part, these students did not envision cavalier futures traveling around the world, as LAS marketing materials suggest. Instead, they seemed aware that their classed, racialised and gendered identities would be met by the realities of the outside world. These young people therefore 'interpreted' the meaning of global mobility, circumscribing it in ways that worked for them.

Global Mobility and the English Language

LAS marketing materials specifically address students' globally-mobile futures in relation to the destinations of school alumni: 'Our alumni are corporate executives, entrepreneurs, engineers, teachers and humanitarians. They create global businesses, conduct important research at the world's leading universities, educate future leaders on every major continent and volunteer to help the less fortunate across the planet' (Academic Year, 2018, p. 45,

LASC). Only one set of synonyms is used: global / world / every major continent / planet. This statement implies that although LAS students may pursue different careers, those careers similarly take them around the world.

Much of the language used at LAS framed English as a pre-requisite for this mobility. English was considered essential for higher education (presumably all higher education, implying that any desirable university teaches in English). This notion pervaded both the halls of the school (page 213) and LAS promotional materials. According to one brochure (2018, LASC), 20% of the student body took English as a Second Language classes for university preparation. Even S. Ott told me in our interview that the primary purpose of a boarding school was to teach English. Although this was an Anglocentric statement, it highlighted a particular justification for LAS's existence, direct from the founder's wife.

Indeed, many young people at LAS enrolled at the school to learn English. In our conversations, they associated speaking English with financial opportunities and high social status. They saw the language as facilitating global networking, travelling, living abroad and, generally, continued wealth and mobility. This perspective reflects what is arguably 'an enduring legacy of British and American colonialism which secured English as the key language of global commerce, and constructed British and American standards and influences as best' (Brooks & Waters, 2015, p. 221).

As a result of this English-language education, however, some students lost command of their native languages. Fourteen of the 19 students I interviewed did not consider themselves native English speakers. Eight of

those 14 felt that reading, writing and/or speaking in their native languages had become more difficult after studying at LAS.

An astute reader might think that this was *despite* their using their native languages in everyday life, as discussed in Chapter 8 (page 214). For some students, however, it was *because* of it. Irina, for instance, felt that her Russian had deteriorated as a result of her exposure to the language at LAS. 'The Russian that Russian people speak here, it's not even Russian. They swear so much – so, so much,' she told me. 'When they don't know what word to use or how to describe their emotional state or whatever, they're using just swear words.' The Russian group as a whole, then, was forgetting its vocabulary, with no outside input to counteract this.

What was perhaps missing for these students was academic exposure to their languages. Magnus felt that he had lost basic academic vocabulary in Danish because of his English-language education. As he told me, 'All these terms that I've learned [in English] from even just math class – I'd have to take a moment [in Danish] of like, "What? Can you show me on paper?" and then I know how to do it but it's weird.' This meant that, 'by now, I speak English more fluently than I speak Danish, which is scary, and another reason why I don't want to study in Denmark.'

However, sometimes academic-language learning was not enough to maintain one's native language. Ya-Hui, a native Mandarin speaker, took a self-taught Mandarin class at LAS. Still, she felt that she could no longer have a professional career in her native language. Moreover, she had lost the dialects that she used to speak, which were also the only languages that her

grandparents spoke. Ya-Hui could thus no longer speak comfortably in either professional or familial situations in her home country.

This was not the case with everyone, though. Wei, for example, also took an academic approach to maintaining his language, with more success. On his own initiative, he learned academic vocabulary in both Chinese and English. Whenever a new concept was introduced in class at LAS, he looked up the relevant words in Chinese. When I asked him why, he explained,

I come to study abroad not to become a European. I'm still Chinese and I need to know how to speak in my language. Maybe I'll never use it in an academic environment, but I think it's important to know how to say it.

Maintaining command of Chinese was not instrumental to excelling in school. In fact, Wei ultimately attended university in the US. Instead, it was critical to his cultural identity. He told me that he was proud that he could still speak and read well in Chinese, and that he still knew a lot of poems in ancient Chinese. This, Wei seemed to feel, signalled that he remained connected to his language and culture from abroad.

One student's narrative sheds more light on the concrete consequences that learning English can have at home. Zahra, to whose story I return at the end of this chapter, came to LAS from Iran. Although she intended to permanently leave her country, Zahra still felt that 'home is obviously Iran and I think it will always be.' When it came to language, however, things became more complicated.

When Zahra started at LAS, she was the only Iranian student at the school. Other Iranians enrolled in her final year. She was excited about this development, in part because of language:

I was like, 'Oh, I finally have people to talk in Persian to!' Because last year, there was no one. And then [one of the Iranian students] started talking to me in English. ... Even when she texts me, she's talking to me in English and I'm like, 'Okay, I'll answer in English... [trailed off].' And I think she's lost.

Zahra missed her language. For her, speaking English unnecessarily was a sign of being 'lost' – socially, culturally and/or linguistically. Yet, she occasionally spoke English to friends at home. When Zahra tried to express certain emotions, she told me, English sometimes felt more natural:

When I feel really excited about something, I just go and say it in English and my [Iranian] friends are like, 'No...,' and they don't really like this fact because they think I'm forgetting everything. But it's not like I'm forgetting. It's just the transformation of the excitement and emotion is different.

Zahra seemed to feel that English was acceptable in some contexts (expressing emotions) but not others (texting). Critically, however, the former was a translation from the LAS world to the outside world, while the latter stayed within LAS's walls. Perhaps, then, English had truly become a cross-border language for Zahra.

Although using language in this way caused awkward moments with her friends, it did not seem to harm their relationships. This was not always the case with strangers. Zahra recounted the following, worth quoting in full:

In winter break, I was getting my national ID and I had to fill out the form, and I was just writing the numbers in English and then I hand in the form and the guy was like, 'What the hell?' And they're like, 'Why you wrote it in English?' And I'm like, 'Oh, sorry, did I?' It's just like... [trailed off]. It's hard and it bothers me because when you go home, people don't like it. It's not a good thing. It's actually funny because everyone encourages everyone to learn English – English is really good, you can communicate with the rest of the world – but then when it comes to this thing and someone just thinks in English and writes in English, they don't like it because they think you don't appreciate your language enough. And when you see that, you obviously get bothered and you think, 'Oh, what am I doing? Maybe I'm doing something wrong.' But I guess it's okay, but the roots should always be there.

This sense of being 'wrong' was contextual. As Zahra pointed out, the problem was not that she learned English but that she used English in the wrong space. She did not code-switch when required. This situation left such an impression on Zahra that she began questioning herself. Learning English at the expense of her native language thus engendered both logistical and emotional issues.

Notably, for some students, trading English for their native language seemed to be part of a longstanding plan. Guozhi's Chinese-Malaysian parents, for example, raised him in English because 'they thought that English would be my future because of how the US and the UK were such a powerhouse then – and even now.' This is particularly interesting given that English was prioritised over his parents' native Chinese, another world power's language. Guozhi thus learned English as part of his parents' strategy for his mobility.

Magnus was the only student who integrated re-learning his native language into his future plans. As mentioned above, Magnus did not want to attend university in his home country, Denmark, because he felt that his academic Danish was too weak. He thus planned to spend a gap year in Denmark before starting higher education abroad. The point was to rebuild his Danish identity – to 'reconnect', he said – before university. He knew statistics about Denmark ('we have a low homicide rate') but wanted to 'come back, live in it a little bit and then see what's going on, really.' In other words, he wanted to gain lived experiences of his country. This did not mean that Magnus would stay in Denmark. 'I'm kind of longing for it,' he said, 'but I feel I've had enough

of it and I want to see more.’ He planned to travel around the world knowing that Denmark would always be something ‘that I can fall back to.’

For young people at LAS, then, mobility took on a greater meaning than opening doors. It was the door. They felt that social, professional²¹ and even familial circles in their home country were no longer accessible to them. This complicates an argument made by Kenway et al. (2017, p. 156) that English-language education creates a ‘discernible linguistic hierarchy’ on a local level between those who speak English and those who do not. Such a hierarchy has also been found in Hong Kong (Lai & Byram, 2003; Wright & Lee, 2019) and South Korea (Song, 2013). Parents at the *Elite Schools* site in India, for example, did not want the language of instruction to be changed from English to Hindi because the former held more social status (Rizvi, 2014). Young people at LAS, however, did not identify with an English-speaking subgroup of their national elite. They felt displaced from it.

This sense of displacement was self-reported by students at the time of our interview. LAS did not have long-term data on the whereabouts of its alumni. Therefore, we do not know whether these young people might still return to their home countries after university. They might, of their own accord. Waters (2006, 2008), for instance, has shown that some students who go abroad for higher education then seek jobs in their home countries. Students might also be encouraged by their nation-states to return. China, for example, entices back overseas Chinese researchers by offering them elite university positions with good working conditions, significant funding and high

²¹ An exception is the young men who planned to take over family businesses, discussed later in this chapter.

salaries (Yang & Marini, 2019). Notably, though, some research has demonstrated that studying abroad hampers students' abilities to secure employment at home (Brooks et al., 2012).

However, there are two differences worth highlighting between LAS students and those who typically attend university abroad. One is the duration and timing of being abroad. Students could study at LAS for a maximum of six years, though many went for just two, for the IB programme. As I discuss next, they usually then stayed abroad for university, which is often three or four years. Thus, an LAS student could be away from home for 5-10 years before turning 21 or 22. This longer time away from a younger age may shape atypical outcomes compared to a student who goes abroad just for university.

A second difference relates to the financial resources with which LAS students go abroad. Some elite secondary school students in Singapore, for example, are sponsored by the state to attend elite UK universities in exchange for government service after their education (Ye & Nylander, 2015). LAS students did not participate in these kinds of programs. Instead, they self-funded their time abroad and therefore went abroad on their own terms. Their financial resources may also offer a kind of flexibility that typical university-abroad students do not have. Vast wealth can come with opportunities, such as job connections or, even, not needing to find gainful employment at all. Such wealth might therefore shape different mobility trends for LAS students than those seen in the extant literature on higher education.

International Futures

LAS students envisioned primarily international futures. This is most evident in how they approached their next life-step: university. Although it is unclear where every student in the year group I studied *went* to university, it is clear to where they *applied*. Of the 94 students, 21 applied to universities in their passport countries. If we remove American and British passport holders from the data, only four students did. In other words, non-Anglo or -American students primarily remained abroad for higher education.

There were various reasons for students to pursue opportunities abroad, including quality of life, career plans and networking opportunities. For example, Fredek, the Russian student from Tatarstan, developed anti-Russian sentiments whilst studying at LAS. 'When I came here,' he explained, 'I saw Russia from a different perspective. I started to see news from Europe.' Going abroad represented 'freedom of choice and freedom of movement', which he was happy to pursue. Diego had career reasons for leaving his home country Spain. At LAS, he saw that studying abroad meant 'having friends abroad, knowing people abroad, having experiences abroad'. Continuing this trajectory, Diego thought, would be better for his career. He intended to work at JPMorgan Chase and then open his own investment bank. Finally, Tanya had social motivations to remain abroad. As discussed in the previous chapter (page 225), she felt that Russians in Russia lived 'a super small life'. She instead saw herself as belonging amongst similarly-wealthy and -mobile young people.

However, sometimes being abroad felt like an undesirable but inevitable future. Irina, for example, felt a loss associated with joining a

globally mobile community. She explained, 'When I think of global citizens and when I'm trying to relate myself to this term, I think that's the people who don't have a home anymore. ... I think it's really easy to lose this sense of home.' Considering a future of always being *en route* caused her to feel uprooted. This was not something positive. She sensed that mobility was happening *to* her rather than being controlled *by* her:

I think I will definitely become even more of a global citizen and I'm not sure if that's what I really want but I see that's where I'm going. And I think if you just accept it, you can make a lot of it so that's what I'm planning to do.

Irina was making the best of her situation but may have mapped a different future if she felt she had the choice. Thus, mobility also can be seen as an inevitable way forward for these young people.

Some students envisioned the world as their oyster. Magnus, for example, explained, 'I don't want to have a plan. ... I'd rather just seize the opportunities that I can and go where I can and do as much as I can.' Similarly, Luke aimed to spend 'good chunks of time in cities in different places in the world just to see it and feel it.' Both Magnus and Luke, however, were wealthy, white young men from developed Western countries (Denmark and the US, respectively).

Over the next five sub-sections, I explore the stories of students who did not have such a privileged global position. I examine how their economic class, their race and nation and/or their gender articulated with their intended mobilities – or, with what Reynolds and Zontini call 'doing transnationalism' (2016, p. 383). This speaks to 'key conceptual questions around the convertibility and portability of capital, or spatialities of racialisation and the embodiment of status' (Waters, 2018, p. 6), as introduced on page 65. It also

extends recent work by Donnelly and Gamsu (2020), which shows that within the UK, students' university choices are contoured by 'geometries' of racial and ethnic power relations.

Economic Class

Students' preferred university locations point to how they activated economic class to achieve particular mobilities. On the whole, these young people sought certain places in which to study rather than certain universities. Global cities like London and New York often topped their lists (implications of these desired spaces are discussed later). In contrast to young people in *Class Choreographies*, who wanted to attend prestigious institutions (Kenway et al., 2017, Chapter 7), LAS students desired 'different friends to be made, different adventures,' according to one of them (Helena).

Extant literature suggests that it is a luxury of class to be unconcerned about one's academic credentials. Middle-class families, for example, may pursue mobility to get their children into status-conferring schools (Brooks & Waters, 2011; Waters, 2008, 2012). LAS students also sought status, but by association with prestigious global cities (see Savage et al., 2005). This reflects Donnelly and Gamsu's (2020) finding that privileged young people consider the cultural and social capital of a university's location when making higher education choices.

Furthermore, to choose to which space one moves and under what conditions is also a luxury of wealth (Bauman, 1998). However, as Bauman argues, not all mobility is created equal (see page 203). Young people at LAS experienced the glamour of a London or New York, not its 'filth and squalor'

(Bauman, 1998, p. 86). In other words, they moved as people *with* money rather than as people *seeking* it, such as migrant workers or refugees. Their sense of adventure was thus underwritten by wealth, which lowers the stakes. Helena, for example, knew that she could return home at any time, from anywhere: 'If I want, I can take a flight to Brazil,' she told me. She had done this from Switzerland, for a weekend, when she felt homesick.

The intersection of these students' classed mobilities and higher education choices is demonstrated by Jieun and Guozhi's stories. Jieun is a young woman from South Korea who applied to American, British and Dutch universities. Applying to Dutch institutions, she felt, went against a traditional Korean mindset that valued American and British degrees over others. Yet, what she saw as a non-hierarchical educational system in the Netherlands appealed to her personal belief in equality of education – her financially-exclusive LAS education notwithstanding. Jieun thus applied to Dutch universities for moral reasons, but to American and British ones for practical reasons: 'to get a job which I want.' She wanted to take a stand but also to protect her future.

Jieun ultimately attended a university in London. She planned to become an international lawyer because 'I want to keep moving a lot ... It's better for me to move around and experience different things.' She strategically pursued a monied kind of global mobility by acquiring a degree from a high-status country that would open the door to a high-paying and geographically-flexible profession.

The classed nature of Jieun's narrative is particularly illuminated when juxtaposed with Guozhi's. Guozhi is Malaysian and had financial assistance to

attend LAS. He went to LAS to escape the Malaysian education system, which he described as 'sub-par' compared to the IB programme. LAS also appealed to Guozhi because it was an American school with 'a lot of infrastructure to apply to America ... which is, in my opinion, what I thought about as the next goal or the next step.' He had set his sights on a liberal arts education at a US university. 'I think that my future is definitely in America,' he told me.

Guozhi was accepted to universities in the US, but without sufficient financial aid. He did, however, receive a full scholarship to a US university's branch campus in the Middle East. In the end, money (or, the lack thereof) curbed his desired mobility. Guozhi thereby faced a choice between what he wanted and what he could afford.

These narratives expose a stark difference between the ease with which Jieun chose where she wanted to study and the compromises that Guozhi made when doing the same. Both of their decisions were driven by money. In Jieun's case, this meant having the resources to live in an expensive city (London), where she could acquire a prestigious degree and pursue a well-paid career. In Guozhi's case, it meant attending the university he could afford, which was in a different country than he had hoped.

Intersections of Class and Race

Although economic class enabled (or circumscribed) some students' choices for the future, these young men and women may also face race-related barriers that class alone cannot overcome. We see this in Ya-Hui's story. Ya-Hui considered herself Taiwanese but also had an American passport. Her

parents planned for her to be born in the US so that she could acquire US citizenship. They thought, she explained to me, that this would later help her get into a US university – a priority, ‘because a fancy-named school probably helps you a lot.’

This statement implies two notable things. The first is that she and her family considered ‘fancy-named schools’ to be in the US and not elsewhere. The second is that Ya-Hui’s family saw American universities as prestigious by virtue of being in the US. The differences between universities and their rankings, to which many American families with secondary-school aged children are attuned, did not seem to matter. In other words, the international status of Ya-Hui’s university degree was more important than its national status within the US.

According to Ong, Chinese families in much of Asia saw an American university degree as the ‘ultimate symbolic capital necessary for global mobility’ (1999, p. 90). This is because the prestige of an American degree was thought to transfer from country to country. In this light, Ya-Hui and her family’s wish that she would attend a US university was culturally informed. It also reflected what Waters, in reference to Hong Kong students attending university in Canada, calls ‘part of a more general child-centred familial strategy of capital accumulation involving migration and transnational household arrangements’ (2005, p. 360).

At the same time, going to the US posed risks to Ya-Hui’s cultural ties. She felt strongly about preserving those ties. For that reason, she had attended LAS instead of a secondary school in the US. Her Asian friends who studied at boarding schools in America, Ya-Hui explained to me, assimilated

into the national culture both linguistically and culturally (Ya-Hui appeared to skewer them with the statement, 'Their parents were in sororities and fraternities'). LAS, on the other hand, seemed to promise acculturation rather than assimilation. This was even though Ya-Hui lost command of Mandarin, as mentioned in the previous section. According to Ya-Hui, this difference was attributable to the national diversity at LAS. In other words, there was no 'standard' to which to assimilate. I would further suggest that in the US, to speak and act like an *Asian-American*, as her friends did, is to limit the discrimination one faces as an *Asian immigrant*.

Despite her reservations about an American secondary school, Ya-Hui enrolled at a university in the US. She planned to be mobile after graduation – 'I don't want to stay in one place in the future,' she told me. This desire also shaped her career goals. Ya-Hui had wanted to be a medical doctor but then realised that physicians in the US are licensed by state, making moving more difficult. She then adjusted her ambitions to public health, 'because I feel like I get to move around more.' Ya-Hui thus opted for a less well-paid career because it would enable mobility.

Being racialised in America²², however, might risk Ya-Hui's advantages as an economically elite person. Her parents even experienced this. Ya-Hui's Taiwanese father had a job in the US but found living and working in the country 'super complicated'. 'They had a lot of difficulties,' Ya-Hui explained. 'Communication wasn't easy, and [my dad] had a lot of trouble because he

²² What I see as an issue of race is what Ong describes as 'the commonsensical view of ethnic succession' – that, 'recent arrivals from non-Western countries are expected to enter at the bottom of the socioeconomic ladder and wait their proper turn to reach middle-class status' (1999, p. 100).

was not American.’ Ya-Hui did not specify what this trouble was, and I did not interrupt her story to ask, though she did note that getting a visa was an issue. This personal history linked to the choices her parents later made for her: ‘They made sure their kids were born in the States, have a US nationality, made sure they know they’re bilingual, made sure they receive education.’

Although her parents tried to ensure that Ya-Hui would not face the same barriers in the US that they did, she may confront others. There are a number of ways in which racial discrimination could devalue her economic status and thus challenge the class advantages that she would otherwise enjoy. One is social depreciation of her economic capital. Ya-Hui is from a newly-wealthy geography and thus may be seen as ‘new money’. A media analysis found that this category is often vilified, particularly when it comes to Chinese, Russian or Arab ethnic groups (Jaworski & Thurlow, 2017).

Another potential barrier is the uneven conversion of economic capital into cultural capital (i.e., educational credentials). Although Ong (1999) claimed that Chinese families saw US degrees as tickets to global mobility, this has been contested elsewhere. It has been argued that in Hong Kong, for example, domestic degrees convey higher status than foreign ones (Sin et al., 2019; Waters & Leung, 2014). The prestige conferred by foreign degrees is thus inconsistent across contexts – an issue for someone who, like Ya-Hui, desires to be forever mobile.

Finally, a third possible issue is whether Ya-Hui can acquire social capital at an American university. *Class Choreographies* (2017, p. 194) tells the story of a young Asian woman who went to secondary school in the UK and then to university in the US. This young woman felt that racism prevented

her from integrating into the primarily white social milieu there, despite her similar economic background to her classmates'. As a result, she transferred to a university in her home country, South Korea. Although this example highlights discrimination in the US, this is not an exclusively American phenomenon. Darchy-Koechlin and Draelants (2010), for example, also found that foreign students at the French grandes écoles were valued less than their French classmates. Therefore, when it comes to race, discrimination can limit class advantages in a variety of ways and contexts.

Race and Nation

Like economic class, one's race and nation can both enable particular mobilities and put others out of reach. In the LAS year group that I studied, only two students were racial minorities within their own countries (Guozhi, see page 231, and an Indian-American). Yet, the others seemed aware that their majority-status could change with mobility. Many, in fact, would become minorities at university, such as a Black Kenyan who would study in the majority-white UK.²³

However, some of these young people planned mobilities that offered racial advantages. Corli, for example, is a white young woman who identified as South African but grew up in Switzerland. She never felt Swiss in part because she was 'heavily bullied', in her words, in local schools for her atypical hair. In contrast, when she was in South Africa, she told me, 'I just

²³ Although her narrative would have been a fruitful contribution to this research, I did not ask to interview her. We had a tense relationship resulting from a particular incident that almost caused her expulsion from LAS. This is an example of how, at times, being an insider researcher can be a disadvantage.

had such a good experience and I've never had anyone be mean to me or be cruel to me for the way I look.' For that reason, she wanted to return to South Africa at some point. In other words, Corli envisioned a country that had long been governed by racial apartheid as one that sees beyond 'looks'. This vision was enabled by the privilege of being white. Thus, with physical characteristics that were derided in Switzerland (her hair) and favoured in South Africa (her skin), Corli planned her future mobility to exploit the latter. She intended to capitalise on her racial privilege.

One's nation can also put privileges at risk when met with the realities of visa requirements. Visas remained a palpable barrier to travel for some LAS students. They and their parents strategized to get around this by acquiring other passports. Ya-Hui's parents, above, ensured she got an American one. Similarly, Sergei's mother flew to the US to give birth so that he would have a US passport. This was an exit strategy, as he described it to me, in case his home country became politically unstable. Olek, from Ukraine, applied to universities in Canada in hopes of eventually acquiring a Canadian passport. This required fewer visas than a Ukrainian passport did.

Such strategies recall Ong's (1999) finding that the business elite of Hong Kong sought additional passports to move through national borders with ease. However, as Ong points out, these businessmen are just that – men. The women in her study were the wives who went where their husbands sent them. They took care of the house and raised the children with the 'right' kind of social and cultural capital for the new environment. The next section explores this intersection of gender and nation through Natalia's narrative.

Intersections of Nation and Gender

Natalia was proud of her Mexican culture. She told me, 'You just get a sense of belonging in Mexico and it is really an amazing community – an amazing group of people.' She was also close with her family ('my cousins, my aunts, my uncles, my grandma') which she saw at least once a week when she was home and called once a week from Switzerland.

At the same time, Natalia's 'relationship with Mexico is very difficult.' This was because of gendered norms. She felt that in her community, 'everyone watches what you do, and they have certain expectations of how a lady is supposed to act, what she is or isn't supposed to do.' One example was around drinking. According to Natalia, girls can have 'one drink max because otherwise you're seen as boisterous and drinking too much and basically not good material for a girlfriend or future wife. And, guys,' she continued, 'guys can do whatever they want'. She then offered a number of other examples:

I cannot get in a car with a guy. I cannot go into an Uber alone. I cannot wear a certain length of skirt or I cannot wear certain cleavage even if it's totally acceptable. My mom is like, '[Natalia] – a proper lady...' ... And they [my family] start giving me this speech. They're like, 'Guys will see this, and they will think that you're easy and they will not want to marry you.'

Natalia concluded, 'There are many differences between men and women and that's something that bothers me, but I also celebrate [it] because it's part of my culture.' She accepted these views out of respect for her heritage.

The internal conflict arising from respect for and frustration with these double standards was so palpable that Natalia even constructed different personas. At the beginning of her time at LAS, 'I was very careful not to put any Snapchat stories or any pictures [on social media] of me in the club. I was

very careful to keep both my lives separated.’ She adjusted the optics of her life to fit her cultural surroundings, maintaining one image in Mexico while living a different life at LAS. The year of our interview, however, she decided, ‘I don’t need to change for Mexico. ... My [Mexican] friends, they will accept [me]. And if they really like me and want to marry me someday, they’re going to have to deal with the fact that once, I drank three beers.’ She thus still framed her social freedom in terms of her marriageability.

‘Marriageability’ is also where nation and gender intersect for Natalia. She contoured her envisioned mobility according to what she perceived as Mexico’s low international status and her own gendered expectations of being in a relationship:

I think I would eventually go back to Mexico, but I still have this idea that the guy... [trailed off]. If you meet a guy and he’s from, I don’t know, France or something and you’re from Mexico, you go with the guy. It’s always the girl that goes. ... I don’t think I could convince my future husband, ‘Hey, let’s move to Mexico’ because it has such [a] bad idea of Mexico and how unsafe it is but it’s really actually quite fun and relatively safe, you just have to know what to do, what not to do, and stuff like that. (Emphasis hers.)

Two interconnected issues are worth highlighting. One is the different international statuses that Natalia ascribed to France, a European nation, and to Mexico. At the time, she planned to study in either London or Paris (she chose London). When she mentioned meeting a guy from France, then, this was a concrete possibility. Her intended direction of movement from Global South to Global North is discussed later.

The other issue is the gendered assumption that Natalia made about who needs to accommodate whom in a relationship, regardless of individual desires (in her case, to move back to Mexico). Natalia thus constructed her future mobilities so as to gain both geographical status and a husband.

Natalia also had career ambitions alongside those for marriage:

I have a big plan, which is I'm going to study ... for three years, then I'm going to go into a company, wherever I'm working, and I'm going to be there for five years or I'm going to be traveling around all over, getting jobs all over the place, until I find a place that I really like and then I'm going to settle down, get married, have kids.

In some ways, this mirrors what Kenway et al. (2017, p. 239) see as an updated, international version of gender roles. In that version, men aspire to global jobs while women aspire to becoming their well-travelled, high-status wives. However, what Natalia wanted to accomplish was about more than enhancing her market value. It was also about setting up her own future:

I'm going to get my own [brand] and I'm going to open a store and hopefully get it successful enough that I can work from home and spend time with my kids. ... I don't want to give up my ambition in life just to stay at home. ... I want to be working. I want to have my job and also be a stay-at-home mom at the same time.

Navigating between conflicting social messages, Natalia sought a way to 'have it all' as an independent woman as well as a wife and mother.

In this way, Natalia can be seen as a 'flexible feminist' (Fahey, 2014). As introduced in Chapter 2 (page 49), Fahey (2014) examined how young women at two school sites from the *Elite Schools* project constructed notions of femininity. She found that the traditionally-masculine characteristics of mobility and financial independence were being taken on by these young women. At the same time, their feminist-inspired ideas sometimes conflicted with those of their socially-conservative families. They thus learned to adapt their practice of feminism to their context. Drawing from Ong's (1999) concept of 'flexible citizenship', Fahey terms these young women 'flexible feminists'. Returning to the LAS setting, perhaps Natalia was trying out her own brand of flexible feminism. She wanted to fill both traditional and non-traditional roles

on her own terms, within her own context, though her envisioned mobility was still contoured by her gendered and national identities.

Gender

Gender impacted the planned futures of both young men and women at LAS. Since I discussed this theme in relation to young women through Natalia's narrative above, this section instead focuses on young men at the school. Some of their visions for mobility were also shaped by gendered roles – in this case, a traditionally-male duty to take over the family business. For such young men, particular routes forward had a pre-determined destination.

Ahmed, Olek and Sergei planned to go abroad for university and then, at some point, return to their home countries to take over their family businesses. These young men framed this responsibility as more of a duty than a desire. Ahmed, for example, explained, 'I have to – I want to – go back to Saudi because the work is there. My family is there. There's nothing else outside of Saudi that I have. ... That was the plan – to leave for university and then come back to Saudi.' Although he corrected 'have' to 'want', returning to his home country seemed primarily to be an expectation tied to family, regardless of – though perhaps also aligned with – his personal wishes.

At the same time, Ahmed had short-term choices. As he said, the 'plan' was university abroad and then a job at home. The where and what of university was up to him, to some degree. Normally, Ahmed told me, he would have gone to university to learn English. Because of his English-language LAS education, however, he could instead choose to study business. The goal of his university education shifted from language-based to content-

based. Ahmed applied to business schools in London, Paris and Montréal – notably, two French-speaking cities. Although his path was still informed by his destination, it newly included other opportunities along the way.

I have made the point previously that mobility can put advantages at risk (Ong, 1999). The young men poised to take over businesses, however, had less at stake. They did not have to worry about the conversion of their capitals because they had management positions waiting for them. However, as a trade-off, they also had less freedom than their classmates in deciding their future mobilities. They could only choose their route home.

This kind of trajectory was not always a gendered narrative of men taking over from their fathers. One young woman (Irina) also had the option of taking over from her mother. Originally, Irina had planned to run her mother's business. This changed during her time at LAS. After seeing 'so many more perspectives', Irina began considering other futures. 'There are so many things to do and you have so many opportunities,' Irina told me. 'You just have to be brave enough to look them in the eye and try things.' Framed in this way, Irina felt empowered to defy expectations of succession and forge her own path forward. The young men above, in contrast, articulated no such alternative option. Perhaps when it comes to family businesses, then, being a woman makes it easier to choose a different route. As seen in Natalia's story, this is not true when it comes to marriage.

Paths Well-Travelled

The mobilities of young people at LAS did not map uncharted waters. They often followed pre-existing routes. This section discusses two such routes:

moving to the Global North and joining a diasporic community. It ends by reflecting on an important implication that arises from this – that there are points of convergence between the theories of ‘choreography’ (Kenway et al., 2017) and ‘interpretation’.

The Global North

As mentioned in Chapter 8 (page 213), LAS students’ university choices often brought them to the Global North. According to LAS brochures, around 45% of graduating students study in North America, 30% in the UK and 20% in Europe. North American and British universities were thus these students’ primary destinations. This breakdown was also reflected in my group of interviewees. As seen in Table 1 (page 100), eight (42%) went to North America (three to Canada and five to the US) and five (26%) went to the UK. Another four (21%) stayed in Europe. They studied in Denmark, the Netherlands, Spain or Switzerland. One student (5%) took a gap year. Finally, one young person (Guozhi) attended university outside of an Anglophone or European nation, in the Middle East. However, as discussed above, he studied at a branch campus of an American school.

Out of the 94 students in the year group I studied, only two national groups as a whole applied to universities in their passport country. These were American students (15/15) and British students (2/2). As previously mentioned, only four other students also applied to universities in their home countries: one from Brazil (out of three Brazilian students), two from Spain (out of four) and one from Turkey (out of three). Likewise, amongst my

interviewees, Americans were the only young people who returned to their home country for higher education.

LAS students' routes to higher education were thus mostly from the Global South to the Global North or within the Global North. Kenway et al. argue that leaving the Global South for British and North American universities is associated with 'joining a "superior" class in a superior location' (2017, p. 231). This suggests that students seek to gain advantages by moving to globally-prestigious locations.

Although this seemed broadly true amongst my interviewees, the details were context-dependent. For example, although Irina applied to universities in the US, she was concerned about social backlash in Russia if she moved there. 'The view,' she said, '[is] that America is this horrible nation. ... [Moving there] is betraying the whole Russian nation.' Ultimately, Irina went to university in Canada. Only one of four Russian participants went to a US university. That was Fredek, who was also the only Russian who wanted to permanently leave his home country. In other words, there is no global consensus about what is globally prestigious, though there might be trends.

LAS students typically did not follow migratory paths from the so-called periphery to the centre of colonial power. Only one participant moved along colonial routes, from South Africa to the Netherlands. This parallels a finding in McCarthy, Bulut, Castro, Goel, and Greenhalgh-Spencer (2014), from the Barbados school site in the *Elite Schools* project. The authors argue that students there no longer took the reverse colonial path to the UK for higher education. Instead, they looked to the 'new world' of entrepreneurship and cultural status: North America.

Diasporic Communities

In some ways, however, a sense of the past continued to influence how students navigated their futures. Zahra, for example, looked to her diasporic community. According to Brubaker (2005), 'diaspora' has become both a contested and a catch-all term. His seminal discussion of this begins from the observation that a "diaspora" diaspora' has emerged, in which the word's wide and disparate use has lessened 'its discriminating power – its ability to pick out phenomena, to make distinctions' (Brubaker, 2005, p. 3). Here, 'diaspora' refers to Brubaker's conceptualisation of the term: a displaced community employed 'to formulate expectations, to mobilize energies, to appeal to loyalties' (2005, p. 12). Below, we will see how Zahra's Iranian community functioned in this way.

However, rather than focusing on this 'diaspora' in and of itself, I here attend to Zahra's construction of what Reynolds and Zontini (2016) call a 'diasporic identity'. This is developed in those authors' introduction to a special issue on transnational and diasporic youth identities. Reynolds and Zontini describe such an identity as 'a place where there are multiple linguistic and cultural affiliations' (2016, p. 381) – which we saw in relation to Zahra earlier in this chapter. They further construct this notion as 'a place where the formation of identity reaches beyond the national borders, where people actively mobilise their diverse sources of identifications to resist subordination and where new subject positions emerge out of cross-cultural exchange and the negotiation of difference' (2016, p. 381). Zahra's linking to and from these elements of a 'diasporic identity' will unfold over this section.

Zahra left her home country Iran to seek what she called 'somewhere better'. By this, she meant somewhere she could get a rigorous education and have more cultural freedom as a woman. Her extended family, for example, did not know that she studied abroad; it would be seen as unacceptable for a young woman to live on her own. At family events, then, her parents made excuses for her absence. Although Zahra still felt that Iran would always be her 'home', she did not want to return. She sought to construct her desired identity as a liberated and educated woman elsewhere.

However, because of her Iranian citizenship, it was unclear where she could do that. When I asked her where she envisioned her future, Zahra responded, 'It's really hard. [pause] It's really hard. I don't know. I mean I know but maybe... [trailed off]. Okay, so maybe I'd like to live in Canada because [cleared throat] I think it's a country where we are kind of accepted.' My question made her uncomfortable. An unspoken undertone was Zahra's original desire to attend university in the US. Between then and our interview, however, US President Trump signed an Executive Order banning nationals from seven predominantly Muslim countries, including Iran. This was not just a legal act but also a symbolic one, signalling who was welcome and, moreover, who was not.

Zahra then had to recalibrate her envisioned future. Canada became her antithesis to the US, a place where Iranians could be proud of their heritage:

From what I've heard, it's like if you go to Canada as an Iranian, you won't feel homeless – I mean, not homeless but homesick – because there are a lot of big populations of Iranians living there and there are events. ... There's a part of a town that just relates to Iranians. So, I think that's really cool.

This 'part of town' reflected Brubaker's diaspora, above. This displaced community helped Zahra form expectations of Iranian life in Canada and imagine getting involved in community events. It also spoke to her desire to stay connected from afar – to feel neither 'homeless' nor 'homesick'.

Zahra's description also reflected the mobilising of different associations 'to resist subordination' (Reynolds & Zontini, 2016). Although she was excited to join an Iranian community that would reinforce her identity as a welcome one (*vis-à-vis* in the US), she was not so happy to have other Iranians at LAS when this exposed her to cultural constraints:

I travelled a lot during the long weekends [at LAS] and went to different cities. ... But when my [Iranian] friend [at LAS] sees me, 'Oh, you're traveling – does your mom know?' She was trying to tell her mom that I'm traveling alone to somewhere and my mom was like, 'Oh, her mom is so stupid. She calls me and she's like, "Oh, [Zahra] is doing this."' And I'm just so surprised. Why does it matter to you what I'm doing? You know, it's a cultural thing. ... And now I think I shouldn't have wished for Iranians here because they're just trouble.

Zahra tried to de-link from the Iranian community at LAS when it threatened her freedom of movement. Yet, in looking ahead to Canada, linking to that community signalled other kinds of freedoms – namely, the freedom to be proud to be Iranian. This demonstrates a kind of flexibility in her identifications, to maximise their advantages.

Zahra knew a handful of families that had moved to the US, Canada or Europe. She thus had first-hand accounts of what it was like to be Iranian in different places. From these, she developed a sense of where she wanted to live – and what kind of diasporic Iranian she wanted to be. This supports findings from Brooks and Waters (2010) that social networks play an important role for UK students deciding whether and where to study abroad. It also extends Donnelly and Gamsu (2020). Those authors argue that UK

students from lower socio-economic backgrounds and, particularly, from minority ethnic groups planned their higher education mobilities around where they had social connections. Zahra's story suggests that this also holds true for an economically-elite student facing a geographical future in which she will become an ethnic minority.

Finally, in reference to Reynolds and Zontini's (2016) 'diasporic identity', there are hints that Zahra's future positionality will grow out of cross-cultural exchange. She already experienced this in a small way, in the US. At an academic summer program, where she studied engineering, she befriended students taking writing classes:

And they were just so passionate about writing. They would write when they're eating breakfast, when they're eating lunch, in the afternoon, after classes. ... In Iran, you don't take a class of creative writing. You just do it beside your math or beside your science. ... So, when I go back home, the first thing that I want to tell my friends is about these things. ... And they're like, 'Oh that's so cool. I never thought about it.' And I'm like, 'Oh, I know.' Because we never think about anything else except for math and science.

Although this was in an academic context, it points to Zahra's willingness to engage with other approaches. We thus see a glimmer of how 'negotiating difference' (Reynolds & Zontini, 2016) may play out, contouring an awareness of both Zahra's own culturally-informed ideas and those of others.

Hence, Zahra felt she could build a home in Canada, with a diasporic arrangement that provided the best of both worlds: cultural connection and living abroad. This was a common sentiment within her Iranian network, one that she only understood when she contemplated the same future:

I think this thing is really nice that you live somewhere that you want and then you're like, 'Oh, I want to go to Iran, but I don't want to live there.' That's what everyone says and all the people who I know who live in US or Canada or Europe, they always get so excited about going to Iran but then I'm like, 'Then why did you move?' And now I understand.

She thus learned from how other Iranians navigated their mobilities and eventually followed their footsteps.

A Convergence of Theories

This section has demonstrated that while LAS students were grappling with their future mobilities, they were not reinventing the wheel. Their movements followed paths that had been laid either by global flows of power or by their diasporas. Historical migration thus continued to be relevant. It pointed these young people towards particular routes that have stood the test of time.

That LAS students followed traditional routes of migration raises a critical point for this thesis. Their future paths were not unique; in fact, they had been and continued to be taken by many other young people, including those in *Class Choreographies* (Kenway et al., 2017). This phenomenon thus represents a convergence of the theories of 'choreography' (Kenway et al., 2017) and 'interpretation'. In other words, from these two theories built from two different kinds of school sites, we see the same outcome. I suggest two possible reasons for this.

The first is that elite schools may not have the ultimate power to influence students' futures. We saw this in Chapter 2 (page 47), in relation to the abilities and limits of elite schools to create particular subjectivities. While an elite school education may shape students' lives in many significant ways, it may not be able to foster a sense of truly global mobility. Other factors, such

as history and community, may instead drive how mobilities are planned and executed. Thus, both 'choreography' and 'interpretation' face limited scope when it comes to students' futures.

The second is that there may be points of interaction – 'conjectures' (Kenway et al., 2017, p. 10), as discussed on page 56 – between different kinds of elite schools and their class formation processes. Students' future mobilities may be one of them. In other words, 'choreography' in one kind of space and 'interpretation' in another may intersect at the point of sending students out into the world. This would imply that there are also other points of interaction between these theories. Seeking these out would help us understand how different theories of class formation not only complement but also connect to one another (page 278).

Conclusion

This chapter investigated how young people at LAS approached their future mobilities. I argued that their trajectories minimised risk to their privileges. First, I showed, they embraced mobility. Losing command of their native languages engendered social, professional and even familial difficulties in their home countries. Mobility thus offered a door to opportunity. Their planned futures, I then demonstrated, articulated with their class, their race and nation and/or their gender. Finally, I argued that these students' routes followed both traditional flows of global resources and their diasporic communities. I suggest that this points to a convergence of Kenway et al.'s (2017) and my theories, as both lead to the same student outcomes.

Ong (1999) claims that the value of one's privileges depends on who

has a 'right' to social power and influence within a particular context. In other Bourdieusian words (page 65), capitals derive power from the field in which they are located. Moving fields puts that power at risk, unless there is a consensus between fields about the worth of those capitals. Ong (1999) shows that there is *not* such a consensus because context-specific norms and prejudices shape each field differently. This phenomenon, I argued, shaped how LAS students envisioned their routes of mobility.

Returning to Koh's question, 'Do elite students have agency over their destiny *or* does wider societal structure pose as obstacles to their elite destination?' (2018, p. 185 emphasis mine), I proffer that it is not an 'or' but an 'and' – that, LAS students made choices with structural obstacles in mind. This lends further evidence to my theory of 'interpretation'. LAS students did not embrace unbounded mobility around the globe, as school marketing materials suggest. Instead, they adapted the notion of global mobility to their particular identities, in ways that worked for them.

The next and final chapter offers a conclusion to this thesis. I summarise my findings, discuss their significance and reflect on a limitation. I also suggest avenues for additional research. The chapter ends with a note on the broader importance and timeliness of this work.

Chapter 10

Conclusion

Summary of the Findings

This case study of elite schooling asked: How do practices and everyday experiences at LAS, a school for the global financial elite, inform an emerging theory of transnational class formation? That emerging theory, proposed by Kenway et al. (2017), proffers that elite schools ‘choreograph’ such class formation. As discussed on page 35, I understand ‘class’ as E.P. Thompson did, as ‘happening’ when ‘some men [*sic*], as a result of common experiences (inherited or shared), feel and articulate the identity of their interests as between themselves, and as against other men whose interests are different from (and usually opposed to) theirs’ (1966, p. 9).

Notably, LAS is a different kind of elite school than those studied by Kenway et al. (2017). Those authors examined seven elite schools that were connected to the former British empire and that educated primarily a local elite. LAS, on the other hand, was a younger elite school connected to the American Cold War (Chapter 6) and informed by its Swiss location and boarding school label (Chapter 5). Additionally, its students were mostly non-Swiss. They represented an international cross-section of the global financial elite. As discussed in Chapter 1 (page 17), LAS was thus not beholden to the needs or visions of one particular nation. This makes it an excellent site in which to study the possibilities and constraints of transnational class formation through elite schooling.

I approached my work with Weis and Fine's (2012) notion of 'critical bifocality' (page 74). This theory of method 'account[s] empirically for global, national, and local transformations as insinuated, embodied, and resisted by youth and adults trying to make sense of current educational and economic possibilities in massively shifting contexts' (2012, p. 173). This approach thus attends to how actors at LAS adapt (and adapt to) frameworks on multiple scales. To make sense of my data, I used two theoretical tools developed by Ong (1999): 'state strategies' and 'flexible citizens' (page 61). These concepts highlight the responsive strategies deployed by both institutions and individuals in the face of changing global markets and mobilities. Ong's tools thereby home in on how things become 'thinkable, practicable, and desirable' (1999, p. 5) in evolving circumstances.

My data chapters began by arguing that LAS's link to images of Switzerland shaped its students in some significant ways, including in who was attracted to the school, how its young people understood themselves and what mindsets they cultivated (Chapter 5). However, I then went on to show that the school's abilities to shape its students were limited in other significant ways. I first demonstrated that over time, LAS leadership needed to shift its clientele to keep the school financially afloat. Although F. Ott originally linked LAS to the American Cold War elite (Chapter 6), his son unevenly re-oriented the school towards the global financial elite, thereby keeping up with a changing socio-political and economic landscape (Chapter 7). This points to the school leadership's constraints in bringing together particular kinds of young people, and thus in forming a particular kind of social class.

The thesis then explored whether an LAS education successfully shaped the subjectivities that it claimed to create. I showed that LAS's motto of 'developing ... citizens of the world' filtered down unevenly to student experiences, which were often informed by refractions of imperial pasts and presents (Chapter 8). The school's notion of global mobility was also circumscribed by students in ways that worked for their particular identities (Chapter 9). Thus, while LAS provided a framework for students to forge common experiences and identities (E. P. Thompson, 1966), its young people made this framework their own.

Hence, from two different kinds of evidence (documentary and interview/observational) around two different kinds of players (school leadership and students), I argue that Kenway et al.'s (2017) theory does not capture practices and experiences at LAS. Thus, another theory is needed. Using a different metaphor from the performing arts, I put forward the idea of 'interpretation' (page 68). To 'interpret' in dance, for example, is to make choreography one's own. This metaphor thereby shifts our focus from institutionally-driven frameworks to how various actors make sense of those frameworks. It also helps clarify how an LAS education can play a significant role in shaping students in some ways, while being limited in others.

Interactions Between the Theories

The theory of 'interpretation' thus captures a different dynamic in processes of class formation than does 'choreography'. 'Choreography' focuses on how school leadership positions institutions and students on a global stage. 'Interpretation', on the other hand, attends to how school leadership

strategically and flexibly negotiates an institution's place within shifting socio-political and economic frameworks, and to how students then also strategically and flexibly negotiate *their* positionalities within those institutional frameworks. In other words, it highlights that institutional and individual processes are both engendered and contoured by, and contested within, their broader structures.

Different dynamics of class formation, such as those represented by the concepts of 'choreography' and 'interpretation', probably interact. This may happen through 'conjectures', or connections in particular moments (Kenway et al., 2017, p. 10). One such conjecture highlighted in Chapter 9 (page 269) is that these different processes may lead to the same future paths of mobility. Interactions between these dynamics may also, in the end, be overlaps. 'Interpretation', for example, may ultimately be a sub-theory of 'choreography', or vice versa. As noted in Chapter 3 (page 68), I decided not to focus on how Bourdieu's interconnected concepts of capital, field and habitus play out at LAS. Perhaps if I had, I would have ended up with a theoretical framework that positioned the concept of 'interpretation' within, rather than as complementary to, 'choreography'.

This kind of empirical and theoretical work is thus far from done – a theme to which this conclusion often returns. More research will allow us to untangle how 'choreography' and 'interpretation' interact, and to develop still more concepts around class formation processes. This thesis thus continues the conversation begun by Kenway et al. (2017); it certainly does not end it. Instead, it points to the need for more investigations along these lines.

Significance of the Findings

Three significant findings arise from this thesis. The first is that the heterogeneity of elite schools may mean that we need multiple theories to adequately elucidate their processes. LAS and Kenway et al.'s (2017) schools, which suggest different theories of class formation through elite schooling, for example, are also differently positioned. Kenway et al.'s school sites educated primarily a national elite; LAS, an international cross-section of the global elite. Domhoff (1967), one of the first three major figures in elite studies, theorised that power works differently on different scales (page 30). He meant this in relation to decision-making on a community level and a national level. However, this may be the effect we see here, with the difference in scale being between educating a national elite and an international elite. Importantly, this means that an assemblage of complementary and perhaps converging theories is needed to capture what is happening in this educational landscape.

A second significant finding is that the multiplicities of elite school student experiences and belongings that is seen in the extant literature (page 47) may, in an international setting, take on an element of 'multi-scalarity' (Howard & Kenway, 2015). As first discussed on page 60, multi-scalarity refers to elite schools 'emphasizing one scale more than another at certain times and in certain places' (Howard & Kenway, 2015, p. 1025). This thesis extends this idea by demonstrating that such a phenomenon is also displayed by an institution's young people. LAS students, I showed, dynamically linked to and from their national and global realms in ways that worked for them (Chapters 8 and 9).

Lastly, a third significant finding is that we cannot take the existence of a transnational elite class for granted. As mentioned above, E.P. Thompson (1966) defines 'class' as arising from recognised shared interests and identities amongst individuals. For Kenway and Koh, as discussed on page 40, a *transnational* elite class describes those 'which are not particularly rooted in any nation state, which relate to all nation states opportunistically and which ultimately are concerned with claiming power and profit in the transnational sphere' (2013, p. 287). Hence, transnational elite class formation refers to building a common identity around global mobility, opportunity and wealth. However, findings throughout this thesis support Cousin, Khan and Mears's (2018) contention that cohesiveness amongst the elite cannot be assumed (page 37). The idea of a transnational elite class thus needs to be revisited, complicated and refined.

A Limitation

LAS is just one school. Can a single site build an emerging theory? I argue that it can and should. However, I also argue that we should know whether that site presents an exception to, a counter-narrative to or a reflection of wider trends. Currently, LAS's positionality is unclear.

We need more research on other international, economically-elite schools to figure this out. I suggest that LAS offers an example of a counter-narrative. It does not appear to be an exception. LAS is a particular kind of elite school informed by its Swiss boarding school label and images of Switzerland (Chapter 5). There are probably other institutions in this sub-group of elite schools, such as Aiglon, Beau Soleil or Rosey (page 116). Their

processes of class formation may be similar. Yet, I would also argue that what is happening at LAS is not happening globally. The characteristics above, while not entirely unique, are also not very widespread. It would seem, then, that LAS provides an example of a counter-narrative.

If true, this suggests that different kinds of elite schools fill different kinds of roles in class formation. Concluding this would then allow us to investigate the points of convergence between these roles, and to build a robust understanding of how class formation theories both complement and connect to one another. However, as a study of one elite school, this thesis can point to but does not evidence such conclusions. In this way, its narrow breadth can be seen as a limitation.

Further Research

Three further studies would productively continue the work of this thesis. One would be a follow-up study in 10 years. As Waters points out in her review of *Class Choreographies* (Kenway et al., 2017) and two other books,

What we do not get to see, from these books, is what happens to these elites once they leave the confines of their schools. In effect, we do not get to see whether their schooling has ‘worked’ or whether its eliteness remains within the school. We do not get to see whether the outside world continues to recognise and reward their ‘elite’ schooling. (Waters, 2018, p. 8)

In other words, elite studies research often examines a particular moment in time, but what of the longer view? Can we extrapolate from students’ secondary school experiences to their life experiences, as so much literature tends to do? Follow-up studies can address these questions. A good example is work by Weis (1990, 2004), who returned to a working-class town 15 years after her initial research to see how participants’ lives had unfolded in the

meantime. Waters (2009) also followed up with five women whom she had originally interviewed eight years prior, for a study on East Asian families' experiences of transnationalism in Canada.

In relation to this thesis, a follow-up study could investigate how LAS students' understandings of themselves, each other and their mobilities develop. As noted in Chapter 8 (page 236), it is possible that how LAS students see their global and national positionalities will change. It would also be useful to see whether and why these students ultimately return to their home countries, despite feeling displaced from them at the time of my interviews (page 246).

My second suggestion for further research is to explore other parts of LAS's 'institutional wormhole' (Nespor, 2014). Presented in Chapter 2 (page 51), a 'wormhole' is a pathway through which elite status is maintained and reproduced. As I demonstrated in that chapter, elite schooling is one part of a wider strategy in this process. Although we can piece together parts of this wormhole on a national scale from the extant literature, we are at a loss when it comes to the transnational scale. It would therefore be useful for further work to parse what constitutes this pathway and how those elements connect.

My third suggestion is to deepen our understanding of a transnational elite class as relational. As I mentioned in Chapter 2 (page 28), E.P. Thompson maintains that 'class is a relationship, and not a thing' (1966, p. 11). This means that a transnational elite class must be in conversation with other social classes. Some scholars have examined the global precariat (Bauman, 1998), the global middle class (Ball & Nikita, 2014; Koo, 2016; Maxwell et al., 2019 special issue) and relations between them (Sassen,

2007; Weiss, 2005). Robinson has also framed the transnational elite as controlling 'globalized circuits of production' (2004, p. 47), thereby inserting this group into wider flows of power. In the context of LAS, I briefly referred to this relationality in Chapter 5 (page 134). However, we need to keep going with this line of inquiry. In other words, how are LAS students both situated and implicated in relations between social classes? Once we understand this, we understand much more about whether, how and with what consequences a transnational elite class has come into being.

Conclusion

This research is important and timely. As seen in Chapter 2, the questions asked and answered by elite studies over time have reflected broader socio-political concerns. In the general present moment, we see a reckoning between globalism and nationalism. Appadurai's (1996, 2006) argument that globalisation leads to increased connections between people across time and space as well as to xenophobia and supremacism (page 39, 41) seems to be playing out on daily news cycles. I have already pointed to some examples: the UK's exit from the EU, the election of US President Trump and the closing of internal EU borders in the COVID-19 pandemic (page 34). To understand this complex fabric of our social world, we need to understand those with both 'power to' and 'power over' (Maxwell, 2015) weaving and unravelling it: the global elite. This thesis is a significant contribution to what we know about this group and one of its educational institutions.

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