

“Diversity”, Inequality, and Elite Education:
A Genealogy of “Diversity” Discourse in U.S. Independent Schools

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education in
Teachers College, Columbia University

2023

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Abstract

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The past 45 years have witnessed unprecedented growth in social and economic inequality in the U.S. Much has been studied regarding the economic, sociological, and educational conditions that have led to increasing inequality, but it has mainly focused on the lower end of the socio-economic spectrum. Recently there has been an increase in research on elites, but one area that has remained relatively understudied is the private, independent school industry.

Since the Civil Rights Era of the 1960’s, most of the 1,600 independent schools in the U.S. have attempted to become accessible to more students, mainly by admitting growing numbers of students of color. However, over the last 20 years financial aid relative to school revenue has remained essentially flat, suggesting that “diversity” in independent schools has taken on a particular meaning. This study traces the history of “diversity” and interrogates why “diversity” is a problem worth addressing, how it has been conceived at different times, and what

doing so has accomplished for independent schools. Previous literature has relied on Marxist and Bourdieusian structuralist theories to describe the mechanisms of social reproduction in elite schools. Instead, this study employs a Foucauldian framework and discourse analysis to examine the primary industry journal, *Independent School*, to construct a genealogy of “diversity” discourse since 1976. This approach endeavors to broaden the theoretical perspectives of elite research and reconceptualize independent schools’ role in perpetuating inequities in the U.S.

The study finds six distinctive eras of “diversity” discourse within these 45 years, each with its own “diverse” subjectivities. “Diversity” has functioned in two primary modes corresponding to different regimes of truth. The first that spans 1976 to 1998 appreciates “diversity” as a matter of threat that must first be neutralized and then can be harnessed for the benefits of elites. In the second period (1999 to 2021) “diversity” transitions to a series of actions and skills that elites can equip themselves with to better their chances of success in their futures as societal leaders. The implications extend from there that by producing conceptions of “diversity” like these, particularly as matters of race, sexual orientation, and gender, (and not socioeconomic status) the institutional apparatus maintains a moral façade and obscures the role it plays in maintaining social stratification in the U.S.

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Acknowledgments

To my dissertation committee, Dr. Daniel Friedrich, Dr. Shamus Khan, Dr. Thomas Hatch, and Dr. Ansley Erickson, each of you has been indispensable and irreplaceable. I cannot express my gratitude for your support and guidance. Dani, over the last five years you have been an invaluable teacher, advisor, and co-author and without you this project never would have materialized. You have always pushed me to do my best thinking while allowing for my process to unfold in its own way. You have been my guide through the doctoral journey and the world of academia; I would have been lost without your wisdom. Shamus, this study would not have been possible without the trail that you blazed. It is evident in what follows how inspirational your work has been for my own, but I am forever indebted to you for your willingness to participate in this project. Tom, from two courses before I even joined the doctoral program, a semester as a CA for School Change, and two rounds of dissertation seminar, it must have felt like you could never get rid of me. Your presence and feedback helped form this study over the entirety of the last six years. At each step you helped me to see the problems I want to address in a different light, and most importantly, understand why they matter to anyone outside my dysfunctional niche of the world of education. Ansley, I feel so fortunate that you were there at the beginning of this project and are a part of its completion. This dissertation was only possible because of your crucial feedback at its inception and your willingness to let me play with these ideas as a thought experiment in historical methods. Thank you so much to all of you.

To my family: Elsie and Liam, I love you, and despite your best efforts, I finished. You taught me an important lesson about efficiency and why it's better to get a doctorate before

having children. Finally, and most importantly, Emily. When I came home from work one day six years ago and said I wanted to join the doctoral program, you never questioned it. You never made me feel like I made the wrong choice, even if there were times I thought I had. No one else would have done that for me. Thank you for never wanting anything other than for me to be happy. I love you.

Dedication

For my dad, who we lost along the way. He taught us all that the answer to every problem was to learn more.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Public awareness of social and economic inequality in the U.S. and other developed nations has grown increasingly mainstream in recent years. Within the changing discourse of equity and the effects of capitalism, recent research has focused on the empirical study of inequality as a phenomenon; the findings have confirmed many people's assumptions. In the U.S., wealth concentration among the top 0.1% reached its apex in 1929, steadily fell from 1929 to 1978, but has persistently increased since (Saez & Zucman, 2016). In fact, between 1978 and 2012, the concentration of wealth among this 0.1% rose from 7% to 22%, while over this same period of time the wealth share of the bottom 90% declined (Saez & Zucman, 2016). This indicates that not only are the wealthiest getting wealthier, but that their gains come at the expense of middle and low-income Americans, rather than the remainder of the top 10%. Using the Gini Coefficient, a measure of the gap between the actual income distribution and an equal distribution curve, Atkinson (2015) confirms that the increase in income inequality has mirrored wealth inequality since 1977 in the U.S. Piketty (2013) has likewise argued the economic inequality present today in the developed democracies of Western Europe and North America have only seen precedent during the Gilded Age of the late 19th century.

In keeping with the nation's mythology of the "American Dream," the traditional American response to economic and social inequalities has been to chase equity of opportunity. During the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960's Presidents Kennedy and Johnson signed executive orders making it unlawful for employers to "discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, creed, color, or national origin" (Exec. Order No. 10925, 1961). This set the legal basis for affirmative action, which has since been broadly adopted by or imposed through derivative legislation on governmental, business, educational,

and other institutions. While affirmative action policy has undoubtedly played a role in American institutional behavior over the past sixty years, it also represents a particular understanding of equality primary as a matter of access. The logic here seems common sensical: if marginalized groups do not have access to the same educational and workplace opportunities, how can they ever hope to achieve upward social mobility? Raj Chetty and his colleagues (2014) have shown that during the period since the passage of Affirmative Action legislation, mobility trends have not correlated with the growth in inequality in the U.S. In other words, while we may expect to see a decline in social and economic mobility during this period of increasing inequality, based on educational attainment and income data, children born in the 1990's have the same likelihood of moving up in the income distribution as those born in the 1970's (Chetty et al., 2014). At the same time, however, Chetty and his colleagues found that the impact of the "birth lottery" (2014), or the economic situation of a child's family has grown in importance.

This seems paradoxical; if rates of mobility are a constant, and marginalized groups have gained access to institutions they were previously shut out of, why is inequality rising? Sociologist Shamus Khan argues that we have made the mistake of confusing openness with equality (2011). He urges us to consider that "our equating of diversity with equality is problematic" (Khan, 2011, p. 195) because it undermines the group cohesion necessary to challenge an unequal and hierarchical social and economic system that perpetuates elite dominance. If we accept Khan's thesis that the Civil Rights Movement was capable of affecting legal change because of the social solidarity of its members, we must then consider how the elite have been able to fracture that cohesion for their own gain while attracting only limited public scrutiny. Khan's belief, based on an ethnographic study he performed at St. Paul's School, one of the nation's oldest and most prestigious private boarding schools, is that the elite's conception of

themselves has changed over time to justify and naturalize their privileged standing. I will detail Khan's study in more depth in chapter two, but for now, it is important to recognize the competing forces of elite preservation and the compulsion of the elite to frame their position as naturally-founded and morally justifiable.

Growing up I attended an independent school from pre-school through eighth grade before enrolling in a well-known Northeastern U.S. boarding school, one of what Cookson and Persell have designated the "select sixteen" (1985), a group of the oldest and most elite American schools. In the years since I have worked in four other independent schools as a teacher and administrator, visited dozens as a part of an exmissions position, completed a masters degree in private school leadership, and kept up with industry literature and conferences. From this extensive personal experience, I have witnessed a distinct shift over time in how independent schools frame their role in American society. It has become clear that, uniformly across the industry, a commitment to "diversity, equity, and inclusion" has become a mandatory part of any school's self-description. In their published materials, these schools will typically define "diversity, equity, and inclusion" as being welcoming to students from a list of marginalized identities (race, gender, sexuality, class, and religion, usually in that order). Anecdotally, however, it seems not much has changed about how students experience these schools or how these institutions function within the American hierarchy.

My perspective on this is informed by two central observations from my time working in these contexts. First, students of color overwhelmingly feel uncomfortable in these environments, an experience that has been confirmed by multiple empirical studies (Arrington & Stevenson, 2010; DeCuir-Gunby, Martin, & Cooper, 2012; Gaztambide-Fernández, 2009; Kuriloff, Soto, & Garver, 2010). Second, though race was the key visible difference that allowed

students of color to be othered in these settings, over the years many students of color shared with me that the difference in socio-economic class background, or the symptoms of that difference, were often the things that discomforted them most. Having to travel great distances to get to school, worrying about the status associated with clothing and technology, and hearing about classmates' exotic vacations and luxurious homes were concrete differences in lived experience that demonstrated an unbridgeable chasm between students.

What interests me in particular, then, is what has anchored the unequal status quo in these schools during a period of what appears to be significant demographic and school culture change. I suspect that the answer lies in how independent schools have conceptualized "diverse" identities in ways that serve their own ends. In this study I intend to explore how "diverse" identities have been produced at different points in the past to better understand what has changed, what has not, and how these shifts inform the present state of the independent school industry.

Background of the Problem

In her influential essay, "Up the Anthropologist," from 1974, Laura Nader first called for anthropologists to turn more frequent attention to the study of the elite, coining the phrase "studying up" in the process. This call has been echoed intermittently over time (Gusterson, 1997; Marcus & Fischer, 1986), but one domain in which it has found purchase is the study of elite, independent private schools in the U.S. (see Definition of Terms section for more on "independent schools"). Over their long history in the U.S., dating back in some cases to the 18th century, independent schools (private, non-parochial K-12 schools) have educated the nation's young elite (Kraushaar, 1976; McLachlan, 1970). These schools were an outgrowth of "quasi-private" (Kane, 2008a) schools that operated autonomously, but were dependent on public

funding during the Colonial era and the early years of the United States. As the common school movement accelerated in the 19th century, many previously independent schools became part of the larger system of public education while many others closed (Kliebard, 2004); however, some schools persisted and thrived as a result of their strong reputations among the social and economic elite (Kane, 2008a; Powell, 1999).

During the 20th century, independent schools opened across the country to meet the demand of what were typically homogenous groups of families seeking an educational alternative that met their desire for high quality or a specific set of values (Cookson & Persell, 1985; Kane, 2008a; Kraushaar, 1976). During the past 100 years independent schools have educated a small, but remarkably stable fraction of U.S. students enrolling about 1% of all students and 10% of private school students (Kane, 1992; NAIS, 2020a). In spite of educating a relatively small proportion of American children, these institutions have wielded outsized influence in American society, government, and industry; a cursory glance through the rolls of leading U.S. social, political, and corporate institutions will reveal a disproportionate representation of alumni of independent schools (Baltzell, 1964; Cookson & Persell, 1985; Khan, 2011; Mills, 1956).

Through much of the 20th century, independent schools existed within their own elite social circles, populated by the children of the white, Anglo-Saxon, protestant (WASP) aristocracy of the U.S. Their role was to instill conservative WASP values in the children of the wealthy and serve as feeder institutions for elite universities (Baltzell, 1964; Cookson & Persell, 1985; Karabel, 2005; Khan, 2011; McLachlan, 1970; Mills, 1956). Many of the most elite schools were residential and sequestered in rural areas of the Northeast or day schools located in the most expensive neighborhoods and suburbs of cities like Boston, New York, Philadelphia,

and Washington D.C. By mid-century the number of independent schools had grown across the country with nearly every major city hosting a handful of highly selective institutions (Kraushaar, 1976). Though some independent schools, particularly Northeastern boarding schools, admitted their first students of color in the late 1940's and 1950's, it was not until the 1960's and 1970's, after the *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) decision and the Civil Rights Movement, that independent schools admitted significant numbers of students of color (Purdy, 2018). Though sociologists like Mills (1956) and Baltzell (1964) had theorized about the role that elite boarding schools played in the reproduction of the upper-class, it was not until the 1980's that independent schools became the site of critical empirical study (Cookson & Persell, 1985).

Though independent schools have increased the “diversity” of their student bodies since the 1970's, it seems they have done little to address social and economic inequality. To Khan's (2011) point that openness is not synonymous with equality, data from the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) indicate that there has been a decoupling of the pursuit of racial and class “diversity.” Figure 1 shows the discrepancy between the increase in the percentage of students in independent schools who identify as students of color and the percentage of schools' total income allocated to financial aid over the past 20 years. Perhaps there is no better indicator of how independent schools have chosen to define and pursue diversity than nearly doubling their enrollment of students of color while increasing their financial aid relative to income by just 6%.

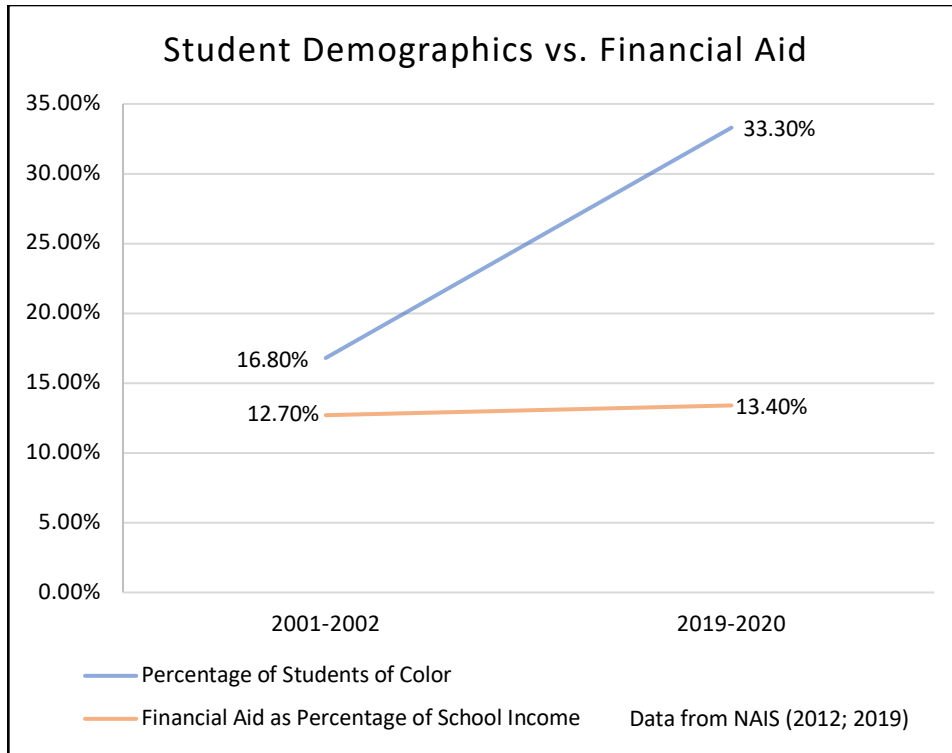


Figure 1

These data, however, are very infrequently presented together and instead this trend is often obscured by two means. First, independent schools tend to publish two numbers prominently in their materials: the percentage of their student body that identify as students of color and the *total dollars* allocated to financial aid. By focusing on the absolute value of financial aid, they decontextualize their financial aid figures from the rest of their budgets. From year to year, then, it often looks as if financial aid budgets are increasing substantially, signifying a deeper commitment to equitable access over time, but as Figure 1 shows, financial aid budgets are barely outstripping tuition increases. Second, independent schools have allocated their financial aid differently in the past two decades, opting to spread financial aid budgets more thinly over more students rather than increase the real value of financial aid grants.

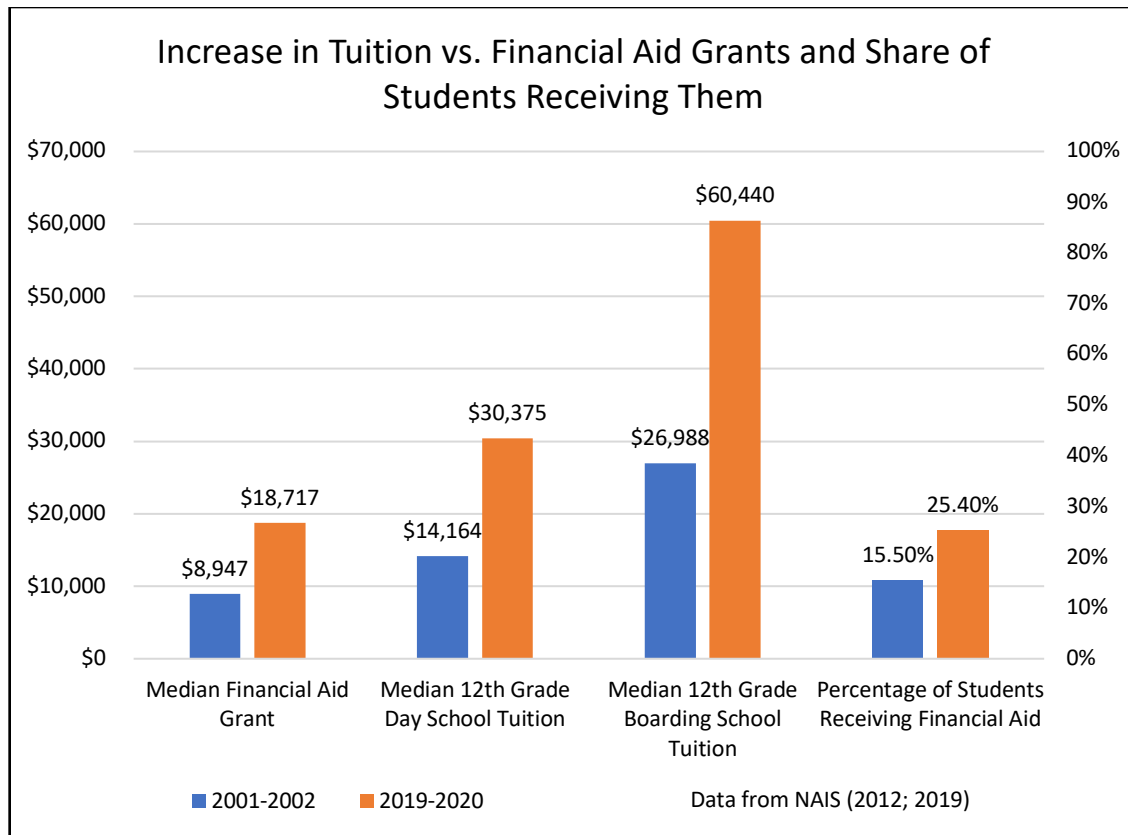


Figure 2

On its face, the increase in the percentage of students receiving aid and the increase in the value of grants shown in Figure 2 seem like substantial improvements. But even though two-thirds more students are receiving aid and the median grant has doubled in the last 20 years, over the same period of time tuitions at independent schools have increased at an even higher rate. This means that students today are receiving essentially the same percentage of tuition in financial aid as they did in 2001, so the extra 6% of income that schools are dedicating to financial aid is going to new recipients, rather than increasing the real value of aid grants. In both cases then (the publication of the absolute dollar amount and the percentage of students who receive aid) independent schools create an illusion of rapid and substantial increases in financial access for prospective students even though the underlying resources allocated to financial aid have grown only marginally over the last two decades.

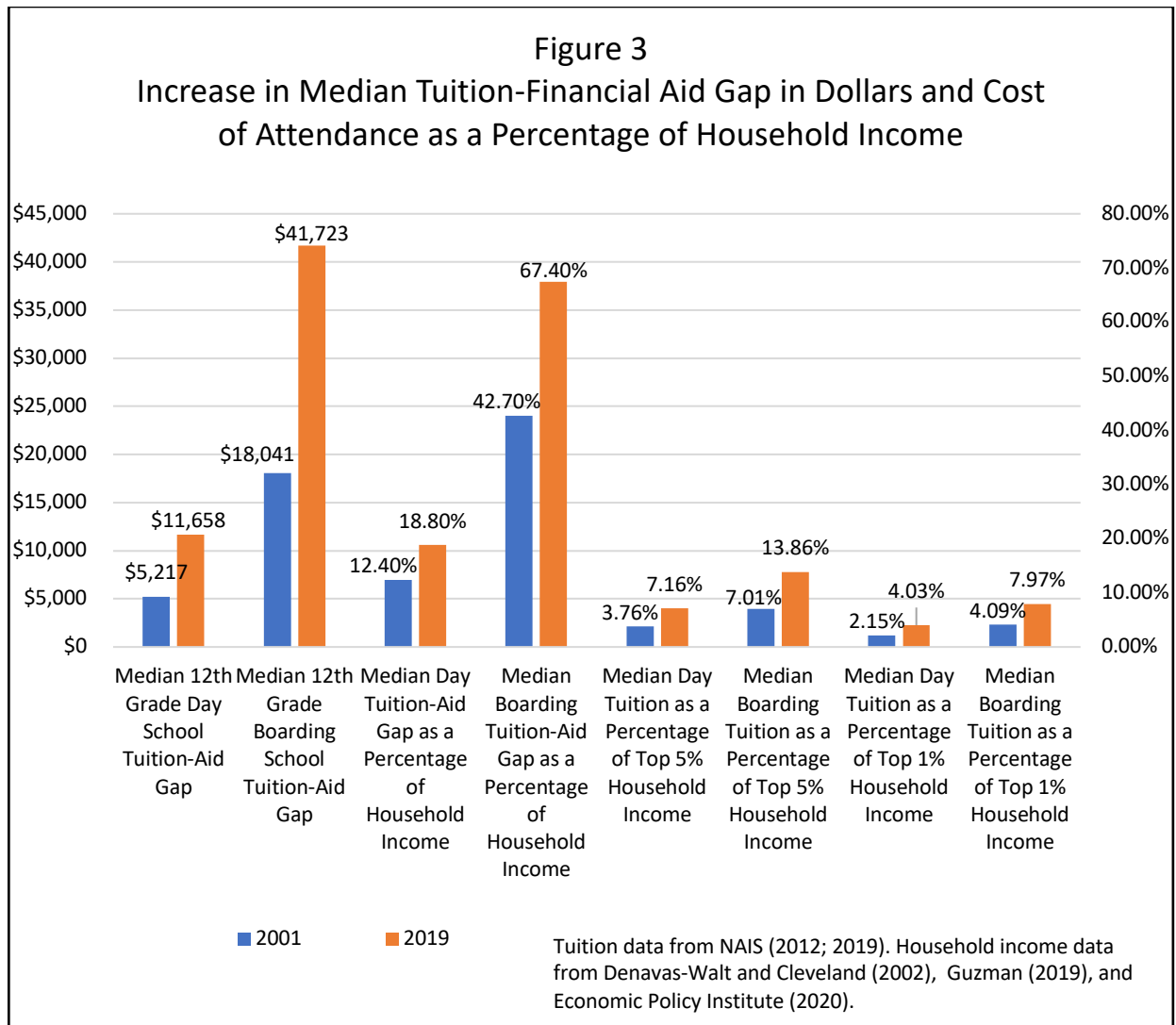


Figure 3

Similarly, the high tuition costs at independent schools, even for those who receive financial aid grants, have grown more burdensome in the past twenty years. Between 2001 and 2018, the median household income rose from \$42,228 (Denavas-Walt & Cleveland, 2002) to \$61,937 (Guzman, 2019), which represents roughly a 50% increase. As Figure 3 shows, the gaps between independent school financial aid grants and tuition have vastly outpaced American income gains and thus the cost of attending an independent school has risen sharply as a percentage of household income. We also cannot overlook the fact that household income represents pre-tax revenue while tuition is paid post-tax.

This then leads us to wonder who can actually afford independent schools, even with financial aid. In 2004, Phillips Exeter Academy, one of the oldest and most elite independent schools in the U.S., commissioned a report to assess the affordability of the school over time. The report found that in 1980, the school's tuition was affordable by 40% of Americans; by 2004 that number had plummeted to 6% (Fabrikant, 2008). Given the financial numbers outlined above, it seems safe to assume that even fewer families can afford tuition today. A similar pattern has emerged in elite colleges, structurally and historically a close cousin of independent schools. As of 2005, only 3% of students at the "top 150 colleges" came from families in the bottom quartile of the income distribution while over 90% of Harvard students came from families earning above the median income (Delbanco, 2007). Independent schools rely on roughly comparable, though slightly lower, tuitions and much smaller average endowments, so it is easy to imagine these findings are broadly applicable to them as well. Even with an average financial aid grant to attend an independent day school, the median household would be hard-pressed to pay \$11,658, or 19% of their gross income for one child's schooling.

If this is the situation for the one quarter of students in independent schools who receive financial aid, of course the remaining three quarters, or roughly 525,000 students (NAIS, 2020a), must come from families at the very upper-end of the income distribution who have \$27,000 to \$60,000 in post-tax income to spend on tuition for each of their children. While the cost of a year of day school tuition *with* a median financial aid grant represents 19% of a median household's income, the cost of a *full* tuition for a top 5% household would be just 7% of annual income. That number drops to 4% of annual earnings for the top 1% of households. Not only is the cost of attendance five times higher for a median household than a top 1% household as a share of annual income, but the difference in remaining income after paying to attend an independent

school is stark. Accounting for an average tuition-financial aid gap, a median household in 2019 will be left with \$51,161 if they choose to have one child attend an independent school. This amount represents about a \$15,500 increase from 2001. The corresponding numbers for a top 1% household paying full tuition are \$707,952 and \$62,717. This means that even though median independent school tuitions have more than doubled over the past two decades, as has the percentage of household income they represent for earners in the top 1%, the growth of income among the most financially elite has risen so rapidly that the gains they have made in that time could now pay for two extra tuitions a year. In essence, despite substantial tuition increases, independent schools have become more affordable for the highest earners and less accessible for everyone else.

Statement of the Problem

It is clear then that while independent schools have felt urgency to make themselves more accessible to students from all racial and ethnic groups, they have been much less successful in economically diversifying their communities. In fact, we may suspect that as these schools have become financially attainable to fewer and fewer students, they have likely become more socio-economically homogenous. Yet, as demonstrated through schools' marketing materials, NAIS publications, and state and regional independent school associations' programming, more and more these schools voice a commitment to equity and social justice. This contradiction forces us to consider the particular ways in which access is opening to these schools, and how "diversity" discourse produces particular subjects deemed worthy of admission to these disproportionately influential institutions and the elite class of American society.

Purpose and Rationale for the Study

Though independent schools educate only a small fraction of students in the U.S., their outsize representation in institutions of power makes the discourses they embrace impactful for many more Americans. In recent years two scholars have produced exceptional ethnographies that detail the experiences of students in elite independent boarding schools. Rubén Gaztambide-Fernández’s (2009a) two-year study of the pseudonymous “Weston School” outside of Boston illuminates the ways in which racial and class boundaries are formed within the school environment even as students are assimilated into the elite and separated from their previous experiences. Khan’s (2011) research at St. Paul’s, perhaps more directly answering Nader’s (1974) call to “study up,” reveals the nuanced ways in which students learn not just to be elite, but how to understand themselves as deserving of privilege because of their innate talent and hard work, a discourse that naturalizes inequality and their position at the top of the social hierarchy. Both of these ethnographies dramatically update and expand upon the analysis of the experience of students in elite boarding schools that was begun by Peter Cookson and Caroline Persell (1985) in their study of 55 American and 13 British residential schools. This work has advanced our understanding of dynamics in elite schools by leaps and bounds, but by locating their studies in single boarding school contexts, their rich description of elite formation does overlook a large swath of independent school contexts.

Two issues arise here when considering these studies’ impact on our understanding of the socio-cultural roles that independent schools inhabit more broadly. First, boarding schools only represent about 15% of independent schools in the U.S. (NAIS, 2019a). Their attraction as an object of study is powerful not just because they are bastions of elite habitus production, but they are total institutions that dictate nearly every waking moment of students’ lives during the school year. As such, they are optimal for embedded ethnographic study. However, the attention paid to

residential schools has left independent day schools relatively under-studied. The second concern is that almost all of the research performed in independent schools, boarding and day alike, has utilized ethnographic or more general qualitative methods to study the experience of students. Each of these endeavors, which will be discussed in more detail in chapter two, has provided meaningful insight into the cultural dynamics at play in independent schools, but has avoided analyzing independent schools' behavior as an industry.

What I propose, then, is a new approach to understanding how independent schools position themselves in relation to inequality in the U.S. as a set of institutions, particularly in examining how they conceptualize “diversity” and “diverse” subjects, how they have positioned themselves in relation to discourses of “diversity” and inequality over time, and how they benefit from these knowledges. In other words, if what is missing from the current literature is an *institutional* perspective on independent schools, I am interested in what their attitudes and narratives about privilege, “diversity,” and inequality are, how they have been presented at different points in the past, and what discourses framing these concerns in particular ways have accomplished for the industry.

Rather than focusing on the experience of students as the existing literature has, I propose taking a more top down approach of examining the discourse and behaviors of the independent school industry by analyzing printed material from the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS), which is the one nationwide, industry-focused organization. NAIS is a voluntary membership association that counts 1,603 schools (NAIS, 2020a) among its ranks. Though there are about a dozen regional and state associations that are primarily responsible for accrediting and running professional development workshops for independent schools, NAIS is the only group that positions itself as a research and policy organization. It is also the only

nationwide association that publishes a periodical about and for independent school leaders and educators. Though autonomy is a central feature of independent school identity, schools' affiliations with one another as an industry through their membership in NAIS and regional associations does indicate a broad set of shared concerns. NAIS's quarterly magazine, *Independent School*, is arguably the most accurate representation of common practices and interests among these institutions.

As the primary venue for institutional conversation about current topics in independent schools, *Independent School* provides a unique opportunity for a Foucauldian discourse analysis that sheds light on the practices of the industry. This analysis will focus on the change in “diversity” language from the first issue of *Independent School* in 1976 to 2021, which coincides with the current era of widening income and wealth inequality (Atkinson, 2015; Piketty, 2013; Saez & Zucman, 2015). After an initial analysis of *Independent School* determines thematic eras of “diversity” discourse, other data sources will be analyzed to complicate and complement the study's findings. Guided by an initial analysis of the magazine, I pursue an examination of head of school, diversity officer, and admission positions job descriptions, as well as Black@, Asian@, and LGBTQ@ Instagram accounts. Studying how the pursuit of “diversity” alternately competes and resonates with other discourses (college admissions, curriculum, financial aid, etc.) will hopefully shed light on how these schools prioritize certain types of access over others and utilize language to justify or obscure their position in American society.

Research Questions

Foucault once said of his work that “what I tried to do from the beginning was to analyze the process of ‘problematization’—which means: how and why certain things, behaviour, phenomena, processes become a problem” (Foucault, 1983, lecture 6, p. 66). In the spirit of this

concern with “problematization” the proposed study will be guided by one primary research question and a two subsidiary, but related questions:

- How has the problem of “diversity” been conceived in elite educational institutions over the past 45 years?
 - What is the genealogy of “diversity” discourse in independent schools and how has this discourse rendered (in)visible racial, ethnic, economic, and social inequalities to varying degrees?
 - How do continuities and discontinuities in “diversity” discourse relate to who is granted access to independent schools and what rationales are produced to justify these inclusions and exclusions?

Theoretical Framework

In approaching these research questions, I intend to pursue a bilevel analysis, or what Foucault describes as both “critical” and “genealogical” (1981). For Foucault, the critical process of analysis seeks to understand how a discourse controls thought, forms subjectivities, distinguishes true from false, divides and produces normal and abnormal identities, and how discourses meet and interact with one another. A genealogical approach focuses on how discourses have been formed and modified over time, have built upon one another, and inform the present regime of truth (Foucault, 1980). Foucault stresses that

these two tasks are never completely separable: there are not, on one side, the forms of rejection, exclusion, regrouping and attribution, and then on the other side, at a deeper level, the spontaneous surging-up of discourses which, immediately before or after their manifestation, are submitted to selection and control... The difference between the critical and the genealogical enterprise is not so much a difference of object or domain, but of point of attack, perspective, and delimitation. (1981, p. 71-72)

This study, then, will attempt to follow the directive that “the critical and the genealogical descriptions must alternate, and complement each other, each supporting the other by turns”

(Foucault, 1981, p. 73), and in so doing, learn how independent school discourses have made “diverse” subjects at different points in time and how the contemporary regime of truth has been constructed.

In some ways this pushes against sociologists who study the elite, for whom Bourdieu and structuralist theories of class inequality have been a guiding light (Binder, Davis & Bloom, 2016; Bourdieu, 1986; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990; Flemmen, et al., 2017; Khan, 2011; 2012b). Up until the 1980’s the examination of independent schools tended toward the historical and historicist, but since then they have adopted significant portions of these sorts of structural theories of social reproduction as well (Cookson & Persell, 1985; Gaztambide-Férnandez, 2009a). While Bourdieu’s concepts of cultural and social capital in particular (1986), are meaningful for an understanding of how elite status relies on more than just economic dominance, social reproduction theory can fall into two traps that are relevant to this study.

First, the idea that there is unidirectional power exerted by independent schools as a set of dominant institutions upon the marginalized is misleading. In response, I would argue that independent schools have utilized specific discourses about “diversity” and inequality and a web of power relations to contribute to building a regime of truth that produces specific identities of the marginalized. Viewed in this way “diversity” is not just a repressive ideology weaponized by an elite cabal for the purpose justifying inequity, but rather one discourse among several mobilized to create a system or

‘general politics’ of truth: that is, the types of discourse which [a regime of truth] accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true. (Foucault, 1980, p. 131)

What is considered “true” and “false” according to the regime of truth of independent schools and the interlocking series of discourses it constitutes creates the thinkable and unthinkable, the sayable and unsayable within the industry. The power to produce these discourses requires an authority that must be interrogated as well; how independent schools become a speaking subject will be a central part of how a genealogical investigation of this sort proceeds. By adopting the Foucauldian understanding of regimes of truth, this study will be equipped to analyze how independent schools have deployed certain beliefs about “diversity” and inequality, their purposes in U.S. society, and independent schools’ position within these discourses in ways that are self-serving and preserve certain relations of power.

Second, a structuralist analysis of independent schools would suggest that these schools have undergone some linear development over time that has led directly to the particular, dominant form they exhibit today. Instead, I believe it is more fruitful to take a genealogical (Foucault, 1980) approach to understanding their regimes of truth today and at different, discontinuous points during the past 45 years. For Foucault, genealogy is “a form of history which can account for the constitution of knowledges, discourses, domains of objects etc., without having to make reference to a subject which is either transcendental in relation to the field of events or runs in its empty sameness throughout the course of history” (1980, p. 117). Foucault pushes back against the historical materialism of the Marxist tradition and its assumption of a progressive march through time that is inherently comprehensible to an enlightened observer. Garland interprets this notion of genealogy as analysis that “traces how contemporary practices and institutions emerged out of specific struggles, conflicts, alliances, and exercises of power, many of which are nowadays forgotten” (2014, p. 372). Essential to this model of historical exploration is that,

the idea is not to connect the present-day phenomenon to its origins, as if one were showing a building resting on its foundations, a building solidly rooted in the past and confidently projected into the future... The idea, instead, is to trace the erratic and discontinuous process whereby the past became the present. (Garland, 2014, p. 372)

These two theoretical notions, genealogy and the relational quality of power that produces subjectivities within discourses sanctioned by regimes of truth, inform my approach to this study and extend beyond the more traditional structuralist approaches that have been used in prior studies of independent schools and elites in general.

Significance of the Study

At its most basic level, the proposed study attempts to explore partially established phenomena from a new perspective over a longer span of time. Previous research has focused on the ways in which students of color are included or excluded from these elite environments (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2009a; Purdy, 2018) or how students are taught to understand and perform eliteness through explicit and hidden curricula in ways that benefit them as individuals and as a social class (Cookson & Persell, 1985; Howard, 2008; Khan, 2011); this project will consider instead how independent institutions benefit from discursive practices that produce elite and “diverse” identities. I believe that this study will unearth how the “diversity” discourse utilized by independent schools obscures their role in perpetuating inequality in the U.S. and, in doing so, can open a new line of inquiry focused on these schools as an institutional body that performs a fracturing function in U.S. society.

In certain respects, this study lacks the capacity to be conclusive. To allege that independent schools do this thing or perform that function will always be a generalization given their range of philosophical and educational approaches. An analysis of a magazine published by NAIS, in its most strict interpretation, is only an analysis of one organization’s opinions; however, if understood in a broader sense as a representation of an independent school

institutional apparatus, “the coupling of a set of practices and regime of truth” (Foucault, 2010, p. 18), such an analysis opens up new possibilities for determining the role that this largely under-scrutinized industry plays in U.S. society (see “Definition of Terms” section for more on the variety of independent schools and the representative role of NAIS). If we can make sense of how these schools continue to exist in a paradoxical space of opening access to all while simultaneously preserving and widening social divisions, there may be an opportunity to both stem rising inequalities and think more broadly about how comparable institutions are utilizing similar techniques in other areas of U.S. society.

Definition of Terms

Independent Schools

The term “independent school” serves two functions, one pragmatic and the other rhetorical. The first is a matter of distinguishing a set of schools that share a certain set of features from the broader group of private schools in the U.S. The second works to position this group of schools as distinctive and free from the constraints of government and larger organizational bureaucracy imposed on most schools. The latter goal indicates a specific understanding of what makes or inhibits quality education. For the purposes of this study, I will be using the pragmatic form in order to identify a category of schools who participate in a discourse community around a set of shared concerns. However, it must be noted that NAIS’s definition of the term “independent school” stakes a philosophical claim as to the identity of this group of institutions:

Independent schools are non-profit private schools that are independent in philosophy: each is driven by a unique mission. They are also independent in the way they are managed and financed: each is governed by an independent board of trustees and each is primarily supported through tuition payments and charitable contributions. They are accountable to their communities and are accredited by state-approved accrediting bodies. (NAIS, 2020a)

This definition is at once literal and vague, but this follows a certain logic. NAIS is a membership organization that comprises over 1,600 schools (NAIS, 2020a) of varying pedagogical, curricular, and political stripe, and thus specificity around the relatively uncontroversial (at least within the industry) financial and governance structure of these schools makes sense. Pearl Rock Kane, former director of the Klingenstein Center at Teachers College, Columbia University, one of the very few graduate programs focused on private schools in the U.S., elaborates on this definition by adding small size, self-defined curriculum, self-selected students, self-selected faculty, self-governance through a board of trustees, and financial self-support (1992, 2008) to the list of common traits.

Otto Kraushaar (1976) argues that a primary cause for the adoption of the moniker “independent” is that during the 19th century “‘private’ acquired pejorative meaning such as elitism, snobbery, or undemocratic and un-American attitudes... The nonsectarian private schools, sensitive to the pejorative meanings attaching to “private,” prefer to be known as independent schools” (p. 45). However, as much is often made of the non-sectarian quality of independent schools, it is worth noting as well that “the distinction between independent and denominational schools is blurred somewhat by the fact that certain church schools are closely allied to the independents. This is true generally of Episcopal, Presbyterian, and Quaker schools, as well as of certain Catholic ones” (Kraushaar, 1976, p. 45-46). While the boundaries around which institutions are considered independent schools do become murkier when religious affiliation is considered, governance still provides the clearest method of division. While many independent schools are historically or actively affiliated with a religious denomination, they are generally not governed by church or other religious organizations directly. As Kraushaar notes, two of the most significant religious traditions that independent schools have emerged from are

the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) and the Episcopal Church. Quaker schools do tend to have a more direct affiliations with specific Quaker meetings (the congregational unit of the Society of Friends), but the egalitarian and consensus-based ideals of the denomination have left the schools largely free to govern themselves, even if some of the meeting's governors sit on the boards of the schools. Conversely, though the Episcopal Church is quite centralized and hierarchical, Episcopal schools are easily separated into two categories. The National Association of Episcopal Schools (NAES), the voluntary membership organization for Episcopal schools in the U.S. indicates that of its 1,182 members only 140 are "diocesan or independent schools" (NAES, 2020), as opposed to the 1,042 Episcopal schools that are "sponsored" (read governed) by Episcopal parishes, cathedrals, or seminaries. In short, though many independent schools do affiliate themselves with the religious principles of specific denominations, they more readily meet the definitions of independent schools laid out above in that they are not subject to direct governance from any other organization.

Gaztambide-Féernandez (2009b) offers one final definition, and though it is meant specifically to address elite boarding schools, it is relevant to the proposed study. He suggests that elite boarding schools are defined by being

"(a) typologically elite, based on their identification as "independent schools"; (b) scholastically elite, based on both 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." (p. 1093)

If we are to broaden this definition to the full scope of independent schools, some amendments are necessary, but the essence holds true. At a minimum the previous illustration of the financial means required to attend independent schools shows that they are demographically elite. Though Gaztambide-Féernandez's geographical eliteness references the location of boarding schools in

the Northeast U.S., independent day schools tend to be clustered in wealthy neighborhoods of urban areas or affluent suburbs. Additionally, independent schools are overwhelmingly known for their historical and academic prestige. Finally, though circularly referential, the self-identification as an “independent” school is a central determinant of being an independent school.

Though there are surely schools in the U.S. that meet many or all of the above criteria, by nature, these schools are not homogenous. They cover the gamut of geographies, sizes, residential status, ages served, prestige, financial stability, and political orientations; however, the choice to identify in this way and to join NAIS as members signals a desire to be a part of the community and conversation of “independent schools.” On the whole, the affiliation with NAIS is not a superficial one, especially when it comes to participation in “diversity” discourse. An illustration of the widespread engagement with common independent school concerns is the input schools have in NAIS’s two annual conferences. One, the NAIS Annual Conference mirrors in content the sort of general topics addressed in *Independent School* magazine, while the other, the People of Color Conference (PoCC), which is open to White and faculty and staff of color, concentrates specifically on issues of “diversity,” “equity,” and “inclusion.” In 2019 and 2020 alone, representatives of 238 different schools, or 15% of NAIS membership, presented or ran workshops at PoCC (NAIS, 2019b; 2020e), numbers which are actually depressed by 2020’s PoCC being an abbreviated, virtual conference as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. If we expand our view to include the NAIS Annual Conference as well for those two years, 500 schools, or 31% of NAIS membership, as well as 12 state or regional independent school associations conducted sessions at NAIS conferences (NAIS, 2019c; 2020f). These schools, in addition to being numerous, are also geographically varied; 40 U.S. states and six countries were

represented in just these two years. While some states like California, New York, and Pennsylvania were most highly represented at these conferences, they are also the states with the highest concentrations of NAIS members and were geographically proximate for conferences held in Philadelphia, Seattle, and Long Beach, CA during these two years.

All of this suggests that, despite the heterogeneity of independent schools, their eagerness to participate in the collective production of shared discourses signals there is a core set of beliefs and practices that apply to all (or at least a critical mass) of them. It seems clear that the highly visible position given to “diversity” discourse within this larger web of discourses is indicative of “diversity” as a location of convergence and struggle. Just as NAIS conference programs are sites of discursive production, so too is the broader reaching and more frequently disseminated *Independent School* magazine, which makes it an appropriate object of study as I search for reflections of “diversity” discourse in this industry at discrete moments in time.

National Association of Independent Schools

NAIS is a non-profit industry association made up of roughly 1,600 K-12 schools in the U.S. (NAIS, 2020a). NAIS was incorporated in 1962 when two fore-runner organizations, Independent Schools Education Board (ISEB) and the National Council of Independent Schools (NCIS) voted to merge (NAIS, 2020c; Purdy, 2018). In 2021, NAIS is governed by a board of trustees comprised of 17 heads of independent schools, one senior lecturer at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, and four NAIS staff members including the association’s president (NAIS, 2020b). The board composition has changed over time and annual reports that list board members are only available back to 2001-2002, but since then the board has remained almost identical in terms of number of members and professional background of the trustees (NAIS, 2020b).

Though NAIS has no formal governance or accountability role in the industry, it does provide policy recommendations and support for the regional and state associations that do accredit independent schools. In spite of the organization's lack of direct oversight of schools, its role as a sort of think tank for the industry makes it the central locus for the production and spread of knowledge about independent schools. The primary avenues for the dissemination of this knowledge are NAIS's two annual conferences, intermittently published handbooks and guides, and its quarterly magazine for members, *Independent School*.

Independent School Magazine

Independent School magazine continues on the series of a previous publication, *Independent School Bulletin*, which was put out by NCIS. Since 2001 it has been released as four issues quarterly, with each volume beginning in the fall to track the academic year; prior to 2001 there was no summer issue. Though NAIS is a for-profit corporation, Independent School Management, release handbook and guide-type publications, *Independent School* is the closest thing the industry has to a regular journal. It is not peer-reviewed and most articles are authored by NAIS staff members, independent school leaders, and faculty; on occasion it also includes selected work from other industries. *Independent School* is meant for and widely read by the leaders, administrators, and teachers of NAIS member schools. NAIS describes the magazine as publication that

provides thought leadership for education leaders, administrators, and practitioners on topics that range from operations and administration to teaching and learning to student wellness to governance—and more. The magazine and the affiliated *Independent Ideas* blog serve as an open forum for information and trends in elementary and secondary education in general, and independent schools in particular. (NAIS, 2020d)

As such, we can view *Independent School* as a snapshot of contemporary concerns in independent schools and a series of recommendations by NAIS of how member schools can

address those issues at different moments in time. It is worth qualifying that *Independent School* is not necessarily a comprehensive catalogue of schools' interests, but over time it is likely the best indicator of their priorities and pressure points. It is important to note that beyond the description of the publication as an "open forum" for information and trends, the facts that many of the articles are written by independent school educators and that NAIS is governed by a board comprised overwhelmingly of heads of independent schools means there is a strong feedback loop between the magazine and independent schools that produces specific discourses about the needs and roles of independent schools.

"Diversity," "Equity," and "Inclusion"

Since understanding "diversity" discourse and its function is at the heart of this study, any firm definition of the term here would be both simplistic and counter-productive. For this reason, rather than define the terms "diversity," "equity," and "inclusion," I will instead frame their relevance to the study at hand. While there can be nuanced differences in the ways independent schools conceptualize these three words, which I will address later in the analysis, for pragmatic reasons I will generally use "diversity" as a shorthand for the discourse that constructs the three as a group (often signified as "DEI" within the industry).

"Diversity" is a floating signifier (Lévi-Strauss, 1987) in that it does not refer to a concrete object or phenomenon and can mean any number of things to different speakers and addressees. Claude Lévi-Strauss argues that it is this variable potential for meaning that makes terms like this meaningless in and of themselves (1987). The proposed study will interrogate what knowledges and understandings of "diversity" have been validated and invalidated at different points in time in independent schools through the analysis of what meaning has been imbued in the signifier "diversity" in *Independent School*. Given the floating signification of the

term “diversity” and this study’s purpose of learning how the institutional apparatus of independent schools has produced its meaning in certain ways, I will continue to place the word in quotation marks throughout to signal its empty nature.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Before offering a more comprehensive description of this study's methodological approach to performing a Foucauldian discourse analysis in chapter three, this chapter reviews the relevant strands of literature for my research. In keeping with the Foucauldian theoretical and methodological approaches that this work adopts, what follows is not so much a traditional catalogue of research in the relevant areas of scholarship, but instead a quasi-genealogical description of how research (and discourse) in these areas has changed over time. The goal of reviewing the literature in this way is two-fold: first, it provides some historical context for the content and analysis of *Independent School* magazine itself, and second, it clarifies how we have arrived at the current moment and modes of thinking about independent schools and inequality in the U.S. In embracing these two tasks, this chapter will consider not just what has been learned in the past, but what paths have been left untrod and how the proposed study might venture into those areas of the unknown.

This chapter begins with an exploration of the (limited) existing literature on independent schools with a specific focus on how multiple waves of study have focused on discrete features of these institutions at different moments. The chapter will then move on to consider a more recent and broader body of (predominantly sociological) literature about elites. Finally, the chapter concludes with a discussion of the theoretical concerns of most studies in these two areas, namely their Bourdieusian foundations, and how a Foucauldian framework can offer new perspectives.

Independent Schools

Part of the challenge in addressing the research questions that guide this study from an historical viewpoint is that relatively little history has been written about independent schools. Additionally, the historical literature that does exist tends to focus on the development of independent schools before the period of expanding inequality that began in the mid-1970's; the primary examples of these sorts of histories are Sizer's (1964) *The Age of the Academies*, that traces developments in the 19th century, McLachlan's (1970) history of boarding schools in the U.S., and Kraushaar's (1976) history of private schools that includes a positive assessment of their role in American education leading up to the 1970's. More recently, Kliebard's (2004) comprehensive history of the ideological debates around American curriculum presents some treatment of independent schools, but the chronology of his work ends in 1958. Purdy (2018) offers a pertinent and compelling history of desegregation and issues of diversity in one school in Atlanta, however, again, the temporal focus of her work ends before the period I intend to examine. For that reason, I take a somewhat genealogical approach to this review, one in which I take an historical viewpoint on the literature dealing with the period since 1976 and how it has morphed over time. Doing so will later offer context to the analysis of the shifting discourses of independent schools reflected in *Independent School* magazine.

The first meaningful wave of critique of independent schools arose in the 1970's and 1980's. Beginning with Michael Apple's (1971) study of the "hidden curriculum," or the myriad ways in which schools condition the behavior of students outside of the explicit academic curriculum, neo-Marxist scholars turned their attention to the mechanisms schools use to reproduce class and social hierarchy. Apple specifically focused on the hidden curriculum of social studies and science education and the ways that the focus on consensus-based knowledge implicitly teaches students to respect authority and avoid conflict. This serves as a means of

educating young people to become docile workers and citizens, accepting of their roles in society as adults. Though his focus is not on independent schools, the idea of the hidden curriculum and its capacity for maintaining class outcomes is inspirational for a scholarly lineage that eventually turned its eye toward elite educational institutions.

Working in the same intellectual tradition, Bowles and Gintis (1976) offer a broader historical and economic analysis to make the case about the socially reproductive function of schools. In their estimation, the ideology of schooling in the U.S. is predicated on the hierarchical structure of capitalism and hegemonic ideas about the social efficiency of meritocratic practices. They argue that by reflecting the class strata of U.S. capitalism, schools naturalize inequality in American society and even legitimize social division through the “myth of meritocracy.” As Bowles and Gintis write,

throughout history, patterns of privilege have been justified by elaborate facades. Dominant classes seeking a stable social order have consistently nurtured and underwritten these ideological facades and, insofar as their power permitted, blocked the emergence of alternatives. This is what we mean by “legitimation”: the fostering of a generalized consciousness among individuals [sic] which prevents the formation of the social bonds and critical understanding whereby existing social conditions might be transformed. (1976, p. 104)

The “myth of meritocracy,” which justifies inequity by claiming there are natural talents and capabilities that lead some to rise to the top, is a technology used to justify elite status and privilege while creating the illusion of social mobility and blaming personal failings for lower socio-economic status. Bowles and Gintis were among the first to undermine this myth by illustrating that an individual’s number of years of educational attainment, which correlates highly with socio-economic background and lifetime income, has minimal association with measures of cognitive ability. In short, their quantitative analysis provided one of the first

critical, neo-Marxist disruptions of capitalist ideology in U.S. schooling and its relationship to the social hierarchy.

While Apple (1971) and Bowles and Gintis (1976) make compelling theoretical and structural cases about the nature of inequality in U.S. education, Jean Anyon (1980) was among the first to offer empirical evidence for class reproduction at the school level. In the late 1970's Anyon undertook a study of five schools in four distinct socio-economic communities in New Jersey. Anyon describes these schools respectively as "working-class", "middle-class", "affluent professional", and "executive elite"; families in each school community share similar professions and incomes. What she found in her research is much what Bowles and Gintis predicted, that each school environment instilled the skills necessary for the future roles children would fulfill as part of the American labor force. While studying these five schools, it became evident to Anyon that not only do the financial resources of schools in wealthy and impoverished neighborhoods differ, but the philosophical, pedagogical, and curricular approaches to education differed as well. For example, Anyon notes that the working-class schools had a "mechanistic" and "practical" approach to instruction while the executive elite school stressed writing and critical thinking skills. But Anyon also highlights the fact that these schools do not just teach different explicit content and skills necessary for impending economic relationships, but that they also provide distinct hidden curricula that correspond to different cultural environments. In other words, while these schools can be likened to different educational tracks that provide the knowledge to perform future professions, they also inculcate specific cultural values by exposing students to discrete activities, types of teachers, and curriculum.

Around the same time as Anyon's study was published, Steven Levine (1980) was perhaps the first to turn a critical eye to independent schools in his examination of 12 highly

selective boarding schools. He concluded that what had begun as an institutional setting for the established American aristocracy to separate itself from *nouveau riche* pretenders had ultimately fused the two groups into one cohesive U.S. upper-class that was able to solidify its control of the nation by commanding the bulk of its financial capital. Publishing five years later, Peter Cookson and Caroline Persell (1985a, 1985b) directly applied the neo-Marxist lens to independent schools. With the intention of comprehending the techniques for socio-cultural reproduction employed by the most elite independent schools of the time, Cookson and Persell visited 55 American and 13 British prestigious boarding schools and undertook an in-depth study of 20 of them. They collected data through surveys from nearly 2,500 students, published materials from the schools, public data, and interviews with alumni. Cookson and Persell endeavor to explain precisely *how* elite preparation occurs by examining institutional mechanisms and what impact they have on individuals, an approach which was novel and generative for later work. They found that the explicit and hidden curricula of schools in both the U.S. and the U.K. stress discipline, hard work, high intellectual expectations, and class-specific cultural values. This effort to offer insights into how elite identity and behaviors are instilled in students provides a more complete picture to sociological and anthropological lines of inquiry that had previously focused predominantly on the marginalized and oppressed (see for example Willis's *Learning to Labour* (1977)). Cookson and Persell's conclusions that these institutions train students to view themselves as future leaders and create cohesion among the elite that they will later wield as the dominant class in a capitalist system represent a neo-Marxist interruption of established narratives about independent schools in the U.S.

Perhaps the greatest strength of Cookson and Persell's (1985a, 1985b) study is that it provides concrete evidence in the U.S. for the social and cultural forms of capital that Bourdieu

(1986) theorizes. For Bourdieu (and Cookson and Persell), class division is not just a matter of economic reality, but rather the product of objective socio-cultural relationships and symbols that individuals internalize and reproduce through their own actions; these forms of capital are valuable because they can be exchanged for economic benefit, but their non-economic forms often create the actual boundaries between social classes. To a certain extent Bourdieu contradicts other Marxist analyses like Bowles and Gintis's (1976) and Anyon's (1980) that are more committed to economic determinism; however, Bourdieu's argument, which he and Passeron (1990) illustrate in a study of elite French schooling, proves fruitful for an understanding of independent schools and seems to be verified by Cookson and Persell's findings.

Since this era of research in elite school contexts, cultural and social capital (Bourdieu, 1986) have offered two useful theoretical considerations for the study of independent schools. First, cultural capital refers to the specific characteristics instilled in students to provide the *habitus* (Bourdieu, 1986) of elite standing in society. This *habitus* goes beyond a set of behaviors, but actually comprises a worldview and decision-making structure into which individuals are indoctrinated. As Bourdieu describes it, cultural capital is inculcated through the presentation and legitimization of a set of structural "realities" that may include values about self-improvement over time, particular tastes in artistic work, and other signifiers of elite social class. He even specifies a sub-form of cultural capital, "institutional capital," that outlines the way in which individuals affiliate themselves with prestigious institutions (such as schools) through credentialing (diplomas and degrees) that can later be exchanged in the marketplace for financial gain. The second form, social capital, relates to the social networks and the interpersonal reach that those from elite groups have access to and are able to further develop

through shared experience and training. Cookson and Persell (1985a, 1985b) illustrate how prestigious boarding schools in the U.S. and the U.K. in the early 1980's infused students with the cultural *habitus* and social cohesion to perpetuate their elite status as adults. A crucial dimension of Bourdieu's theory for understanding independent schools as enduring institutions (one which Cookson and Persell note as well) is the central role that education plays in stabilizing cultural and social capital intergenerationally, thereby perpetuating and intensifying the elite's dominant status in society over time.

After this first wave of critical scholarship, little attention was given to independent schools for several decades. Perhaps due to the tendency of sociologists and anthropologists who study inequality to focus on the marginalized and under-served, independent schools experienced a period of significant demographic change (NAIS, 2012) without much external scrutiny. In 1996 and 1999 Arthur G. Powell, an educational policy reformer, published work on the essential characteristics of independent schools, but did so with an eye to culling best practices that could serve as a model for public schools in the U.S. By nature, this study was designed not to be a critique, but to accentuate the positive traits of these schools and consider their adaptability for public education systems. Nevertheless, Powell does identify many of the features noted by Cookson and Persell (1985a, 1985b), like the sense of social cohesion, community, belongingness, and character focus common to these schools. While the neo-Marxists identified these traits as mechanisms for reproducing class division and elite *habitus*, Powell offers them up as models to be adopted in public schools. This all makes sense given Powell's solidarity with the Small Schools movement championed bySizer and Deborah Meier among others. In fact, Meier (1995), the force behind Central Park East in East Harlem, is explicit about her attempt to model her school on independent schools. This brief attention

during a long period of silence can best be understood as a means of policy and rhetorical support for a specific reform effort and only secondarily as an effort to understand the nature and practices of independent schools. However, it is remarkable that the narrative about independent schools as a productive lab for educational best practices that could be used to improve public schooling has been a durable justification for independent schools' continued existence (Kane, 1992; Kane, 2008a), one that makes repeated appearances in *Independent School* (NAIS, 2000).

Powell's interlude aside, the first critical examinations of independent schools to follow the neo-Marxist work did not emerge until the late 2000's. Contributions from Howard (2008), Gaztambide-Fernández (2009), and Khan (2011) make this the richest and most illuminating period of empirical study in independent schools. Additionally, a flurry of articles on the experiences of students of color in independent schools were published in the early 2010's as well. This new focus appears logical given the 2006-2007 school year was the first in which the average enrollment of students of color in NAIS member schools eclipsed 20% (NAIS, 2006a). This new wave of scholarship does not identify itself as directly with a particular critical theory, but it does generally provide much more detailed account and analysis of life and the acculturation processes within elite schools. Though some of the smaller studies explore the racial achievement gap in independent schools (Kuriloff et al., 2010), the perspectives of Black students (Arrington & Stevenson, 2010), and racial identity formation (DeCuir-Gunby et al., 2012) in a handful of independent schools, Adam Howard, Rubén Gaztambide-Fernández, and Shamus Khan produce more substantial ethnographies that address privilege and inequality in these environments.

Howard (2008) explores identity formation for privileged students in three selective day schools in the Midwest. Performing research over a four-year period while teaching in one of the

three schools, Howard visited the other two schools regularly and conducted a “critical ethnography” to make sense of how these institutions facilitated and justified the internalization of privilege and Whiteness. Howard presents himself as a Critical Race theorist focused on interrupting privilege and seeking “equity,” unlike his neo-Marxist predecessors in this domain who were satisfied with documenting “objective” phenomena. This shift to an interpretivist stance is reflective of broader changes in the disciplines of sociology and anthropology in the intervening years, but it also finds more empirical purchase in schools with newly significant portions of students from marginalized groups; this stands in stark contrast to the token students of color that the neo-Marxists would have found in earlier decades. While Howard repeatedly indicates his primary interest is *class* privilege (and to this end he does cite the neo-Marxists included above), he leans heavily on McIntosh’s (1988) concept of White privilege in his analysis of independent schools and frames Whiteness as a type of capital in the mode of Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995). Ultimately, Howard’s ethnography is not as robust as Gaztambide-Fernández’s (2009) and Khan’s (2011), but his work represents the beginning of a new generation of scholars and brings new tools to bear on the analysis of independent schools and privilege more broadly.

During these years, Gaztambide-Fernández (2009), an anthropologist, and Khan (2011), a sociologist, conduct admirable ethnographic studies that reveal how some of the most prestigious independent boarding schools go about acculturating students into elite *habitus*. Gaztambide-Fernández, primarily focusing on students of color and low socio-economic status in an anonymous boarding school outside of Boston, goes beyond the neo-Marxist understandings of these communities by presenting a more nuanced vision of how a school’s cultural and social *milieu* includes and excludes different students to varying degrees based on their willingness to

adopt the behaviors and attitudes of the elite. At a time of increased “diversity” in institutions like the pseudonymous “Weston School,” Gaztambide-Fernández’s remarkable ethnography based on extensive informal time spent “hanging out” with students, formal interviews with students and teachers, and analysis of school materials, shows how students from marginalized groups are at once adopted into the elite by encouraging identity ties to the prestigious institution while simultaneously being distanced from their home environments and cultures. What Gaztambide-Fernández finds over the course of his two-year study is that while the students that these schools now produce may no longer be the biological progeny of the old WASP aristocracy, they are still very much their ideological descendants. Thus, what has transpired is a visible change on the margin that obscures the elite class re-entrenchment of these institutions in U.S. society.

Khan (2011) similarly performs an ethnography over the course of a year at St. Paul’s School in Concord, New Hampshire, one of the “select sixteen” boarding schools identified by Cookson & Persell (1985a, 1985b) as the most elite American secondary institutions. Khan had himself been a student at St. Paul’s and returned as a teacher, coach, and dorm parent for a year to facilitate his ethnography. In returning to the school years after graduating, Khan encountered a distinctly different cultural environment and attitude toward eliteness than he had experienced as a student. Similar to Gaztambide-Fernández (2009), Khan notes many of the same processes of elite inculcation of students of color, however, as a sociologist focused on the elite as a social group, his main focus is cataloguing the new mechanisms employed by affluent students to justify their privilege. Central in his analysis is an ideological move from justifying privilege by “entitlement” based on birth and breeding to a new “ease of privilege” predicated on the belief that the elite are advantaged because of their individual talents and hard work. In this worldview,

which fits neatly with the myth of meritocracy, inequality becomes a natural phenomenon based on humans' differing capabilities and work ethics. Simultaneously, as Gaztambide-Fernández argues, Khan's findings suggest that the role of independent schools is not just to perpetuate the old WASP aristocracy, but to assimilate new types of "talented" young people into a future elite.

In the midst of these studies, Cookson and Persell (2010) published a follow-up article revisiting their work in the light of this new wave of research. In their updated study, which is a relatively cursory look at a selection of boarding schools' mission statements and a few other published materials, they acknowledge the value that these sociological and anthropological approaches offer. They make the point that "the objective [of the upper-class] is to control and master change, not be swept away by it. The incorporation of change is the hallmark of a successful elite" while noting that "the relative absence of the critical perspectives afforded by anthropology and sociology [in these schools] is also consistent with a strong case for the reproduction of the upper class" (Cookson & Persell, 2010, p. 15). What this shows is that in a new cultural environment, 25 years after their initial study, even an older generation of scholars is adapting to a new trend within social science research that expands beyond their previous structural, neo-Marxist model.

After another lull through most of the 2010's, study of independent schools was revived with the publication of Purdy's *Transforming the Elite* (2018). Purdy produced the first true history of an independent school in decades in examining the process of desegregation at The Westminster Schools in Atlanta. Focusing on the period from the school's foundation in 1951 through 1973, she details the interlocking forces at work (federal desegregation policy, Georgia state law, local Atlanta politics, NCIS and NAIS guidelines) that led to the admission of the first Black students at Westminster in 1967 and their experiences in the school. While her research

deals with a period ending a few years before the scope of this study, the oral histories she conducts with the first students to desegregate Westminster and the survey of cultural forces of the era are useful context for the early issues of *Independent School*.

The fact that the above historical and research literature represents the main corpus of work on independent schools is indicative of how little independent schools have been studied given their influence in U.S. society. Beyond the generally sparse research in this area, however, it is clear that two main lines of inquiry have dominated the research agenda at different points in time: the neo-Marxist lens of the 1970's and 1980's and the more socio-cultural ethnographies that seek to reveal systems by extrapolating from the experience of students in these environments. Though there are many compelling arguments from the neo-Marxist theorists like Apple (1971), Bowles and Gintis (1976) and Bourdieu (1986), it is safe to say that the analyses of Cookson and Persell (1985a, 1985b) are predominantly useful for providing context to issues of *Independent School* from that era as the demographics and discourse of independent schools today seem to have shifted significantly from those of the 1980's. I would argue based on personal experience working in independent schools over the last decade that even Gaztambide-Fernández (2009) and Khan (2011) would encounter different environments and discourses of privilege, inequality, and “diversity” were they to return to their research sites today.

Additionally, the extant literature, much of its analysis exceptional for its depth and richness, is relatively limited in scope. Cookson and Persell (1985a, 1985b), Gaztambide-Fernández (2009), and Khan (2011) focus on a very narrow range of the most selective independent boarding schools. These schools represent only about one and a half percent of the roughly 1,600 NAIS (NAIS, 2020a) member schools. Where some attention has been paid to day schools (Arrington & Stevenson, 2010; DeCuir-Gunby et al., 2012; Howard, 2008; Kuriloff et

al., 2010), research has typically been completed in case study form on a small, geographically localized group of schools. In all of these instances, going back even to Cookson and Persell, the primary focus of these studies has been on student experience with data gathered through ethnography, interviews, and surveys. What is missing, then, is not just a more current appraisal of what life is like for students in independent schools, but how institutional discourses about privilege, “diversity”, and inequality have evolved over time, and what these discourses have accomplished for independent schools as an industry. Rather than generalizing from a case study like most of the existing literature has, I propose taking a more top-down approach to examining the discourse and behaviors of the independent school industry. NAIS’s quarterly magazine, *Independent School*, is arguably the most accurate object for this sort of analysis.

Sociology of the Elite

One essential conversation among social scientists who research the elite is simply how to define the “elite” as an object of study and force in human societies (Khan, 2012b; Maxwell, 2015; Prosser, 2016; Stitch & Coylar, 2015; Thurlow & Jaworski, 2017a). Much of the debate surrounds whether the elite is bounded as a social class (either as “the upper class” or some more rarified subgroup) and if there are multiple elites (e.g. transnational vs. national, or cultural vs. economic vs. political). Differing views on these issues have produced a variety of definitions of the elite. It seems commonsensical that any definition of “elite” must rely in some sense on the relational positioning of a certain group as dominant, as without an opposing group, the elite simply become the majority, but to parse these definitions in search of a particular formula for determining who does and does not qualify as elite serves little purpose in the context of this study. Instead, I take as my starting point Khan’s broad reaching definition of elites as:

Those who have vastly disproportionate control over or access to a resource. Within this definition we can think of elites as occupying a position that provides them with access

and control or as possessing resources that advantage them—the difference is in our unit of analysis (individuals or the structure of relations). Important for this definition is a secondary point: The resource must have transferable value. (2012b, p. 362)

Recognizable here is a commitment to Bourdieu's (1986) forms of capital and their exchangeability. An illustration of this fluid quality of capital could be the way money from one generation, in the form of tuition, is exchanged for elite educational credentials for the next generation, which is in turn exchanged for access to prestigious career paths that may result in further accumulation of financial, political, or cultural capital.

Though studies of elites in schools in the U.S. has tended to focus on a tiny group of 50 (or fewer) of the most prestigious prep schools (Cookson & Persell, 1985a; 1985b; 2010; Gaztambide-Fernández, 2009; Khan, 2011; Levine, 1980; McClachlan, 1970; Powell, 1996), there is reasonable argument to make that most independent schools cater to families that inhabit a mix of economically, culturally, educationally, and/or politically elite positions. This is not to suggest that all independent schools are populated exclusively by individuals who qualify as elite, but rather that these schools are oriented toward common discourses about eliteness, its value, and its legitimation. The literature supporting this last point will be explored in more depth below.

A History of Elite Sociological Literature

Though Laura Nader was among the first to directly argue for the value of studying the elite in an effort to expand the field of vision of social scientists in her 1974 essay, "Up the Anthropologist," two foundational works of modern sociology, C. Wright Mills's *The Power Elite* (1956) and E. Digby Baltzell's *The Protestant Establishment* (1964), have set the stage for much of the research on elites in the U.S. since. In both works Mills and Baltzell describe pseudo-aristocratic classes of American elites who disproportionately control power in the U.S. and how

these groups preserve and reproduce themselves over time. While Baltzell focuses on the closure of the WASP establishment to ethnic and religious minorities, Mills describes the class structures behind what he identifies as the three most dominant powers in American society (major corporations, the military, and the political elite) and how individuals in those groups arrive in their roles via established institutional channels such as elite universities and prep schools. While Nader's call has been met more by echoes in later generations of anthropologists (Gusterson, 1997; Marcus & Fischer, 1986; Stich & Coylar, 2015) than by a sustained research interest in elites, Mills and Baltzell have inspired a more robust line of inquiry among sociologists.

However, an elite research agenda took decades to materialize in a significant way. Though some such study materialized in the 1980's (Useem, 1984), not all owing a debt to Mills and Baltzell (Bourdieu, 1986), and 1990's (Bourdieu, 1996; Zweigenhaft, 1993; Zweigenhaft & Domhoff, 1998), it was not until well into the 21st century that sociological study of the elite really found its footing. If Mills and Baltzell provided the empirical inspiration for researching the elite in the U.S., Pierre Bourdieu's work (1986; 1996; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990) has become the theoretical bedrock for this area of scholarship, both in the U.S. and internationally. While Bourdieu and Passeron's (1990) analysis of social class reproduction meshes rather neatly with Mills and Baltzell's analysis of the U.S. power structure, it is Bourdieu's later theorizing on the multiple forms of capital (cultural, social, and symbolic), elite *habitus* (1986), and fields of power (1996) that are most often cited by contemporary sociologists who study elites.

One interesting feature of Bourdieu's research that has become central in sociological study of elites is the importance of educational institutions. Bourdieu's *State Nobility* (1996), a study of elite reproduction and legitimation in the prestigious French *grande écoles*, American Ivy League, and British Oxbridge, serves as an empirical illustration of much of his previous theorizing. This

is reflected in other sociological work on elites, which does not usually take education as its object of study, but does make frequent use of schools and universities as institutional sites of elite *habitus* production (Binder, Davis, & Bloom, 2016; Khan, 2011; 2012a; 2012b; Rivera, 2015; Zweigenhaft, 1993) and social network formation and upper class closure (Flemmen et al., 2017; Karabel, 2005; Kenway & Prosser, 2014; Prosser, 2016; Reeves et al., 2017; Stevens, 2007). The focus of this work ranges from how students from elite schools are admitted to elite universities (Karabel, 2005; Stevens, 2007), to how they come to desire (Binder, Davis, & Bloom, 2016) and receive (Rivera, 2015) elite jobs, predominantly in finance and consulting, and ultimately to how they earn more money as a result of their educational credentials rather than their academic performance (Zweigenhaft, 1993). Others have focused on the processes and narratives about elite legitimacy and identity formation that students internalize within elite institutions (Khan, 2011; 2012a, 2012b). With regard to upper-class closure and social networks, some have used quantitative data to show the impact of parents' (Flemmen et al., 2017) and schools' (Reeves et al., 2017) status as elite on outcomes for children. In some cases this is even treated in connection with the closure of physical space in elite neighborhoods and their schools (Kenway & Prosser, 2014; Prosser, 2016).

In addition to sociologists' use of schools as a proxy for studying elites more broadly, the past decade or so has seen the expansion of scholarly interest in elite education and schools directly (Ball, 2015; Gaztambide-Fernández, 2009; Howard, 2008; Howard & Kenway, 2015; Jenkins, Cipollone, & Weis, 2014; Kenway & Lazarus, 2017; Kenway & Prosser, 2014; van Zanten, 2009; 2015). The line between this literature and broader sociology of elites that focuses on educational institutions is blurry, but for my purposes, the criteria for distinction are two-fold: first, whether the researchers position themselves as sociologists broadly speaking rather than educational

scholars or sociologists of education, and second, whether their research takes the school as an instrument or example of elite practice in general instead of the site of educational and identity-forming processes specifically. As an illustration of this last point, Howard (2008), Gaztambide-Fernández (2009a, 2011), and Kenway and Lazarus (2017) have all examined narratives around privilege and their relationship to eliteness in private schools. In their various incarnations, these studies have analyzed how elite schools instill in students self-identifications with eliteness while simultaneously teaching them to reject the idea that they have benefited from unearned privilege. Of greatest import to my study is the research focused on this less structural and more discursive line of thinking (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2009; Howard, 2008; Kenway & Lazarus, 2017; Khan, 2011) that demonstrate some of the legitimation tactics that elites and elite institutions make use of. Kenway and Lazarus (2017) point directly to the contradiction at the heart of elite schools, where the need to act morally collides with the need to maintain exclusiveness in order to preserve their elite status. Khan (2011) describes a similar process of schools normalizing and naturalizing hierarchies, which allows individuals both to perceive themselves as deserving of their position at the top of society and to avoid questioning the moral implications of their privilege. I would suggest that “diversity” discourse in independent schools has become one of (if not *the*) central mechanisms for resolving the tension between moral imperatives and social inequality that these scholars have brought to light.

In the past five years especially, scholars in the area of elite studies have begun to push for research agendas that move beyond what they see as stagnant theoretical and methodological approaches (Ball, 2015; Cousin, Khan, & Mears, 2018; Kenway & Howard, 2015; Maxwell, 2015; Thurlow & Jaworski, 2017a). A common refrain among those advocating for new paths is the need to expand, or in some cases move beyond Bourdieusian, structuralist theory. Some cases call for

the accommodation of non-class factors (such as race and gender) and the utilization of power in sociological analyses (Ball, 2015; Cousin, Khan, & Mears, 2018; Maxwell, 2015) while others advocate for more radical shifts in the reflexivity of researchers (Kenway & Howard, 2015) or the move to a Foucauldian understanding of power and discursive practices (Thurlow & Jaworski, 2017a; 2017b).

Two studies have arisen in this time frame that provide revisions of the traditional formulas for studies of the elite. Rachel Sherman (2017; 2018) uses her study of affluent New York City parents to complicate conceptions of the elite as a monolithic group with a coherent agenda for maintaining power and control. In her in-depth interviews with 50 parents from different households, she examines the dominant discourses that circulate within this community about “good vs. bad rich people” and how there is a consistent attempt on the part of these wealthy people to cast themselves as ordinary and their needs as reasonable. Though all of these families earned between \$250,000 and \$2,000,000 a year and most had millions more in inherited wealth, they were intent on aligning their spending habits, parenting approaches, and educational choices with traditional, American middle-class values. Within Sherman’s analysis, however, the biggest departure from traditional Bourdieusian assumptions is the assertion that these discourses about ordinariness and need are not part of a coordinated and coherent strategy on the part of elites, but rather a means of resolving the internal, moral conflict of these predominantly liberal (politically speaking) parents experience when considering their own privilege beside the inequalities they see in U.S. and their local context. Sherman is careful to point out that her participants are not a representative group of elites in the U.S., but even their existence as a sub-group within elite society demonstrates some of the oversimplifications of previous sociological work on elites. Finally, Sherman’s study provides an example of discursive practices that naturalize inequality

and behaviors without casting elites as immoral, or what Crispin Thurlow and Adam Jaworski (2017b) refer to as “slippery rhetorics,” that entrench elite dominance while giving the appearance of progressive values.

In a more theoretically oriented push to broaden perspectives and approaches to elite study, Thurlow and Jaworski (2017a; 2017b) make the case for adopting a Foucauldian framework, particularly the notion of *discourse* (see chapter three for more detail) and power relations for analyzing the elite. Admittedly, they maintain some theoretical ties to Marxist thinkers, particularly Antonio Gramsci (1971) and his concept of *hegemony*, but the suggestion that elite power is discursively produced and legitimated is novel in the area of elite scholarship. They assert that “slippery rhetorics” about the position of elites in society allows them to distance themselves from being portrayed as immoral while maintaining their power and location in class hierarchies. They use as an example the proliferation of the term “elite” in everyday consumer products such as kitchen appliances, soap dispensers, and grocery store produce, arguing that applying this language to mundane objects waters down the term itself and its signification; this discursive practice simultaneously deflects attention from elites and makes non-elites feel as though they may have realistic aspirations of joining the elite in the future. This serves as an example of how progressive discourses about access and openness, much like “diversity” in independent schools, can actually serve the purpose of anchoring the status quo. Additionally, thinking about language as a discursive practice with material effects in a Foucauldian mode makes this an innovative approach within the field of elite studies that is only now beginning to move outside of the well-worn, Bourdieusian channel it has followed for decades.

Concluding Thoughts: Bourdieu and Foucault

In chapter one I briefly drew a distinction between structuralist theoretical assumptions and those of Foucault, particularly in how the two conceive of power and social structures. In the following chapter I will explore some of the central Foucauldian notions of discourse, archaeology, and genealogy in more depth to outline the methodological approach of Foucauldian discourse analysis, but here I return to a few key differences in the two modes of thought as a way of reflecting on the bodies of literature laid out above.

Bourdieu's views have been important for analyzing independent schools and for elite sociology in the past four decades for good reason. In particular, the idea of multiple forms of exchangeable capital and *habitus* (Bourdieu, 1986) offer compelling theoretical explanations for the elite's dominance in U.S. society and how independent schools function as a prominent mechanism of elite reproduction. These concepts retain merit, but as has been pointed out by those advocating a broader methodological approach to studying the elite, most clearly Cousin, Khan, and Mears (2018), they have become a restricting force in understanding the nuances of elite power dynamics. I contend that one problem in much of the literature that adopts Bourdieusian frameworks is that the forms of capital and *habitus* imply some degree of organization and oppressive intent on the part of elites as a cohesive whole. This assumption, though perhaps accurate in some places at some times, can be a restrictive simplification, and one need look no further than the debate over the definition of "elite" to see the methodological challenges this poses. For example, it is hard to imagine we would need to distinguish the "super-rich," the "political elite," or "global elite" (Thurlow & Jaworski, 2017a) from a broader elite if there was the sort of coordinated group behavior that some structuralist theories rely on as a basic premise. In fact, as some have shown empirically (Khan, 2011; Sherman, 2017; 2018),

narratives about individual talent, work ethic, and ideological separation from the entitled or the “bad rich” has become an important part of elite legitimation today.

To address the nuance often lost in structuralist analyses of the elite and elite education, we would benefit from a more Foucauldian understanding of the subject positions of elites within discourses and particular regimes of truth. At the risk of presenting a reductive view of some of Bourdieu’s important contributions to social theory, I offer two ways of reframing the forms of capital and *habitus* through a Foucauldian lens. First, if we take social, cultural, and symbolic capital as accurate models for thinking about elite status and power, we should also think about what the historical contingencies are that produce a regime of truth that values (or devalues) certain indicators of capital at any moment in time. In other words, what are the discursive practices that produce a shared understanding of certain qualities and credentials as being elite and others as being ordinary? Second, it may be useful to expand our analytical perspective beyond *habitus* as the internalization of these forms of capital, a pattern of behavior, way of thinking, and worldview (Bourdieu, 1986), to consider how a particular *habitus* reflects what is thinkable and sayable at a specific time. To do so moves past the idea of *habitus* as a state of being conditioned by institutions like the family, school, or social club, and instead as a text that can be read to learn what ideals and identities are considered legitimate/illegitimate, normal/abnormal, or valuable/valueless within certain discourses. It is with these thoughts in mind that we can consider how something like “diversity” discourse can perform the paradoxical function of signaling a (seemingly genuine) desire for “equity” and “inclusion” while also working to maintain elite privilege and legitimating inequality.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Restatement of Research Questions

As an introduction to elaborating the methodological design of this study, I return to Foucault's characterization of his own work: "what I tried to do from the beginning was to analyze the process of 'problematization'—which means: how and why certain things, behaviour, phenomena, processes become a problem" (Foucault, 1983, lecture 6, p. 66). The notion of "problematization" informs the questions at the center of this research:

- How has the problem of "diversity" been conceived in elite educational institutions over the past 45 years?
 - What is the genealogy of "diversity" discourse in independent schools and how has this discourse rendered (in)visible racial, ethnic, economic, and social inequalities to varying degrees?
 - How do continuities and discontinuities in "diversity" discourse relate to who is granted access to independent schools and what rationales are produced to justify these inclusions and exclusions?

This chapter begins with an outline of the principles of Foucauldian discourse analysis, particularly the complementary methodological approaches of archaeology and genealogy and their relevance to the questions above. The second part of the chapter will then go on to detail a pilot study undertaken with two issues of *Independent School* magazine, how data was selected for the larger study, and how those data were analyzed.

Foucauldian Discourse Analysis

Arribas-Ayllon and Walkerdine tell us that "it is customary to warn that there are no set rules or procedures for conducting Foucauldian-inspired analysis" (2017, p. 110). It is perhaps so

customary as to have become cliché. The primary reason for the absence of any step-by-step methods for performing a Foucauldian discourse analysis (FDA) is Foucault's unwillingness to offer any prescriptive approach to analysis. Instead, as Stephen Ball describes,

Foucault spoke of his work as being concerned with the history of practices and the history of veridictions or a history of institutions. Foucault certainly did not outline a general theory of society, rather he identified a set of "problems" and outlined some methods of analysis (archaeology and genealogy in particular) and developed a set of tools, a toolbox of concepts, which he hoped others would use and develop further. He expressed frustration that so much effort was devoted to writing about what he might mean rather than doing the sort of practical analytical work that he advocated so vigorously. (2012, p. 17)

Nearly as ubiquitous within studies utilizing FDA is the qualification that each is unique and not, in a logistical sense, a model for all other FDAs (Carabine, 2001; Kendall & Wickham, 2011; Nicholls, 2008; Tamatea, Hardy, & Ninnes, 2008). Jean Carabine argues, however, that the common thread of all faithful FDAs is "the application of Foucault's concepts of discourse/power/knowledge and therefore the lens through which they read their data" (2001, p. 268).

To be sure, the absence of methodological prescription and loose affiliation of FDA methods around the discourse/power/knowledge triad present potential pitfalls. Ball cautions that,

In much of the work that purports to be Foucauldian in educational studies, power is reduced to domination and knowledge is detached from power. Perhaps most common are those studies, which claim to be undertaking some form of Foucauldian discourse analysis, where the object of study is text and language rather than discourse. Many writers claim to being [sic] "doing" Foucault and assume that discourses can be accessed and unpacked with a bit of critical detachment and some analysis of key or recurrent words and phrases... (2012, p. 19)

In order to avoid performing one of these FDAs in-name-only, before outlining the particular methods I employed in an analysis of *Independent School*, it is necessary to clarify some central concepts of Foucault's analysis.

At the outset, it must be noted that Foucault's approach is primarily historical and descriptive, not linguistic or interpretive (Ball, 2012; Foucault, 1972; 1981; Kendall & Wickham, 2011; Nicholls, 2008; Peräkylä & Ruusuvuori, 2008). Foucault's approach is one of "general history" (Foucault, 1972), which stands in opposition to a "totalizing history" (Kendall & Wickham, 2011). This distinction recalls a point made in chapter one, that between the Marxist-structuralist tradition and Foucault's notion of genealogy. Totalizing history refers to the sort of historical materialism characteristic of Marxist historicism, which conceives of history as progressive, based on fundamental causes and effects, and describable as a series of grand narratives and principles. A general approach, instead, focuses on the past as a mass of discontinuous historical contingencies, read as a series of possible events, only some of which have come to pass. In the general sense, there is no grand narrative, no organizing principles that can be read in a causal manner. I return to this division in historical perspective to make clear that while FDA as a methodology is essentially historical, its divergence from more traditional historical methods opens up different opportunities for analysis. With this atypical notion of history in mind then, I will describe in more detail three of Foucault's central concepts that inform the methods of this study: discourse, archaeology, and genealogy.

Discourse

To return to Ball's point from the previous quotation, for Foucault, there is a distinction between his conception of discourse and that of the linguist. For most scholars focused on discourse analysis the term "discourse" has come to mean, in the broadest sense, something on the order of language in use or language in context (Gee, 1999; Johnstone, 2002). Even for those who work in the area of critical discourse analysis (CDA), a methodological field focused on the political and progressive capacities of discourse analysis, the primary analytical concerns are

semiotic and the form and function of language (Gee, 2011; Fairclough, 1992; 2010; Meyer & Wodak, 2001; Rogers, 2011). For Foucault, while language is an integral part of discourse, it is by no means the defining limit of discourse as an object of study:

Of course, discourses are composed of signs; but what they do is more than use these signs to designate things. It is this more that renders them irreducible to the language (*langue*) and to speech. It is this “more” that we must reveal and describe. (1972, p. 49)

So instead of a simple semiotic analysis, Foucault advocates an approach that perceives discourse as a broader “body of statements” (1972), both texts and practices, that has material effects for individuals. This view sees discourse as a sort of envelope that informs the sayable and the unsayable, the true and the untrue, at any moment in time. Though any discourse may change over time as it comes into contact with other discourses and with internal resistances from certain subjectivities, it is never escapable in that it produces what is thinkable and excludes what is unthinkable. Discourse understood in this way is made up not of utterances, but of a web of power relations that create and legitimize certain knowledge while delegitimizing and excluding other knowledge (Foucault, 1980). Deducing how certain subject positions within discourse are formed goes beyond mere linguistic analysis of language and instead looks to the “body of statements” as a group of practices that reflect (as a product of) and create (as a producer of) power-knowledge, and thereby, subjectivities, material effects, and institutional strategies. To perform such an analysis, then, we must understand discourse as a series of rules that determine how statements are produced, what is sayable at a given moment in time, and how statements become material (Kendall & Wickham, 2011).

For the purposes of this study, I believe that *Independent School* magazine is an accurate representation of the discourses that circulate within the independent school industry.

Approached in a Foucauldian way, the magazine is not just a series of signs of thought within

schools, but a reflection of practices and material effects that form the subject positions and lived experience of students, faculty, administrators, and parents within this institutional setting. To outline the actual research methods I utilized, I will first address archaeology, which Foucault (1972) argues for as the proper tool of analysis for one discourse or a cross-section of discourses at any given moment of time. An example of the archaeological approach within the context of this study would be exploring how multiple independent school discourses interact around the end of the Cold War in 1989-1991. What I found was that particular discourses about capitalism, neoliberalism, and patriotism came to struggle against or work with certain elements of concurrent discourse on “diversity,” socio-economic inequality, and the purpose of education.

Archaeology

Archaeology, or the “critical” approach that I borrowed from Foucault (1981) in chapter one, is primarily concerned with the practices and material effects that exist within one or a set of intersecting discourses (Foucault, 1972). In one sense archaeology is a micro-level analysis that looks at language as an indicator of social practices at a certain moment (Foucault, 1972; Kendall & Wickham, 2011). I will clarify again that this process is not linguistic, but rather looks for the “propositional content” (Peräkylä & Ruusuvuori, 2008) within discursive practices. In this way, archaeology examines language as a reflection of the rules for making statements within a discursive community, and in turn, how those statements manifest in material effects. One way to conceive of the archaeological perspective is to examine a moment in history cross-sectionally or as a slice that looks broadly at one set of coincidental historical contingencies. Conveniently for this study, each issue of *Independent School* magazine offered pieces on different topics, each situated within different, but intersecting discourses at a discrete moment.

Of course, as a Foucauldian methodology, archaeology lacks any prescriptive steps, but Kendall and Wickham offer a series of “tasks” that such an analysis should seek to perform:

- Describes statements in the archive, statements covering the sayable and the visible;
- describes regularities of statements in a non-interpretive manner (content to remain at the level of appearances, eschewing any quest to go “beyond” this level to find “deeper meanings”);
- describes statements in a non-anthropological manner, as a means of avoiding the search for authors (again remaining at the level of appearances — the appearances of statements — to avoid the habit of seeking to source meaning in human beings);
- analyses the relation between one statement and other statements;
- formulates rules for the repeatability of statements — what allows certain statements to recur;
- analyses the positions which are established between subjects in regard to statements;
- describes “surfaces of emergence” — or places within which objects are made objects in discourse;
- describes the institutions which acquire authority and provide limits within which discursive objects may act;
- describes the “forms of specification” in which discursive objects are targeted. (Kendall & Wickham, 2011, p. 43)

While each of these tasks informed this study, I highlight three of these points as especially useful for my purposes. First, I emphasize the nature of this form of analysis as “non-interpretive” (Kendall & Wickham, 2011). Obviously avoiding any interpretation of a text was an impossibility, but the intention of eschewing interpretation was to take this body of statements at face value and to understand it as a reflection of material practices, rather than understanding discourse as an ideological veil that hides some conspiratorial system of actors and functions as a means of negative oppression. Second, understanding how discourse produces visible subject positions that individuals come to inhabit, and how those subject positions interact with one another was central to my study. Finally, discerning the institutional roles that form and are formed within discourse was essential to investigating the dynamics of “diversity” discourse in independent schools.

An archaeological analysis was appropriate mainly for the second research question restated above, and as such I employed archaeology as a lens to examine how “diverse” subjectivities were produced within “diversity” and other discourses at specific moments in the past. Foundational to this approach was reading the pages of *Independent School* with a focus on what and how certain subjectivities were included and excluded, legitimized and delegitimized, and presented as normal or abnormal within independent school discourses. In addition to performing this discourse-level analysis with archaeological methods, I utilized a genealogical approach to learn about the function and transformation of these discourses over time.

Genealogy

Foucault referred to the genealogical method of analysis as a means of constructing a “history of the present” (1977). The idea of such a history is to trace the myriad historical contingencies, struggles, and interactions of power and discourse that have existed over time and have produced the conditions of the present (Foucault, 1980; Garland, 2014). Unsettling the taken-for-granted nature of the status quo is central to this process. I am careful here again to clarify that genealogy rejects the totalizing nature of historicism, opting instead for the “general” approach, which sees the present as one of many possible outcomes and focuses on the discrete points in the past that, taken together, have produced the contemporary moment. Ball argues that “what seems ‘natural’ or truthful or inevitable is in fact enabled by clashes of forces, everything has a history and has lowly beginnings. Genealogies are histories of things that are supposed to have no history” (2011, p. 34). In short, genealogy seeks to question the assumptions of the present by examining the power relations and resistances of the past.

In a slightly reductive sense, if archaeology is a method of analysis for one or a set of discourses at a moment in the past, genealogy strings together multiple archaeological analyses

for the purpose of learning how discourses, and thus the operation of power, morph over time. Genealogy appreciates each discourse as body of statements that, linked together, represent an ongoing (though discontinuous and erratic) process of transformation. Through this lens, the present is just one more historical contingency rather than an endpoint or a mile-marker along the grand arc of a progressive history. It should be apparent by this point that while Foucault distanced himself from the term “archaeology” in his later writings (Ball, 2011; Kendall & Wickham, 2014), genealogy relies heavily on archaeological analyses as the building blocks of writing history. In essence, genealogy extends archaeological practice over time, which allows the researcher to make sense of not just the discursive rules and practices in one moment in the past, but also how power operates within certain regimes of truth, how institutional authority is legitimized, and how material effects have come to exist in the present.

For this study, the genealogical methodology allowed for an analysis of how “diversity” discourse has changed over time as a result of its confrontation with other discourses. Crucially important here, however, is not just what these discourses indicate at different moments in the past, but what they reflect about the institutional apparatus of independent schools (“the coupling of a set of practices and regime of truth” (Foucault, 2010, p. 18)). I was particularly interested in whence this apparatus derives its authority and how it positions itself in relation to broad issues of inequality. If archaeology could tell us what “diverse” subject positions have been produced at discrete points in time, genealogy informed what we know about the dominant regimes of truth that have existed over time and resulted in present conditions. *Independent School* magazine provided a unique opportunity for performing a genealogical analysis because each issue presents articles on a number of topics over the past 45 years. This offered a glimpse of the ongoing interaction between discourses at regular intervals and revealed the coherence and

combativeness between them. Looking over the run of the magazine allowed for an analysis of how discourses amplify and inhibit one another and how concurrent regimes of truth changed over time.

Pilot Study

To determine the fruitfulness of the larger research project, I first completed a very brief pilot study. To demonstrate the viability of the overall project, I turned to two issues of *Independent School* to give an initial illustration of the changing discourse of NAIS on the general topics of “diversity” and inequality in independent schools. I initially chose an issue from the winter of 1990 because it is the first issue available digitally and then selected the other, from the fall of 2000, because it represented a significant distance in time from the first. Here I will briefly describe the contents of each issue and then highlight a central set of interconnected discursive themes (“diversity”, privilege, and socio-economic inequality) that arises in both.

The first issue (NAIS, 1990a) contains ten total articles; three address college admissions topics, two by independent school directors of college counseling and the third by Michael G. Thompson, a psychologist well-known in the independent school world. Two other articles focus on pedagogical concerns, one on a specific literacy approach and the other on middle school education, both by independent school teachers and administrators. There is one excerpt from the opening of year remarks regarding time pressure from a head of school and a piece of fiction written by an English teacher. Next there are two articles that specifically address “diversity” and “inclusion.” First is a critical book review of *Visible Now: Blacks in Private Schools* edited by Diana Slaughter and Deborah Johnson written by the Dean of the College of Education at UMass-Boston, who is also a former NAIS staff member. Second is an excerpted portion of Peggy McIntosh’s (1988) original working paper on white and male privilege, which addresses

the “invisible knapsack” of white privilege. Finally, there is an article reprinted from a College Board publication by Louis Harris, the founder of a polling agency, noteworthy for its recognizable “Harris Poll,” that ostensibly addresses twenty-first century educational needs.

In his reprinted piece, Harris (1990) makes a specific case for the purpose of education in America as it looks ahead to the 21st century. Though Harris does not speak directly to the role of independent schools, the editorial staff’s choice to include this article appears to be an endorsement of Harris’s opinion that centers around the pragmatic economic functions of successfully increasing diversity in elite educational environments. In his essay that forecasts demographic and economic trends between 1989 (when the piece was first published by the College Board) and 2001, Harris argues for the rapid development of a 21st century American workforce that will ensure U.S. economic dominance in perpetuity. To that end Harris writes:

If we succeed in learning how to make productive citizens out of minorities, if we can find ways to make them creative, thinking workers, as must happen with young whites, then surely we will have created a strongly competitive America that will be the envy of the world. But, if we fail, then all other bets are off, simply because we will be mired in a system in which the baggage we will have to carry in unproductive human beings, mainly the minorities and the disabled, will be too heavy and will condemn us to second-tier economic status. (1990, p. 41)

Putting aside the callousness of the viewpoint and language above, we must contend with the assumptions that accompany NAIS’s choice to publish this essay. The belief that the education of “minorities” is essential to the economic viability of the U.S. struggles against much of the rest of the issue which seems more preoccupied with education as a form of pastoral care. Perhaps this emphasis on economic competitiveness should not be a surprise given the historical context of the end of the Cold War, the first decade of the rapid increase in neoliberal policy reform in the U.S., and the broader discourse about public education that produced thinking like *A Nation at Risk*.

Yet, NAIS is vocalizing a belief that White privilege and the experience of students of color need to be addressed in independent schools for moral reasons (a belief outlined in McIntosh's (1990) piece and the book review), while also making an economic argument that there is an economic motive for "inclusion." As Harris goes on to write, this strategy is essential "not because of bleeding-heart motives, but instead because of self-interest, the basic will to survive" (1990, p. 41). Taken together, these articles suggest there is some confluence between discourses about "diversity" and economics that gestures toward "minorities" being a problem worth addressing on both moral and economic grounds. Additionally, there is some indication that the "diverse" subject position is constituted as the outsider, new to the independent school landscape, and becomes visible as a) non-White and b) deficient educationally and economically. Though this is limited to one issue, there is evidence at least "diversity" and economic discourses are intermingling, and reading the second issue (NAIS, 2000) from ten years later there are further indications that there are interactions between these sets of discursive practices.

Ironically, though Harris's (1990) predictions were meant to be realized in 2001, by 2000 NAIS pivoted to a message about independent schools offering a public service as laboratories for best educational practices and outreach to public schools (much in the mode of Powell (1996, 1999)). The underlying theme of the entire issue from the fall of 2000 promotes a vision of benevolent independent schools creating public-private partnerships. One article highlights the role of independent schools interacting with community organizations; two others describe different summer programs where independent school faculty teach public school teachers about pedagogy. One piece, authored by the then president of NAIS, speaks broadly to the moral imperative for private schools to work with public institutions and communities of all sorts. But perhaps the best indicator of discourse related to Harris's essay is an article about a public-

private partnership that gave 90 “at-risk” (Phillips, 2000) students access to an outdoor education program in Colorado facilitated by the Eagle Rock School. In this account of a program conceived and funded by the American Honda Corporation, Phillips lauds the program because “it provides a rigorous and challenging academic program, but puts more focus on character development so that it can bring its at-risk students back into mainstream society” (2000, p. 64). Here we have NAIS presenting an opinion about the direct public service of an independent school. If we look closer, though, the language of “mainstreaming” “at-risk” children as a public service echoes Harris’s mandate “to make productive citizens out of minorities” (1990, p. 41). Phillip’s language seems to be only a slightly sanitized version of Harris’s, which indicate that a similar regime of truth is in force, but that what is sayable within “diversity” discourse in 2000 has changed. Here what is deemed true is that “diversity” initiatives provide economic benefits, not just for the “diverse” subject, but also for the normal subject. The essence of “mainstreaming” is to make the abnormal normal, which reflects the curative aims of education within “diversity” discourse at this time. A broader reading of this issue further indicates that something has changed about the rules for producing statements by 2000. If Harris’s (1990) language seems hard-edged and pragmatic, the articles from 2000 read as a series of plaudits for independent schools who do the right thing by sharing their excellence with the less fortunate in attempt to reform the ills of public education and dysfunctional students.

Though this is but a cursory analysis of two issues of *Independent School*, the data suggested there was merit to continuing with the larger research project. The issues described above indicated some of what had changed (and what had not) in discursive practices between two points in time, opening the door to a promising FDA. It was reasonable to believe that with a

more expansive study of every issue, *Independent School* was the appropriate data source for beginning to construct a rich genealogy of “diversity” discourse in independent schools.

Data Selection and the Archive

As discussed in chapter one, *Independent School* magazine offered an opportunity to view discourses that circulated in the independent school world between 1976 and 2021. Though, as a data set, this could not represent an exhaustive catalogue of thinking in each member school, it presented the broad outlines of discursive practices, regimes of truth, and “problems” worth addressing within these institutions. *Independent School* was the most logical body of statements for analysis because it was the only regularly published text that presented institutional-level practices and concerns. It was particularly useful as a depiction of individual discourses and dominant regimes of truth in this field because it was both written for independent school leaders and faculty and produced by an organization governed by a group of heads of independent schools. Thus, it functions as a material artifact of the circular interaction of power and discourse whereby power relations produce discourse and discourse produces certain relations of power.

As a series of secondary data sources, head of school, diversity practitioner, and admissions officer job descriptions, as well as Black@, Asian@, and LGBTQ@ Instagram accounts offered reflections of how “diversity” discourse circulated among specific subject positions within the independent school industry. In other words, these data sources represented how “diversity” discourse is taken up by those who inhabit the roles of school leaders, staff, students, and alumni. My hope for these data sources was that they would enrich the genealogical task of this study by illustrating material experience and triangulating which elements of “diversity” were made visible by discourse in the present. These two sources were

selected over others for several reasons. First, they proved to be easily accessible in a way that others were not. For example, I had initially intended to use alumni magazines, school newspapers, and school communications from different eras of the past, but found that access to those things would have required a protracted collection process with individual schools that would be challenging to complete at a scale that I felt was representative for the industry. Second, I believed the large volume of job descriptions and Instagram posts from a wide array of independent schools better represented discourse than did artifacts collected directly from a handful of institutions. Finally, they were statements produced by individuals about either their own experiences in schools (in the case of Instagram posts) or their vision of desirable additions to schools' administration (in the case of the job descriptions). This was key in that both reflected how individuals understood and internalized "diversity" discourses and the relationships of specific subjectivities to the institutional apparatus.

I explored two other data sources for this study: conference programs from the NAIS and PoCC annual conferences and feedback from heads of school on the initial findings of the study, but encountered issues with both. In the case of the conferences, programs were only available for the most recent two years, and after an initial analysis of the four programs in those two cycles, I found that they did not offer much to this study. While I did code their titles using the same codes employed for the magazine, none of them offered another dimension to the genealogy outlined in chapters four and five, so I have not included a formal analysis of them. To solicit feedback from heads of school, I had hoped to present my initial genealogy of "diversity" discourse during the Klingenstein Center's annual Heads of School Fellowship Program. This program brings together roughly 20 heads of school each February to participate in a two-week fellowship where they study leadership practice, perform case studies, and

network. While feedback from heads of school on my findings and analysis would have likely provided intriguing complications to this study, I did not receive a response in my repeated attempts to contact the director of the Klingenstein Center. Having now completed this study, though, I believe that pursuing this process again may yield different and meaningful insights for a future project.

Though *Independent School* has been published since 1976, digital copies are only available back to the winter of 1990. Interestingly, though these digitized versions are available through several online databases, the “archive” on NAIS’s website only contains issues back to 2008. This may be because older issues lack the manicured graphics of the post-2008 issues, but it does indicate something about NAIS’s disinterest in examining or contending with its past publications. Physical back issues were available locally and thus it was logical to analyze the entirety of the magazine’s publication from its first publication by NAIS in 1976 to 2021. For the job descriptions, I utilized the NAIS career website, which is the primary job posting location for NAIS schools nationally. I collected each description for a head of school, diversity practitioner, and admissions officer published between February of 2021 and January of 2022. This resulted in 43 head of school descriptions, 83 diversity practitioner descriptions, and 105 admissions officer descriptions, for a total of 231 artifacts. Finally, for the Black@, Asian@, and LGBTQ@ accounts, I created my own Instagram profile and began following 123 accounts attached to specifically named independent schools; I analyzed items posted between June of 2020 and March of 2022. It is hard to know exactly how many of these accounts exist as there is not one centralized location where they are all identified. Another research project using these accounts whose initial findings were published in *Independent School* (Furlonge & Graves, 2022) following the completion of my study used data from 253 accounts. For my purposes, I identified

accounts for analysis by beginning with accounts I had prior knowledge of and then exploring which accounts they followed. By tracing this path, I created a network of accounts, stopping only when the lists of followed accounts became almost entirely redundant. In the end, the 123 accounts I did analyze were connected to independent schools all across the U.S., including day, boarding, and single-gender schools of varying sizes.

Research Design and Analysis

My intention was to read every issue of *Independent School* twice. On the first pass, I would read at intervals of five years starting from the first issue in the fall of 1976 (i.e. read fall 1976, then fall 1981, then fall 1986, etc., then beginning again with winter 1976, then winter 1981, etc.). The goal of this approach was to force myself to look at each issue archaeologically, at its own distinct moment in time, and resist the temptation to form narratives about the evolutions of the discourses that appeared in the text. However, as with so many things, this process was interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic, which prevented me from accessing the physical issues from 1979 through 1989 for a number of months. Because of this, I began with the digitally available issues from 1990 through 2021. Since this span was abbreviated, I decided to read sequentially without the five-year gaps. By the time I completed this series, I was able to access issues from 1976 onward, and read those in the same way. I read with a special attention to articles that overtly address topics of “diversity” and socio-economics, but was careful not to exclude articles and works of fiction that may at first seem to be unrelated to such discourses. For example, the pilot study suggested that articles directed toward college counselors may inherently communicate assumptions and knowledges about what role “diversity” and socio-economics play in college admissions. The archaeological approach of reading in this way focused on the “propositional content” (Peräkylä & Ruusuvuori, 2008) of language in these

issues and I made note of the specific positioning of “diverse” subjects at different times. As I read through on this first attempt, I specifically looked to see how “diversity” and inequality discourses interact with one another and with other discursive practices. In this first process, I developed 45 top-level nodes that I coded for throughout the entirety of the magazine. As I completed this first round of coding, I maintained regular memos that documented recurring discursive themes that emerged in discrete time periods. These themes, and in particular the breaks that occurred as time passed in the magazine, informed the six discursive eras described in chapters four and five.

Following the first pass, I reread every coded article in sequence from 1976 to 2021, developing another 47 sub-codes that indicated a more refined connection to the six eras I had identified. Having already performed an initial analysis of each issue on its own, this approach allowed me to better construct a genealogy of how the particular discourses of today have come to be. This helped me to refocus on building a “history of the present,” by making me consider each issue as a moment constituted by distinct conditions of possibility that legitimized knowledges about “diversity” and inequality and the institutional authority of independent schools.

Once my reading of *Independent School* was complete, I turned to the secondary sources laid out above to consider which were the most appropriate for enriching and complicating the archive of the magazine. By this point I had been regularly checking the NAIS career site and collecting job descriptions for a year, and I began with reading and coding those using the codes developed through analyzing the magazine. Because these data were collected from only the final era of the genealogy, they skewed heavily toward the themes that emerge in that period of the study. I then read over 75% of the posts from each of the 123 Instagram accounts I had

identified for examination. I chose not to code the Instagram accounts themselves for two reasons. First, the nature of Instagram as an image-based platform made it extremely challenging to download and code text from the postings. I did attempt to use CrowdTangle, but Meta, Instagram's parent company, delayed granting me access to their research platform for months, and when I did receive access, the search tool proved not to be useful for my purposes. Second, after reading a significant volume of posts from these accounts, it became clear that there was a remarkable consistency to the types of narratives and discursive practices they represented. This made certain themes obvious, thus making the process of coding itself just a cumbersome logistical choice.

Concluding Thoughts

The goal of this study was not to reveal some conscious plot for how independent schools as a group obscure the damaging impact they have on inequality in U.S. society. The aim here was to learn what discourses about “diversity” and inequality circulate at different moments in time and how they operate in accordance with certain regimes of truth to construct a “history of the present” in independent schools. The ultimate purpose was to understand how these schools, whose increasing financial inaccessibility has outstripped broader increases in economic inequality in the U.S. over recent decades, conceive of themselves as moral and positive forces in American society. From a theoretical standpoint, FDA offered unique opportunities for insight, not in terms of revealing what is hidden beneath discourse, but rather in analyzing what statements independent schools have made overtly. Though *Independent School* magazine was not a perfect representation of the discourses operating in each NAIS member school, it did give the best overall picture of institutional discourse around these issues, and thus offered a novel perspective for research in the area of independent schools and the study of elites in general.

Chapter 4: Managing the Many Threats of “Diversity” (1976-1998)

This chapter is the first of two that considers the genealogy of “diversity” discourse in independent schools between 1976 and 2021. Over the course of these 45 years, six discrete discursive eras emerge, each with distinctive subjects and power relations; however, these six eras break along two central themes. Though different subjects are centered in each of the first three periods, spanning 1976 to 1998, they share a concern with “diversity” as a threat to be managed by the institutional apparatus of independent schools. The following presents analysis of statements from *Independent School* magazine during these years focusing primarily on what constitutes a “diverse” subject and how these subjects interact with normal students in these schools, as well as the schools themselves.

In a broad sense, this analysis finds that “diverse” subjects in these years are positioned as threats that must be neutralized or harnessed for positive purpose by the institution. In the first era (1976-1983), working women, learning-disabled students, and racial minorities in independent schools materialize as novel subjects that pose a danger to traditional independent school students, but might be properly acted upon in order to negate their impact. In the next (1984-88), the emergence of the female student; disadvantaged, Black and Hispanic students; and gay people continue to manifest as threats to an institutional status quo that is facing social and economic crisis narratives in the U.S. The final period (1990-1998) sees a narrowing of “diverse” subjects relevant to independent schools and announces the arrival of the first biopolitical (Foucault, 2010) tools to manage their presence and effect on affluent, White students. In some ways, these first decades represent a more pluralistic conception of “diversity” than what operates in the latter three eras of this study; yet what stands out in the analysis is how

the erratic course of “diversity” discourse maintains a constant goal of producing beneficial outcomes for the normal student in these environments.

Era 1: Working Women, Disability, Race, and the Moral Crisis of America (1976-1983)

The first discursive period of *Independent School* can be thought of as the dawning era of “diversity” even though the term “diversity” itself is seldom used. At this time, the problems posed within independent school discourses revolve around a crisis of morality in American society, in particular, the dissolution of the traditional family structure, gender roles, and socio-economic stability of the post-World War II era. From these discourses emerge three primary subjects who interact with independent schools, all of whom represent some sort of threatening intervention in the established patterns of activity in these environments. The first, working women, reflects an interest not just in students and faculty as meaningful subjects in the independent school ecosystem. The next two, the learning-disabled and racial minority students, present a broader understanding of what might be considered “diverse” in these years when compared to later eras.

In many ways one article from 1978, “Raising our Consciousness,” encapsulates the tone of this period by specifying these subjects as abnormal to the independent school setting, yet alluding to their capacity to benefit normal students:

It is not enough to recruit the ethnic minority, the female, the handicapped... Whether we like it or not, independence no longer means that we can choose to serve only those segments with which we feel comfortable. It is time for us to take the initiative in educational development by creating truly representative microcosms through which we can provide models of solving large-scale problem of educating our children. (Boerner, 1978, p. 56)

A statement like this signals movement toward what is considered desirable “diversity” in later eras. The pursuit of microcosmic representation for the benefit of “our students” remains central

to narratives about the benefits of “diversity” up to the present. However, at this point these subject positions reflect an ambivalence about the role that “diverse” individuals play in relation to independent schools, on the one hand representing others that make schools uncomfortable and on the other hand presenting an opportunity to better prepare “our children” for their futures. Both of these elements, discomfort and a need to adapt, mirror prevailing discourses about gender equality, family structure, and race relations during a period of social and economic destabilization in U.S. society.

A preoccupation with a rise in divorce rates, single parents, and women’s new employment is evident throughout this period in the production of the working woman. This subject is problematized within independent school discourses about parents’ expectations for schools and their availability to nurture their own children. In a piece from 1977 entitled “A New Breed of Parents,” a professor of psychology and independent school parent describes her experience interacting with a teacher who was:

...Intimidated by the fact that I was this strange creature called a “working mother,” who was not supposed to be a good kind of person. I had already received all kinds of flak, in the form of supposedly interested questions – “Well, how are you going to deal with *that*?” – asked in a way that implied that I probably couldn’t deal with it. (Seiden, 1977, p. 16)

The perception is that the working mother, distracted by the tasks associated with employment, is inherently neglecting her child. By casting her as incapable or incompetent, these discourses position her as inferior to the institution and of little value. The suggestion that this subject is “strange” indicates that this position is new within independent schools, and breaks from previous conceptions of mothers as well as work and family structure in this institutional context. Another example of the crisis around changing notions of femininity comes from “Self-Realization in Women: It’s Time.” This piece, which transcribes remarks presented by a

psychiatrist at a symposium on the state of women in independent education hosted by the New York State Association of Independent Schools in 1982, describes some of the characteristics of the working mother and the issues that arise for this newly liberated female subject:

Some women are coy and seductive when dealing with superiors; others are ingratiating and appeasing. These women confuse healthy self-assertion with aggression and in their anxiety fall back on “little girl” ways of defending themselves. A Third area of anxiety and conflict is fear of competence. Many women, as they become more competent, panic because they feel they are losing their femininity. (Symonds, 1982, p. 50)

This artifact reaffirms many of the stereotypes of working women by questioning their morality and shaping them as inherently selfish, incapable of parenting appropriately, and weak. Central to this assessment is the idea that there is an inverse relationship between competence in the world of work and femininity. Narratives about working mothers are framed within lukewarm reception of some of the social gains resulting from second wave feminisms. Unsurprisingly, this stands in stark contrast to the complete discursive absence of a male analog.

What is also noteworthy about the production of these female subjects is that they are never posited as a node for change in schools. As a problem, they are not one to be solved by independent schools, they are one to be managed. They represent a threat to the school because they cannot support the work of the school at home since they are overstretched and have made a personal decision that comes at the expense of their children. Similarly, within independent schools their behavior is suspect and reflects their predilection toward “anxiety and conflict.” Yet, instead of advocating for supporting these women in some way (as is often the case with other “diverse” subjects), the magazine repeatedly suggests that their “anxieties,” “intimidation,” and immorality must be navigated for the school to adequately educate their children.

The second frequently addressed subject is the learning-disabled student. Unlike other individuals who are presented as wholly new to the independent school, this subject displays familiar behavior in this context:

We all know these children, who have been variously described as learning-disabled, dyslexic, minimally brain-damaged, hyperactive, or “just immature.” Causes of such problems are still a subject of debate, but one fact is clear: despite selective admission policies, they exist in independent schools and may be the source of more faculty frustration than any other dilemma. Learning problems occur in both boys and girls, but boys’ problems, for a variety of reasons, are more frequently recognized. They occur at all intellectual levels, though bright children are often able to cover up early difficulties and compensate for learning deficiencies... Everything depends on early diagnosis and intervention, which new attention to early childhood development is making possible. (Healy, 1978, p. 18)

Intriguingly, this subject is cast as both recognizable and stealthy. The newly labeled learning-disabled child’s characteristics have long been a fixture of independent schools, but only because the “bright” ones covertly evade the exclusionary mechanisms of the admissions office. Now, these individuals are made visible to a degree that they may be acted upon by the institution. While the learning-disabled student is predominantly male, the suggestion remains that a mass of clandestine female students operate in the background. These students are a problem for faculty, schools, and normal students that must be remediated through medical and psychiatric practices lest they subvert the proper course of education. Interestingly, these subjects may in many other ways (socioeconomically, racially, gender-wise, etc.) seem like normal students, so their abnormality must be sought out and eradicated for their own good.

Much of the discourse about the learning-disabled student circulates around the appropriateness of their presence in independent schools. This leads to the specification of certain forms of disability as acceptable, typically those with dyslexia, and others as unacceptable. These taxonomic and pathologizing techniques specify the learning-disabled as abnormal, but they also analogize this abnormality to other subjects who have historically been

excluded from independent schools. In “Different but Not Dumb,” an article written by two occupational therapists from 1979, recounts the tale of a mother, Mrs. Smith, being told her son could not attend a “well-known New England preparatory school” because he was dyslexic:

Mrs. Smith, though injured to some degree, was not ready for quite so thorough a rejection. She blurted out, unable to stop herself, “Oh, and how do you feel about women? Blacks? Jews?” The point of the story is that there are prejudices and stereotypes about dyslexia as irrational and damaging as the blanket prejudgments about any other disability or group of people. (Howard & Marek, 1979, p. 30)

This statement reflects a noteworthy change in discourse about how some marginalized groups relate to independent schools. Here certain subjects, namely women, People of Color, and members of oppressed religious groups, have been condoned within these institutions while the learning-disabled remain problematic to a degree that allows for the continued and overt exclusion. Yet this artifact also represents an understanding that all of these now-visible subjects must be admitted to these schools, however abnormal they might be.

One final subject position which emerges in this era is the racial minority. While these individuals will rapidly become central to “diversity” discourse in successive periods, their appearance at this time is peripheral. The focus falls primarily on the racial minority student in these years and this subject is typically understood to be Black, low-income, and urban, though some articles specify different racial others, most of whom have gained access to independent schools through a program called A Better Chance (ABC). “A Better Chance: A Program That Works” describes the successes of this program:

The ABC program places academically talented students from low-income families in college preparatory schools... While the majority of the students are black, ABC also serves Hispanic, native American, Oriental, and white students. They receive financial aid for the final three years of their secondary education. Financial aid is given jointly by ABC and its member schools, with the school providing the major portion. (Dunning-Alami & Boiko, 1977, p. 26-27)

Additionally, this piece features anonymous perspectives from ABC students:

The ABC program means to me just what it stands for – a better chance. It gives people who do not have much money... a chance to go into a private school and make something of themselves.

It means to me a chance to go to a good school, attend an excellent college, and really use my full potential.

It means that I will have a better chance to become the best corporation lawyer in the world. [It gives me] a chance to prove that I am indeed someone and to let others know that by my achieving success. (Dunning-Alami & Boiko, 1977, p. 28)

The emphasis on the specific ethnicities of these subjects and the beneficence of independent schools is repeated throughout the period. In another commentary a former head of school writes about the travails of admitting and managing Black students in his school and frames the motivation for doing so:

Those of us who were teachers and heads of schools in the middle of the 1960's can remember the excitement and optimism – and pride – of those days. We were playing a serious part in a national movement to bring justice and equality to black Americans. We were educating a new leadership class. We were exposing our students and ourselves to the realities of American society. We were trying to change it, at some cost to ourselves in – in money, in efforts to fit badly prepared students into our classrooms and to act correctly when these defensive newcomers responded to our “generosity” with anger and scorn. We joined A Better Chance’s program, which included Hispanics, Indians, and poor whites along with blacks, and which supplied both structure and impetus for our actions. (Merrill, 1982, p. 57)

Several features of these subjects and their relationships to independent schools are made visible in artifacts like these. First, these subjects are constructed in a way that correlates race and socio-economic status. While ABC is a program for low-income students to gain access to independent schools, these students are additionally identified only by race. Even in the small number of cases where ABC selects White students, they must be differentiated from the normal independent school student by the descriptor “poor whites.” The differences produced between these subjects and the independent school creates an opportunity for the institution to save these individuals and demonstrate its moral, martyrial convictions. Racial minorities are given an

opportunity to “make something of themselves” at the institution’s cost, even though they are “badly prepared,” “defensive,” and demonstrate “anger and scorn.” Individuals from these groups remain outside the acceptable social hierarchies of independent schools until they demonstrate a sufficient level of ability and desire to assimilate to the norms of these environments. They are marginal to the operation of independent schools and their discourses, but are allowed to participate in limited ways once they show both “potential” and a desire to achieve sanctioned goals such as joining the leadership class and attending elite colleges, thus demonstrating that they are “indeed someone.”

These three subjects, the working woman, the learning-disabled student, and the racial minority symbolize the fractured nature of “diversity” discourse in this initial era. Though they share almost no common characteristics, each represents a threat to the normal student in their own way and that threat must be addressed by the institution because their access is now a forgone conclusion. The working woman, the indicator of the deteriorating American family, must be attended to in order to alleviate her deficiencies as a mother and her conflict-inducing anxieties in the workplace of the school. The learning-disabled student must be identified, categorized, and given curative attention to neutralize their abnormality. This is necessary so that they may achieve normal student status and lessen the burden on those normal students and teachers around them. The racial minority, whose presence in independent schools is linked directly to the upheaval of social change of the 1960’s, threatens the institution with anger and ingratitude, but also embodies the opportunity to assimilate abnormal subjects to the normal values and goals of independent schools and their communities.

In each of these three, then, we can identify the struggle among discourses about “diversity,” social change, and education. These discourses produce an ambivalent orientation to

“diversity” on the part of independent schools. “Diversity” looks like a necessary evil, one that can come in a variety of unrelated appearances. It is an unavoidable peril that without appropriate modification will have significant, negative consequences for the normal student. However, if moderated correctly, these crises can be averted by assimilating abnormal subjects into the behavioral and social mores of the normal student and the institution. One item of import in these discursive processes, however, is that the normal student is never defined explicitly. While oblique references like “our students” or “those segments we feel comfortable with” (Boerner, 1978, p. 56), the normal student is produced only through the delineation of who they are not. They are not the progeny of homes with working mothers, they are not learning-disabled, and, most visibly, they are not racial minorities or impoverished.

Era 2: Exposure, Multiculturalism, Gender, and the AIDS Epidemic (1984-1989)

Between 1984 and 1988, “diversity” discourse is preoccupied with the “disadvantaged” and “at-risk” youth of America. These subjects are cast primarily as “urban,” “inner-city,” and Black, racial minorities who are viewed as cultural others. Here class characteristics become an important component of producing the racial minority, and narratives about this group begin to concern themselves with the economic competitiveness of the U.S. on the global stage. Women continue to be a “diverse” identity for independent schools, but narratives shift to thinking of girls being a group to be included at a time when many previously single-gender independent schools had recently become coeducational. This era also sees the emergence of homosexuals in independent schools, particularly adult male teachers who are “in the closet,” and adolescents struggling to come to terms with being gay.

To bring into focus the discourses of this era, it is worth beginning with a quotation from an article entitled “Why Teach Afro-American History in White Schools,” which was part of a

series called “To Include Us All” from 1984. Mark Hilgendorf, a high school history teacher argues,

Instead of pushing thoughts of guilt and contrition at them for their parents’ and grandparents’ actions – or inaction – it seems wiser and healthier simply to expose our students to the thoughts and cultural values of blacks, Hispanics, women, and other minorities who have felt locked and shut out of the mainstream American experience. (Hilgendorf, 1984, p. 47)

This statement suggests a more explicit hierarchy of othered identities that emerges in this era, as well as a clear definition of a norm that stands in opposition to them. In essence, this form of institutional discourse designates “our students” as white and male, and that “diversity” will benefit them because it will expose them to other, non-“mainstream” ways of life. This formulation will continue through following eras where the benefits of “diversity” for the competitive advantage of White elites are espoused as rationales for “diversity” initiatives. This is remarkable because it reflects a shift in thinking about “diversity” as a problem that takes hold in the mid 1980’s, one in which “diverse” subjects become less visible as individuals who may be brought into the world of independent schools as a token gesture of morality, but rather because their presence might positively impact the normal students of these institutions.

This discursive move is connoted by the arrival of “inclusion” language in the magazine. Though a number of articles written by admissions officers and faculty supervisors address concrete steps for the recruitment of racial minorities, most explicitly Black students and teachers, a distinct turn is made toward addressing how schools might make racial minorities, both students and parents, comfortable in these settings by expanding “multicultural” curricular representation. These representations reinforce the “diverse” subject as different because of their affiliation with Black, Latinx, and “urban culture,” which are almost invariably coupled with low socioeconomic status. These associations are evident in a handful of articles that promote new

urban studies or African-American history courses; an example from 1984 describes one teacher's experience at a school in Dallas:

Predictably, some of the most animated, and probably most useful, exchanges [between students] took place when a speaker was controversial. Minority concerns and welfare questions stimulated particularly vehement debates. In most cases, the students were having some of their most basic beliefs brought into question. I don't know whether anyone's mind was completely changed by these sessions – that was not our aim – but rarely have I seen students so challenged, so reflective. (Hartzell, 1984, p. 21-22)

Here, not only are racial minorities and welfare connected directly, but these topics are identified as controversial. Presumably, the commonly held opinions of the traditional independent school student are controverted by speakers from marginalized communities, something they benefit from by being forced to think critically about their own beliefs. This is a new orientation of the power relationship between the racial minority and the normal student. In the past the racial minority entered the school as an abnormal individual made available to be acted upon by the institution once they recognized the desirability of affluent, White norms and showed the potential to attain the goals associated with them; this relationship is about exposure to the racial minority's weakness sparking a new form of strength in the normal student. Here, the racial minority is not just an external threat being brought into the institution in a way that neutralizes the risk for normal students. Instead, knowledge of the racial minority produces excess power that will allow the normal student to thrive.

At the same time, however, the racial minority continues to benefit from their association with independent schools. Previously, that value depended on full assimilation, but in this new era, the institution attempts to make the racial minority comfortable by reflecting back their otherness. This arises mainly in discussions of curricular representation, which are framed as helpful to racial minorities:

For black students, the [African-American history] course, in both a direct and indirect way, helps to mitigate feelings of alienation and isolation in an independent school by encouraging them to read, think, and express their feelings about historical material that is rarely presented in the curriculum. It gives black students an opportunity once again to get in touch with the people they can empathize with and accept, to sort out how they can productively live in two cultures without compromising their integrity, and to satisfy a strong need to enlighten and educate other people in a community. (Hilgendorf, 1984, p. 48)

A distinction is drawn between the “culture” of normal independent school students and Black independent school students, one that must be navigated by racial minorities. However, the school may help include these others in their community by mirroring and reconnecting them with their own “culture,” so that they might “enlighten” their communities and protect the integrity of their own identities, which are separate from independent school ones. It is telling that this discourse suggests that the only people that racial minorities can “empathize with and accept” are those who share their racial and cultural identity, which is not of the institutional setting they participate in. It is also remarkable that the aim is for the racial minority to learn to navigate this division rather than try to eliminate the division itself. This suggests that their abnormality is intrinsic, natural, and unrectifiable. They should be recruited to the school because their difference will benefit elite students, but they will always retain a cultural deficit.

As these discursive productions of the racial minority morph from the past, the visibility of female students proliferates. If the previous era centered the working woman out of concern over changing family structures, this era is fixated on the girl as a newcomer to many independent schools¹ and how the intrinsic qualities of boys and girls differ. A standard example

¹ This discursive trend comes on the heels of the gender integration of a number of high-profile independent schools. The 1970’s and early 1980’s saw some of the country’s most prestigious boarding schools turn co-educational, as well as some urban and suburban day schools. Though I suspect this change affected a minority of schools, the relevance of the ones that experienced this change seem to have impacted industry discourse in a significant way. This happens in two directions, both the advocacy of differentiated education in newly co-ed schools and arguments for single-gender schools to remain that way.

of this comes from an article called “For Girls, Schools of their Own,” written by Barbara Powell, the head of an all-girls school, and her husband, educational scholar Arthur Powell:

Women “by nature” are really different from men in ways that cause deep conflict when they enter a man’s world and feel forced to mute or abandon some basic womanly qualities. If so, the proper education of women deals, not only with completing the revolution of access to opportunity, but also with preserving particularly womanly qualities – such as nurturing and defining self in terms of relations with others. (Powell & Powell, 1983, p. 55)

These “womanly qualities” extend from the typical gender roles that have long been a staple of U.S. society and reference to those characteristics defines a negative space of normal, male tendencies. There are clear echoes from the past production of the working woman, particularly around the conflict caused by the insertion of women into traditionally male spaces, but the shift in focus from the working woman to the girl student allows for an explicit, educational (or curative) solution to this problem. The working woman was a threat because of her incompetence in the workplace and as a mother. The girl, however, may be fixed by the independent school and, much like the racial minority, be taught to navigate an immutable duality. The girl will not have to suffer the conflict of the working woman because she will learn how to assimilate *and* she will learn to preserve their own natural tendencies as woman.

While the gender differences outlined above are used to justify single-gender education in this instance, these variances are also promoted for their benefits in coeducational schools, as witnessed in the case of one school in Baltimore that had recently begun admitting girls:

“Parents will be able to rest assured that their sons will receive a more well-rounded education, whatever that is considered to be, and will better mature in a normal social atmosphere. Fortunately, in all situations the male students will be exposed to the so-called women’s ‘point of view...’” Occasional lapses and oddities aside, the school seems a much better place for having female students... The girls add personality and zest to the place. They in turn attract high-quality male students who aren’t interested in boy’s schools... What this school has discovered, you see is that girls *are* different. Thank God for the discovery. (Bowler, 1983, p. 5)

Much as is the case in the power relationship between White, affluent students in independent schools and racial minorities, the “diverse” presence that is embodied by girls is primarily beneficial to boys. The expression of the female subject’s value as deriving from her difference, her embodiment of the “women’s point of view,” is analogous to the cultural exposure provided by the racial minority. In both cases, normal students, whether White and affluent or male, receive preparation for a world beyond the independent school because they have received exposure and desensitization to their inferior counterparts. Here again we can see the positive impact that the “other” brings to the institution as well. Much as the incorporation of the racial minority strengthens the competitiveness of independent schools by neutralizing the threats outlined above, the admission of girls does the same by attracting “high-quality male students” who might otherwise choose not to attend a single-gender school.

It is intriguing that where there is a current of pushback against the limitations of stereotypes about gender, there are highly defined outlines drawn of what those stereotypes are. In an article entitled “Testing the School Climate for Gender Equity” the academic dean of an independent school in Ohio writes:

The conventional stereotype of girls assumes that they are cooperative, passive supporters, shy, artistic, and headed for the humanities, marriage, and family. Boys are stereotyped as competitive, active leaders, mechanically inclined, and oriented toward mathematics, science, and a career. I will not argue here whether such differences consistently exist today in the United States nor the degree to which they are inborn or acquired. But I will argue, passionately, that by treating individual boys and girls as if we expect them to conform to such stereotypes, we stunt their development. (Chapman, 1984, p. 25)

While offering a “passionate” argument against the perils of expecting students to fit these subject positions, the precision with which they are described leaves no room for misunderstanding, and no argument is offered to contradict the existence of those identities. This

statement performs a complicated turn as well by suggesting that boys and girls exist as distinctly different from one another (and other gender identities), but that the role of the school, teacher, or parent is to avoid assuming that individuals should exhibit that characteristics that construct these subjectivities. This move can be read as an early statement of a type that offers resistance to particular relationships between subjects, but in the process contributes to the production of those subjectivities.

A final problem associated with “diversity,” homosexuality, arrives at the end of this era. A series from one issue of the magazine at the end of 1988, entitled “Homosexuality and Homophobia,” delimits the nature of the problem unequivocally by stating from the outset that “Homosexuality is a heterosexual problem, just as the black problem is one of white racism, and the feminist problem is one of male sexism” (Ross, 1988, p. 13). The positioning of these three as equivalents unveils a certain power relationship surrounding the homosexuality problem as familiar and understandable for a contemporary reader who is immersed in “diversity” discourse. In essence, the visibility of this problem is novel, but its structure is not.

In large part the problem of homosexuality emerges out of broader discourses about the ongoing AIDS epidemic. As such, much of the discourse in this relatively brief sample focuses on disease, both the transmission of HIV among homosexuals and the myth of homosexuality as a contagious phenomenon. Though discourse in the magazine focuses on dispelling this myth, it makes the myth visible and thereby a problem requiring redress. Out of these discursive practices materialize two clear subjects, “closeted” gay teachers and gay students.

The former subject is discussed predominantly within narratives about the process of “coming out” and how in spite of their difference they likely do not conform to stereotypes about

gay men. In one first-person narrative called “Opening Closets and Minds,” a gay teacher recounts that:

In the course of discussing homophobia I told the class I was gay. For them it was a great joke because they assumed I was merely testing them out to see their reactions. After all, Mr. Jennings was a young, clean-cut, all-American Harvard graduate who loved the Celtics and didn’t have limp wrists. He just *couldn’t* be gay. (Jennings, 1988, p. 23)

Once again, within the context of making difference visible, a norm is produced. In this case, that norm is not only the archetypical independent school teacher, it is also an aspirational intersection of identities to inhabit for independent school students. The suggestion that this subject could be both a role model and gay might appear progressive, yet the difference produced by statements like these likely does more to posit that the instance of Mr. Jennings is an exception, not the rule.

This same article articulates the living conditions of the gay teacher:

Gay and lesbian teachers have three options in dealing with their sexuality in the school setting: to hide their identity completely, neither deny nor confirm, or be completely open. The first option – denying or hiding one’s sexual identity – is the one chosen by the overwhelming majority. (Jennings, 1988, p. 23)

In some ways, this echoes the treatment of the learning-disabled subject from the prior era. This is a subject who has long existed, but is not easily identified. It is not literally visible in the way that racial minorities or girls are; instead, it is covert. While homophobia may function the same way as racism or sexism according to discourse in this period, its subjects are unique since they can pass for normal. As such, they must be outed, ostensibly so they can be supported by the community, much as the learning-disabled were previously.

Meanwhile, the gay or lesbian student is conceived more as a clinical identity. The experience of growing up as gay or lesbian is associated with trauma and “they do feel different”

(Shaecher, 1988, p. 31). Medicalizing this phenomenon is evident in “Stresses on Gay and Lesbian Adolescents,” a piece from a school health coordinator:

My thinking about homosexuality is based on certain premises. The first is that homosexuality – being gay or lesbian – is a natural variation of human sexual behavior, It may be a deviant behavior statistically, but not in a clinical sense. (Shaecher, 1988, p. 29)

Even if the problem of homosexuality is not clinical, the need to designate it as such (and to revert to statistical analysis to demonstrate deviance) reflects the impulse to approach the problem from a curative and diagnostic framework. Even within these narratives that seek to dispel mythologies around sexual identity, this discourse makes visible, and in some cases promotes, stereotypes of gay and lesbian subjects, often going so far as to produce difference between the two. The health coordinator continues:

Most young lesbians do not operate in the framework of public sexual contact. They tend to identify with and form an emotional and intimate relationship with another woman. The danger is that, after they have established a close tie with someone whom they treasure and value and with whom they can share their feelings, the relationship may become too tight, too bonded. The young woman, terribly attached to her female partner finds it difficult to experience other aspects of her life and to relate to other people. A closing-in process takes place. For the male, the opposite process takes place. He tends to have multiple sexual partners. Prostitution is one route, especially for young poor men living in the city. Often young boys say they get into hustling or male prostitutions, not because they need the money, but because they are looking for contact with other men and have not yet figured out how to do it in any other way. (Shaecher, 1988, p. 32)

Beyond the obviously damaging stereotypes that this statement endorses, it also highlights an intersection between sexual and gender identities. Girls are already an othered identity, and therefore the behavior that lesbians exhibit can be generalized to any relationship they participate in; these “dangers” do not seem so foreign from the “womanly” qualities established previously. Meanwhile, since boys may easily qualify as normal students in independent schools at this time, the gay boy’s promiscuous behaviors must be made more explicit and presumably immoral. In each case there is the concern that hiding among the normal students are an underclass of gay

and lesbian students who require visibility in order to be psychologically fixed and to divert them from these dangerous behaviors. The threat is that without proper identification, gay students may pass as normal students, hurting themselves by engaging with the blight of gayness or negatively affecting the normal students around them. This is a complex construction, which is akin to the learning-disabled in that gay students might otherwise possess all the other features of normal students, and perhaps more importantly, be the children of normal parents. It seems likely that this necessary association between the abnormal student and normal parent leads to the production of two different varieties of gay subject: the gay teacher who might pass because he embodies all the desirable characteristics of the normal student and normal parent, and the aberrant gay student who has descended into a life of psychological instability and promiscuity.

In this relatively short period, major discursive shifts take place surrounding the utility of “diversity.” Whereas Era 1 fixates on neutralizing the potential threats of newly visible subjectivities so that their impact on normal students can be made marginal, this five-year window reformulates the problem of “diversity” to produce value for normal students. White elites become more competitive socially and economically as they are exposed to the racial minority because they are desensitized to others whom they must inevitably contend with in a newly multicultural world. Boys become more well-rounded because of their interactions with girls in the school environment. Heterosexual and homosexual students’ eyes are opened by learning that gay teachers can have all the trappings they desire for themselves. Discursive practices and the technologies of the independent school apparatus have found a way to harness the threat of these others to enhance the outcomes for their traditional patrons and strengthen the institutions that a few years earlier were under siege by these outsiders.

Era 3: Economic Crisis, Competition, and the end of the Cold War (1990 - 1998)

By the period of the late 1980's into the early 1990's, "diversity" has transformed from a novelty in Era 1 and an inevitability in Era 2 to a necessity for the survival of independent schools in the U.S. Era 3 balances moral and pragmatic rationales for addressing the problem of "diversity" and its relationship with international competitiveness. In producing these narratives, discourses of this time further restrict the field of visible subjectivities in a substantial break from Eras 1 and 2. Gone is any treatment of women and girls, gay people, and the learning-disabled; meanwhile the racial minority takes on new characteristics and explicitly encounters its counterpart, the White person. This represents a constricting understanding of "diversity" while, for the first time, defining a visible center (White people) that stands in opposition to "diverse" identities. In addition to the poles of this relationship becoming visible, new technologies of institutional control arrive in a move toward what Foucault describes as the "biopolitical" (2010). In both of these occurrences, the materialization of the White person and the exercise of biopolitical techniques of measurement, institutional discourse highlights the ethical and practical necessities of "diversity" that will benefit both the White person *and* the racial minority.

The complex dance of intertwining morality and pragmatism begins in the winter of 1990, where NAIS published Peggy McIntosh's "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack," a now famous paper on white and male privilege, and "2001 – The World Our Students Will Enter," (Harris, 1990) an elaborate treatise on the need to educate racial "minorities" so that they would not become an "albatross" around the neck of American society. McIntosh's piece is an exposition of the concept of White privilege illustrated by her own experience. The heart of her article is a 26-point list with examples of how she benefits from White privilege, including statements like "I can, if I wish, arrange to be in the company of

people of my race most of the time,” and “whether I use checks, credit cards, or cash, I can count on my skin color not to work against the appearance of financial reliability” (McIntosh, 1990, p. 32). This list and her description are issued as statements of fact and couched within a critique of White obliviousness to unearned privileged, a critique that revolves around the moral imperative to pursue justice for People of Color. The Harris piece, conversely, makes explicit a wholly pragmatic logic for a similar call to improve economic “equity:”

To put it bluntly and categorically: by the end of the next decade, the United States will have either succeeded or failed on the pivotal issue of how to open the doors of opportunity to minority young people. If we succeed in learning how to make productive citizens out of minorities, if we can find ways to make them creative, thinking workers, as must happen with young whites, then surely we will have created a strongly competitive America that will be the envy of the world. But, if we fail, then all other bets are off, simply because we will be mired in a system in which the baggage we will have to carry in unproductive human beings, mainly the minorities and the disabled, will be too heavy and will condemn us to second-tier economic status. (Harris, 1990, p. 38-39)

These are competing logics that show the struggle between moralizing and practical discourses about the problem of “diversity,” a struggle that offers two very different rationales for arriving at similar ends. Here we find two different threats to the White person spurring the action of increasing equitable access to educational and economic attainment for the racial minority. On the one hand, White people, faced with a new awareness of their unearned privilege, are threatened with a negative self-conception of immorality as they fail to upend inequitable structures of power. On the other hand, they are faced with the threat of an impending economic collapse caused by the burden of the “unproductive” “baggage” that the racial minority embodies. The first ostensibly asks White people to sacrifice something while the second demonstrates why this sacrifice is self-serving, but both make clear that the White person and the racial minority exist in an asymmetrical power relationship and the time has come for a more equitable balance.

This dichotomy is found throughout the era, where moralizing language is used to make a persuasive case for the importance of “diversity” in independent schools, while also making a pragmatic case for “diversity” as a means for maintaining and increasing the competitiveness of the U.S. and independent school students. This could be reflective of the distribution of independent schools along the political spectrum, especially at a time when “political correctness” becomes a key feature of popular debate. At the same time, it may speak to a duality held central to independent schools across the board, where imperatives to produce successful elites require that schools imbed skills that lead to social and economic competitiveness while also instilling a moral conscience. In this latter sense, McIntosh’s (1990) case for White people surrendering their unearned privilege resonates with Khan’s (2011) argument that a central function of elite schools is to create the sense that hierarchies are natural so long as the privileges that they bestow on elites have been earned through talent and hard work. Whatever the cause for the logical split that the moral and practical discourses indicate, it is easy to read both as instances of interest convergence (Bell, 1980), where racial minorities achieve some measure of progress only because their interests are aligned with those of White people in this particular moment.

If McIntosh and Harris’ pieces are artifacts of macro-level discourses, several others underscore the tensions between morality and pragmatism that are specific to independent schools. While there are clear echoes of the previous era, in which normal students are positioned as beneficiaries of exposure to others, there is now an added layer of conflict as White people are positioned as obstacles to the process of “diversifying.” An early instance of this comes in an article entitled “The Diversity Imperative,” where Richard Barbieri, an NAIS columnist for decades, argues that:

However strong the need for diversity, it has been difficult, and will continue to be difficult, to make the changes needed in independent schools for several reasons. First is the apparent success of unchanging independent schools. Many schools have all-white faculties and almost all-white student bodies, which, whatever sense of social responsibility they may or may not be feeling, are not being adversely affected in either their enrollments or their success in pleasing families, students, and employees. (Barbieri, 1990, p. 11)

Here we can see that the White person and the White institution are unethical barriers. This is a dramatic shift from previous constructions of the relationship between the normal and the racial minority. Whereas prior to Era 3, access is something that might be beneficently bestowed by the obliquely defined normal subject, here the White student or institution is conceived in the reverse, as overtly barring admittance to elite environments and outcomes.

While a statement like this contributes to the production of the White person and White institution as ignorant and immoral, other related statements add a dimension of gatekeeping to these constructs. In essence, White gatekeepers are unaware that they harm themselves by being blind to the ways they can better compete in society and internationally by addressing and incorporating the needy racial minority. This discursive intersection is expressed in “The Freedom to Change” (1991), in which the author, a Black teacher and alumnus of one elite boarding school argues that:

The real world of America is multiracial, among other things, and I submit that all-white or nearly all-white independent schools are crippled in their effort to prepare students for life in the real America... If we are truly to educate for leadership and "democracy," we must expose and sensitize young people to as many different cultures and ethnic groups as possible. By recruiting and retaining non-white faculty members and students through clear and well-planned programs, the school can begin to nurture in its students and other members of the community the cooperation and understanding that are needed for life and leadership in today's world. (Hannibal, 1991, p. 4)

The suggestion that racial homogeneity will have a crippling effect for the White student and institution speaks to concerns about these subjects’ abilities to compete in society. The solution to this the threat of non-competitiveness is the recruitment and retention of racial minority

students and faculty. This again mirrors the idea of exposure in the previous period, however, it specifies the utility of exposure to the development of leadership skills in the (oddly quoted) “democracy” of the post-Cold War era. In other words, the White student must engage intimately with the racial minority in order to apprehend a necessary ability for success in a new world order. By performing this move, discourse of this time inverts the exposure narrative from Era 2. In the past, the normal student’s exposure to the racial minority provided a marginal, but positive effect; in Era 3, admission and assimilation of the racial minority is crucial for the White student and White institution to thrive.

The idea of the normal White student being the beneficiary of the incorporation of the disadvantaged racial minority is addressed more directly later in this era. In “A Two-way Street: Reaching out to the Disadvantaged Benefits the Privileged, too,” Robert DeBlois, creator of a public-private partnership between several independent schools and an urban public district, addresses the imperative to change by noting that:

If we face the reality that by the year 2010, people of color will represent a majority in this country, and if we also recognize the reality that many of these same individuals are those who are regarded as being at risk in reports such as "Turning Points," then there is definitely something to be considered. It seems to me that independent schools, regarded by some as elitist institutions, can play a role in enhancing the opportunity of many of these children, while increasing the diversity of the education provided to children normally regarded as "clients" of independent schools. (DeBlois, 1994, p. 2)

Here the appeal to a sense of mutual benefit is an explicit underscoring of interest convergence. Prior narratives in the magazine that speak to the need to better the “at-risk,” “urban,” racial minority in order to improve international competitiveness are being brought to the individual level. The individual, “at risk” youth is positioned against the normal “client” of independent schools, though their opposition is cast as mutually beneficial by providing new opportunities for both to compete in society. Another important feature of this narrative, however, is the way in

which changing national demographics have created a threat to White students and White institutions. This arises in Harris' piece, which is framed around the negative implications of the U.S. not responding effectively to a growing racial minority demographic in its midst, but this case highlights how independent schools must respond preemptively to the specific threats to White elites that these changes pose. The White subject and White institution will profit from the adoption of the racial minority, but they will also suffer the erosion of their dominant standing in society if they continue to disregard these others. If exclusion persists, a critical mass of the racial others may consume the White subject; however, if the other can be included, the competition between the normal and the abnormal may be controlled and moderated.

These competitive assumptions also emerge within statements that reflect on the failings of independent schools in their limited attempts at becoming more accessible and welcoming. In "Organizational Voices: A Cautionary Tale," a school leader issues a warning about tokenizing and superficial "diversity" initiatives in independent schools, but concludes with the following:

Diversity will be viewed as a source of strength. There is suppressed and underdeveloped talent in any group that has been relatively powerless or oppressed. This has been amply demonstrated in the case of women and ethnic minorities, but it is also true of any person whose particular kind of intelligence or learning style may not have fit some traditional mold. Furthermore, the extent to which our educational environments restrict the development of any individual, they may well be restricting everyone through the pressure to conform. In the decade ahead, successful organizations will be able to appreciate and use the strength inherent in diversity. Respecting differences and sharing power is the first step. The ultimate goal is a celebration of uniqueness and the generation of new power through creative tension and synergy. (Buckheit, 1992, p. 5)

Amidst a discussion of the need to empower the historically oppressed, the author underscores the idea that "diversity" is a source of strength and power. The "successful organizations" that "use the strength inherent in diversity" are those that will emerge at the end of this process unscathed. Once again, then, this crisis takes the shape of competitive advantage.

These examples taken together demonstrate how redressing the ills of the disadvantaged racial minority provides competitive benefits at three levels: to the international economic standing of elites in the U.S., to the multicultural education of elite White students, and to the institutions themselves who must compete in the marketplace.

The necessary complements to competition in the marketplace are technologies of measurement and assessment, which in this era target the object “diversity.” In 1991 NAIS introduced the Multicultural Assessment Plan (MAP) that was piloted in 51 independent schools. In 1993, Elliott described this tool with the following:

The voluntary MAP process, guided by technical assistance and support from the NAIS department of diversity and multicultural services, was designed to allow the participating school to assess the degree to which it offers an educational experience that is multicultural and antiracist... Thirty-six of the 51 MAP schools to date have participated during my tenure. When school heads, faculty and trustees have asked, "Why do the MAP," we now point to the structural changes evidenced by schools that have completed the process. Those schools demonstrate that MAP supports the development of schoolwide structures that coordinate diversity activity and encourage a system for individual and institutional accountability. Before their MAP experience, all the schools have had well-intentioned individuals independently motivated to act in support of diversity-related activity, i.e. curriculum development, support of students of color, and advocacy. While some schools had diversity committees, sought training and/or worked with consultants, no school involved with the MAP had comprehensive measures to systematically promote and coordinate the planning, implementation and assessment of all these activities. (1993, p. 1-2)

Evident here are several indicators of the institutional apparatus of these schools creating new technologies to address the problem of “diversity.” Here students of color, who elsewhere in the same article are highlighted primarily as “African-American,” are conflated with diversity and there is distinct shift from managing them and their experience in independent schools as a matter of individual responsibility to one of institutional structures and processes. This can be read as an example of Foucault’s concept of Biopower (2010). MAP offers an example of the biopolitical operations of identifying the aberrant subject, measuring their deviance from the

norm, and producing taxonomies that allow curative action to be taken in particular, and differing, ways. In the case outlined above, the student of color is identified as different from a typical independent school student, data are collected about their experience within these schools, and then systems are produced to act upon those students.

This discourse of measurement and assessment naturally produces concepts of “diversity” that are quantifiable and visible. Several articles from this era share reports on the number of students of color in NAIS schools (NAIS, 1990b; 1994; 1995a), outside grants that NAIS received for helping schools increase the numbers of their students and faculty of color (NAIS, 1995a), and grants received by individual schools for the same purpose (NAIS, 1995b). In one instance there is even a call for photos for a future issue that represent “the subject of diversity” (NAIS, 1998). The reporting of numerical and visual data are methods of making “diversity” observable, but they also require “diverse” subjects who can literally be made visible.

It is not by chance that the “at-risk” and “disadvantaged” racial minority arises as a target of numerical techniques in independent schools at this time. Barbara Cruikshank (1999), discusses the production of the Welfare Queen, a closely related subject to the racial minority delineated by “diversity” discourse in independent schools; she argues that the visibility of the Welfare Queen is not primarily the result of rhetoric promoted by Ronald Reagan and his conservative administration, but actually extends back to the Carter administration’s campaign to discipline the systems of welfare and rid them of fraud. As Cruikshank argues, this auditing process produced the dimensions of the Welfare Queen that arose in the popular imagination. Cruikshank argues that her accountability “...was the condition of her appearance. It is the fact that she was represented and constituted as a quantifiable and calculable citizen-subject that accounts for her” (1999, p. 106). With the development of the MAP process, concurrent with

public discourses about welfare reform during the Clinton campaign and administration, the racial minority in independent schools becomes “quantifiable and calculable” to a degree that rigidly defines what is and what is not a “diverse” subjectivity and opens opportunities for new actions to be taken by the institution.

Even within these numerical, biopolitical techniques of institutional control, dual logics of morality and practicality are detectable. The description of MAP above highlights how the MAP protocol can replace the ineffectiveness of the “well-intentioned individuals” who have been responsible for “diversity” efforts up to this point. These moral individuals have been “independently motivated,” but now they can be replaced by the practical techniques of data collection and analysis to more efficiently achieve the solutions for “diversity.” We might, then, consider this the ultimate expression of Era 3, a tool for combatting the threat of immorality, managing the intervention of the racial minority in institutionally acceptable ways, efficiently harnessing the knowledge of the racial minority for White student’s growth, and further delineating the divergences between these subjects.

Closing Thoughts on the Nature of Threat and Institutional Power

Between 1976 and 1998 “diversity” is problematized as a matter of threat: a threat to normal subjects and to the independent school institutional apparatus. Each of the three eras discussed above constitutes certain “diverse” subjectivities that pose threats and possibilities in their own ways. The visibility of each of these positions changes over time as they chart erratic paths through Eras 1, 2, and 3. However, one overarching feature of these three periods is the refinement of the institutional technologies of controlling “diverse” subjects and the problem of “diversity.” The honing of these technologies occurs as the institutional apparatus coalesces around one specific reaction to crisis: preemption. Brian Massumi (2007) describes preemption

as a response to an ill-defined, future crisis, a response that utilizes uncertainty to prompt present action. This understanding of crisis hinges on a lack of specification; threat is amorphous and enemies are hazy. Massumi (2007) gives the example of the second U.S. invasion of Iraq as an operation of preemption where the potential and unmaterialized threat of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs) prompted and justified concrete action.

Preemption is a framework that the independent school apparatus embraces during these first three eras. Discourse in Era 1 responds to direct and material threats: changing family structures, second wave feminist movements, public calls for opening access for racial minorities, and the presence of the learning-disabled. As such, action is diffuse and unfocused and “diverse” subjects require bespoke approaches to be neutralized. In Era 2, the threat of the racial minority, girls, and gay people’s arrival in independent schools is recognized as a space of potential. The intervention of the abnormal creates an opportunity for positive impact on the normal, yet the actions of this relationship are rudimentary, they rely on placing two objects next to each other and expecting one to osmose into the other. By Era 3, preemption is the central motivation for problematizing “diversity.” Though the reduction of “diverse” to the racial minority may seem like a specification of the threat of “diversity,” this subject is no longer the actual threat. The threat in this era becomes the uncertain future for White elites and the White institution should they fail to act upon the deficits of the racial minority. As such, the refinement of technologies of control like MAP are a logical response to a preemptive understanding of threat.

What follows this trajectory, however, is a decisive break away from clearly defined subjectivities and mechanisms of power. To this point, “diversity” has been problematized as a matter of threat, in eras 4, 5, and 6 it becomes a matter of individual responsibility and skill

acquisition. As chapter five will show, while self-work will be promoted as a moral anchor for “diversity” discourse, statements in these later years make othered subjects less visible, fixate on White subjects and Whiteness, and promote technocratic mechanisms for addressing “diversity.”

Chapter 5: The Technocratic Solution to “Diversity” (1999-2021)

Chapter four discussed how the first three eras of “diversity” discourse in independent schools represent a preoccupation with the threat that “diverse” subjects present to normal students. Over these years the institutional response to threat moves from neutralizing the other to harnessing the other’s presence for the benefit of elites. In these instances, the power relations that produce these benefits require clearly defined others, for without them, there is no demonstrable value to be added to the normal student’s experience, knowledge, and skills. This chapter will explore the marked shift that takes place in the latter three eras of these discourses, one in which “diversity” transforms from a problem of threat to a technocratic action. The following analysis investigates how this transition largely erases “diverse” subjects by obscuring their differences from the norm, replacing them with “diversity” concepts, and recentering White subjects and Whiteness.

The genealogy of institutional discourse over the last two decades parses new narratives about what “diversity” is and what its associated problems are. In Eras 1, 2, and 3, “diversity” is located in an ever-narrowing set of people, but in Eras 4, 5, and 6 it becomes an increasingly vague concept whose solution is predicated on the acquisition of technical skills by normal subjects. In Era 4 (1999-2005) the long-established racial minority becomes murky just as White subjects proliferate and fissure into multiple positions: allies who seek “equity” and barriers who stand in the way of “diversity” initiatives. Era 5 (2006-2015) witnesses the promotion of the individualistic (White) leader and the administrative Person of Color as active solutions to achieving “equity,” “inclusion,” and “justice.” Finally, in Era 6 (2016-2021) “diversity” integrates wholly into the realm of technocratic action as the discourses of “equity,” “inclusion,” and “justice” merge with the technologies of measurement, data analysis, and technologies of the

self (Foucault, 1988), even in the face of a sudden, irruptive reemergence of People of Color.

While the breaks between these three eras are more nuanced than among the previous three, they do represent distinct moments of discursive struggle and reflect an institutional apparatus incorporating technological controls to manage disparate narratives about the role of independent schools in resolving social inequities.

Era 4: Allies, Global Citizens, and “The Big Eight” (1999 – 2005)

In many ways this period is a transitional one where the threat narratives of previous eras fade and the technical approach to “diversity” appears. Amidst this transition, racial minorities, certainly the at-risk and disadvantaged images of them, almost entirely disappear, while the concentration on the White subject blossoms. This indicates a sort of inversion of “diversity” discourse where focus is removed from the other and fixed squarely upon the normal. The emphasis upon the benefits to elites provided by “diversity” remains a constant from previous eras, but now, those benefits are bestowed less and less by the presence of “diverse” subjects and more by training in “The Big Eight” concepts of “diversity,” all of which contribute to normal students’ future success as leaders and global citizens. Two key subjects materialize in this process, the ally and the barrier. Over time one will come to dominate the other, but in the early part of the 21st century, the struggle between the two will come to define not only the legitimacy of “diversity” work, but of the institutions themselves. In this era, the map of visible subjectivities is messier than at other times as the centering of allies, barriers, and “The Big Eight” struggles against the reformulation of the racial minority as the student of color and the emergence of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) director. While logic might suggest that these White subjects and People of Color are defined by their relationship to one another, we will see how they are instead produced in relation to the institution and “The Big Eight.”

The convergence of many of these trends is represented in an article called “Stepping into the Darkness, Coming into the Light” (1999), a reference to a speech given in 1998 by Cornell West at the annual NAIS People of Color Conference. In this article William Handmaker, the head of a school in St. Louis, offers his approach to “diversity” and shares the words of a student:

At Crossroads School, we view a celebration of diversity as one hallmark of an educated person. For that reason, we approach diversity as something that benefits everyone as opposed to providing for those less fortunate. We emphasize diversity not out of a sense of noblesse oblige, and not because it benefits "those people." As important as it is to prepare students for a global workforce, we would emphasize diversity even if our world were not becoming smaller every day. We approach diversity not out of altruism or charity; on the contrary, we come to it almost selfishly. We are all better because our school is diverse. Homogeneity would prevent each of us from reaching our potential. As student council vice president Sarah Fisher said recently, "A diverse school gives me an opportunity to expand my perspective and helps me gain a better understanding of people in general." This mind set forces all of us to look for ways to seek out opportunities to learn from those who are different from us. In the end, each of us is closer to being whole because all of us are different. "For a school and an individual to be open-minded," Sarah Fisher adds, "you have to be cool with everybody despite how different they might be from you. This allows you to take bits and pieces from everyone so you can be confident that the choices you make are wise ones." (Handmaker, 1999, p. 6)

There are vestiges of earlier eras here such as the emphasis on the “almost selfish” case being made for “diversity” as well as the idea of learning from others in a broad sense, but there are also a number of novel aspects that reflect the discursive shift happening in this era. Most important is the production of the “diversity” skill. Here “diversity” is not just located in the body of the other, it is a quality that is acquired by the “educated person.” Elsewhere, this normal subject will be developed as the ally, but early on in Era 4 this position materializes as one who celebrates difference and “take bits and pieces” of others in order to better themselves on the global stage. This skill connotes wisdom, confidence, and wholeness, assets that would be impossible to attain if the normal student were forced to stagnate in the homogeneity of independent schools in the past. The parallel to the development of the ally and global citizen,

however, is the erasure of the “diverse” subject. “Those people” are conspicuously ill-defined; who makes up the “diverse school” is left unsaid. What remains is a vague abyss of otherness that will largely be filled by concepts, not subjectivities.

What these concepts are becomes enshrined in this period; they are so frequently referenced that they require their own shorthand, “The Big Eight,” which are found throughout the magazine. In an advertisement in 2001 for an upcoming “dynamic new diversity institute,” NAIS refers to “The Big Eight cultural identifiers - gender, race, culture/ethnicity, ability, age, socioeconomic level, sexual orientation, and religion” (NAIS, 2001, p. 3). The discussion of these ideas quickly supplants the elaboration of “diverse” subjectivities and the primary subjects of the Era 4, allies and barriers, are produced through their relationship with the concepts rather than othered subjects.

In the simplest terms, allies appear as those who are on board with the cause of “diversity” while barriers are those who reject it. I begin with barriers (my term, not the magazine’s) because their relationship with “The Big Eight” is often made more explicit. In “Go Ahead, Open the Box” (2004) a diversity director, Eric Polite, from The Gordon School in Rhode Island recounts the results of an anonymous survey his school gave to parents, students, teachers, and trustees as part of a self-assessment project. In the article Polite shares some of the parent responses he found telling:

One parent, for instance, wrote, “I believe the Gordon needs to balance its intent to create a 'diverse educational experience' with the need to maintain a certain standard of students.” Another parent put it more bluntly: “My children are there for an education, not exposure to other ethnicities (that is my job as a parent).” Still another wrote, “Most of [my] misgivings are about the curriculum and the risk that political correctness will lead us into bad scholarship. I worry too that the debate on multiculturalism will divert the faculty's time and energy as they try to design creative and challenging academic assignments.” Another parent's comment echoed what a small percentage of parents felt: “Gordon wastes inordinate time and money on diversity and is pushing it to the point of

creating ethnic and racial prejudice and tension where none previously existed." (Polite, 2004, p. 62-63)

Barriers are made possible because they stand in opposition to "The Big Eight." Whether they express skepticism about "diversity" or outright condemnation of it, they are defined by their resistance to particular notions of progress developing within institutional discourse. In an earlier time, these individuals may have objected to the admission of the racial minority, but in these years, they take issue with weakening academic standards, multiculturalism, and wasting resources on the promotion of "diversity." Race clearly still occupies the central point of concern for barriers, but the absence of the racial minority in these statements indicates what has become unspeakable in the new discourse of Era 4. Responding to the vaguely constructed "diverse educational experience" and lamenting that the school's pursuit of that experience creates "ethnic and racial prejudice and tension" positions the barrier as a reactionary flailing against indefinite, but morally righteous actions of the institution. Thus, they materialize precisely because of their anti-"diversity" statements, not because of their relationship to the racial other.

In this first case the barriers are parents, but they are not restricted to that role. In "The Student View" (2003), head of school Jon McGill describes the process and outcome of a series of NAIS surveys given to 37,000 students nationwide:

In school after school, white students rally around the notion that their needs are ignored or trampled in the haste to recognize issues related to students of color. In reality, the needs of white students and students of color have a symbiotic relationship; neither can be met in isolation from the other. However, it is clear that white students often believe that they are being left out, that they are the newly marginalized group. This concern reflects what is being heard, nationally, from white males who are susceptible to the media barrage about "political correctness," affirmative action, and, more recently, sexual harassment. (McGill, 2003, p. 61-62)

Most obvious in this statement is that White students are often barriers, but the characterization of their opposition is noteworthy. In this transitional era, there is reference to the new semantic

formulation, student of color, who occupies the place formally inhabited by the racial minority. Yet, while the racial minority was clearly delimited in the past, in Era 4 the student of color loses almost all character beyond being non-White. Though there is a first impression of a relationship between the barrier and the student of color, what is actually relevant to the formation of the student barrier is the fear of displacement through mechanisms of social progress like affirmative action and expectations of gender equity. In essence, the student of color is a largely shapeless stand-in for popular discourses about social arrangements in the U.S. Though students of color do exhibit certain characteristics, which will be explored later, the specificity of those features is largely irrelevant to the production of the barrier. This discussion has focused on the racial identities of the normal and other, and not their positions in relation to different concepts of “The Big Eight,” because the other axes of their identity are largely invisible in Era 4. There are no articles that specifically reference low-income students, religious minorities, disabled people, or elderly people. There is even limited treatment of girls and LGBTQ+ people, with discourse in this time focusing almost exclusively on gender and sexual orientation “issues.” Thus, the barrier is formulated overtly around being White and only implicitly being affluent and possibly male.

While barriers are produced in part by their orientation towards “The Big Eight” and the downstream technologies of “diversity,” their true relational opposite is the ally. Like barriers, allies are White, but rather than fight the tides of “diversity,” they roll up their sleeves and do the challenging identity work necessary to fight for righteousness. Again, though, the visibility and delimitation of allies is made possible not by their relationship with People of Color, but by their interaction with the institution. In “White on White” (2004), Elizabeth Denevi, the co-director of diversity at Georgetown Day School, outlines her institution’s orientation to and prescriptions for creating allies:

...schools need to develop opportunities for whites to talk about race, whiteness, and privilege in order to create more white allies. In a professional development seminar program I co-facilitate, most of the white participants and many people of color cite our exploration of white identity development as the most revealing and important work they have done as teachers. During the last ten years, an explosion of research on this topic has created a wealth of materials. What is needed now is the will to work in a systematic way -- not only for the benefit of people of color, but for everyone in independent schools. (Denevi, 2004, p. 78-79)

Explore your own whiteness; become firmly rooted and aware of your own ethnic identity; think about what it means to be white in your school. See yourself as diverse; make sure that "multicultural" is not synonymous with "other than white." (Denevi, 2004, p. 84)

Of note here is how central Whiteness is to the process of becoming an ally. An ally contends with the concepts of racial injustice and privilege by doing personal identity work to come to terms with their own Whiteness and how it manifests in the institutional setting. The statement that this work should be done “not only for the benefit of people of color, but for everyone in independent schools” echoes past eras and the “Stepping into the Darkness, Coming into the Light” excerpt discussed above in that there is personal benefit to becoming an ally. Yet, the encouragement to “see yourself as diverse” proposes an embrace of racial difference so comprehensive that it might demolish the relationship between White subjects and People of Color. If Whiteness is not the absence of “diverse” culture, but rather a “diversity” marker in and of itself, White subjects normality is no longer produced by their relation to the Person of Color and “diversity” might cease to mean anything at all. Thus, the Ally is defined not by a relationship with others, but by a particular orientation to Whiteness, privilege, and “The Big Eight.” This statement also provides a seed that will blossom in Era 5, which is the critical importance of identity work and the responsibility of the individual ally to resolve the problem of “diversity.”

The production of the Person of Color in Era 4 is transitional in its own way. In relation to the racial minority that it has replaced, this subjectivity loses its clear outlines of being “at-risk” and “disadvantaged,” though its identification with being Black or African-American remains strong. The most visible change is the location of the Person of Color vis-à-vis the racial minority. Through Eras 1, 2, and 3, racial minorities were exterior to the institution and discourse was preoccupied with bringing them in for the variety of reasons discussed in Chapter 4. Between 1999 and 2005 an accelerating number of People of Color have been introduced into independent schools (NAIS, 2006a; 2012), which is reflected in a “diversity” discourse fixated on the experience of these students in schools. No longer is the Person of Color characterized as an individual struggling in society because of a socio-cultural deficit, instead People of Color grapple with and react to an institutional environment not made for them. This often shows up in a way that pathologizes People of Color by discussing the “psychological burdens” (Thompson & Schultz, 2003) they bear by attending independent schools. In “The Psychological Experiences of Students of Color” (2003), Michael Thompson, a renowned independent school psychologist, and his colleague Kathy Schulz share a framework for understanding the student of color experience:

Based on our experiences in supporting students of color in independent schools, we would like to suggest that there are six particularly difficult psychological experiences which most -- not all -- of these students are likely to face: (1) social loneliness, (2) racial visibility and social invisibility, (3) class and cultural discomfort among white parents and administrators, (4) the burden of explaining oneself to white people, (5) completing studies at a demanding school with minimal parent participation, and (6) the burden of having to feel grateful all the time. (Thompson and Schulz, 2003, p. 42)

This artifact makes visible the same racial, socioeconomic, and cultural differences seen in the past, but it does so in a new way. While there are references to White people (some of whom have been produced as barriers elsewhere in this era), it seems that the Person of Color only

materializes upon entering a White environment. In essence, the intrusion into the White institution creates the psychological experience that makes the Person of Color. In this way, the most salient relational counterpoint to the Person of Color is the institution itself rather than the White subject. It may be unsurprising that the diagnosis of the problem of “diversity” is a medical one, as is the resolution:

For some students of color, the psychological stresses of attending majority-white schools are too much, and they need to leave for their own mental health. Most students remain and thrive, though they may struggle psychologically. What makes their psychological pain bearable? It is to have it heard and acknowledged by others, and to have others help bear that pain. (Thompson and Schulz, 2003, p. 49)

The solution posited to ease the psychic burden caused by presence in the school is for institutional actors to relieve them of their pain. The Person of Color is defined by being non-White and lacking the psychological capacity to navigate the White environment.

This statement does provoke the question of who is responsible and capable of “bearing the pain” of being a Person of Color in an independent school. The suggestion during Era 4 is that charge rests on the DEI director. In an article entitled “Directing Diversity” (Kaufman, 2003), an assistant head of school and former dean of multicultural affairs muses on the role of this subject:

For me, in deciding to become my school's dean of multicultural affairs, my agenda was and continues to be simple. I want to help give the marginalized -- folks of color, women, religious minorities, gays and lesbians, and the disabled -- a roadmap to aid the navigation of independent schools as organizational systems. As I see it, the systems that keep individuals and groups from experiencing schools in ways that are equitable are simply that, systems. With enough key people in place who can decode the systems and translate them for others, it is more likely that those who have been traditionally marginalized will be able to skillfully negotiate their way to the metaphoric table. (Kaufman, 2003, p. 26)

The DEI director is an interpreter and a guide; they are experts in the systems and technologies of the institution and work to direct othered subjects through a safe passage. This is an intriguing

construction of the DEI director because they are both a piece of the independent school apparatus and a subversive within it. They are possible because of the presence of others and because of the institutions desire to control those others by channeling their actions. As such, they embody the capacity to bear the psychic pain of students of color. In addition to being responsible for the management of “The Big Eight” in the school, the DEI directors are themselves racialized. This same article advocates specifically for hiring a Person of Color for the administrative role in order to meet “the needs of students and families of color” (Kaufman, 2003, p. 22). What this hints at is that the DEI director, as a Person of Color, has had an experience with the institution that is analogous to the student of color’s; they have been this way before, become a piece of the apparatus, and are now a mechanism for managing the student of color’s interaction with the environment.

A final subjectivity that arises in this period is the global citizen. In many ways, this figure intersects with the ally and with the normal student of previous eras. It certainly incorporates the discursive currents of international competitiveness and exposure to others seen in Era 3, but it also combines those trends with the transition to the idea of “diversity” as a set of technical skills to be acquired. In Era 4, several articles discuss the utility of admitting international students, one in particular claims “it is often the international student who gives the American student the gift of perspective” (Barber, 2003, p. 95). This mirrors the exposure case made for incorporating the racial minority in Era 3 quite neatly, but indicates that an international view of “diversity” has become more relevant at this time. This is indicated as well by the advent of the “Diversity Delegation,” an annual international trip organized by NAIS for independent school students and faculty during these years. Destinations included India, South Africa, China, and Brazil. In describing the rationale for these ventures, NAIS wrote they were in

keeping with their mission, which “promotes diversity and global citizenship for its member schools and associations through a variety of programs and initiatives” (NAIS, 2006b, p. 3). This conflation between “diversity” and globalism is messy, but it reflects a similar approach to two varieties of otherness on the part of independent schools. Both “diversity” and globalism are opportunities to equip normal students with the ability to navigate an increasingly complex world by learning to deal with others. By interacting with others and the concepts of “The Big Eight” and globalism, as laid out in the quotation that opens this section, global citizens are prepared to be a part of a global workforce and develop the skills of wisdom and open-mindedness that will ensure their success as actors in the 21st century. It is also unsurprising that International Students, who have attended independent schools for decades, only discursively emerge in this moment when “diversity” is changing from a threat to an opportunity to build technical skills. While racial minorities may evoke fear in barriers, international students are typically part of a socioeconomic elite in their home countries and often shares many common traits with normal students. Therefore they represent a sort of safe or desirable “diversity” that checks the box of racial or geographic difference without the baggage of class difference.

At the same time that normal students benefit from the perspective of international students, being a global citizen is not optional. As Martha Nussbaum, a professor of law and ethics at the University of Chicago, lays out in an interview with the magazine from 2000:

We are all citizens of the world; our daily choices as consumers, or as users of energy, influence people in distant places. But we often know far too little about those places, and so we think badly about them. Children, again, can begin developing this ability very early, by learning stories about and from other parts of the world. As time goes on, their learning about other nations and their people can become increasingly sophisticated. Knowledge is not sufficient for mutual respect and constructive problem-solving, but it probably is necessary. (Brosnan, 2000, p. 87)

In this construction, global citizenship starts at a young age. Being a global citizen is unavoidable and engagement with foreign cultures is foundational for sidestepping ignorance and developing as capable problem-solvers. To keep up with the demands of their future lives as corporate, political, and social leaders, then, normal students must acknowledge the need to adopt these skills and embrace the position of global citizen.

Era 4 sees a marked shift into “diverse” identities and problems being structural, not interpersonal. We will see how this change manifests in more strategically refined ways leading up to the present, but this is the central pivot of “diversity” discourse at a transitional moment. Logic would dictate that People of Color and DEI directors should emerge in opposition to normal students and faculty as in past periods, yet the fact that the challenges People of Color and other marginalized individuals face are systemic proposes that their visibility derives from their relationship with the institutional apparatus. Likewise, that the ally and the barrier emerge through their reaction to discourse about “The Big Eight” and Whiteness indicates that the Person of Color is tangential to their existence. In the next era we will see how the global citizen and the ally begin to fuse in a way that allows for a new technical approach to “diversity.”

Era 5: Data, Leadership, Cultural Competency and the Individual (2006 – 2015)

In noticeable contrast to the disparate narratives of the prior years, Era 5 is remarkable for the commonality of discursive practices around “diversity.” Central to that break is this period’s preoccupation with the notions of cultural competency and leadership. Neither of these trends is surprising in a moment in which the state apparatuses of the Global North have fully embraced the individual actor, globalization, and data collection and analysis. This era, however, dovetails these political and technical discourses quite neatly with the erratic lineage of “diversity” in independent schools. Many of these technocratic developments lodge themselves in the synthesis

of the global citizen and the ally: the leader. At the same time, the delineation of the leader is more acutely bounded by the arrival or amplified visibility of diversity directors and practitioners, teachers and administrators of color, and to a lesser extent LGBTQ+ people.²

While few of these subjectivities are unfamiliar to the independent school context, their salient features are, and their presence is critical to the formation of the leader.

The concept of leadership intersects several key subjectivities during this time. In many cases leaders are normal students who have inherited the capacity and responsibility for moral change in the world. In other instances, leaders are White teachers and administrators who are obligated to shepherd normal students through an education that will ensure success in their future roles. Finally, diversity directors, who are typically People of Color, are leaders charged with developing cultural competency in White students and faculty. Articles from 2007 and 2008, plainly lay out the construction of the student as a leader. These two, “Leading the Way,” by a head of school in New York City, and “Learning from Experience of Administrators of Color,” by the director of the Klingenstein Center for Independent School Leadership, argue the following:

The benefits of being a more diverse school -- as opposed to a relatively monocultural school -- have never been more apparent. As our world continues to "flatten" and intercultural contact becomes the norm, as our own country becomes more diverse in a variety of ways with each passing year, and as cognitive and intellectual diversity are seen as precursors to excellent schools and institutions, it becomes untenable for school leaders to believe that there is educational excellence in schools with a narrow representation of adults and students. If schools truly want to meet the needs of their

² LGBTQ+ people reemerge in these years to a degree not seen since Era 2. In particular, several articles address gay parents (Jennings, 2008) and “gender variant” and transgender students (NAIS, 2010; Scott 2014). While both of these subjects is novel in that they have not been foci of “diversity” discourse in the past, they are presented as largely tangential to “diversity” discourse in Era 5. They are subjects who do exist, but they are not clearly engaged in asymmetrical power relationships with other subjects in this time. For example, they offer little utility to the development of leadership in normal students. While reference is made repeatedly to gender and sexual orientation related privilege, these specific subjects are treated in a manner like students of color in Era 3; there is a call for their “inclusion,” but the discourse of “diversity” often treats them as an add-on. It seems that articles about LGBTQ+ students are more reactions to broader societal discourses about LGBTQ+ visibility than they are related “diversity” discourse in *Independent School*. In short, they seem to be an afterthought.

students, prepare them for the realities of the world, and teach them to be moral leaders of the future, then schools must become more diverse, more inclusive. (Marblo, 2007, p. 66)

By virtue of the quality of education afforded independent school students and, for many, the benefits bestowed by economic advantage, independent school graduates occupy a disproportionate number of leadership positions in society. Independent schools do many things to prepare their students for future leadership roles and one of the most important is to provide a learning environment and curriculum that prepares them for the world they will inherit... Educated citizens know that many of our nation's economic, social, and environmental challenges require global solutions. If independent schools are to deliver on the promise of preparing societal leaders, then students must learn to collaborate with a diverse population of students and faculty during their formative years. (Kane, 2008b, p. 100)

These statements indicate nuanced, but essential changes in the production of normal students vis-à-vis rationales for seeking “diversity.” The argument that “diversity” in independent schools will better prepare normal students for future lives extends all the way back to Era 2, and the globalization contours of these narratives find their origin in Era 4, but acknowledgement of an inevitability to normal students’ leadership role in society and their inherited privilege is novel. In the past, exposure to “diverse” subjects was about preparing students to survive a demographically transformed world or generally operate in a globally connected society, whereas discourse in these years elucidates specific functions of the normal student as a leader. In essence, the leader these schools will produce must be able to serve a moral, social, and commercial purpose by embracing their privilege and making themselves as prominent as possible. “Diversity” is an essential component of leaders’ development because without acquiring the skill of cultural competency, they will be unable to collaborate with the many others they are bound to encounter on the global stage.

The distinction between the normal student as a beneficiary of exposure to others in a general sense versus as a future leader with a mastery of cultural competency may at first seem minor, however, it represents a remarkable shift in how the problems of “diversity” are

conceptualized by the apparatus of independent schools. By stressing the inevitability of the normal student becoming a leader, it makes the function of the school to empower those subjects to perform their destined roles *morally*. It also belies an inherently individualistic and stratified world view. This is a key point that Khan (2011) makes about the way in which independent schools naturalize social hierarchies with elites at the top. His study, which was performed during the early part of this era, determined that by underscoring the role of hard work and *not* inherited status, these environments ingrained in elites the sense of earned, and therefore acceptable, privilege. Khan (2011) additionally indicates that the elites of this time are distinct from their ancestors because of things like their omnivorous approach to popular culture, rather than steeping themselves in elite culture and fencing themselves off from non-elites. This acquisition of everything is a form of cultural competence, a way of demonstrating an openness to otherness that actually bolsters elite status. What the Foucauldian analytical approach adds to these findings, though, is that there is an even more complex entanglement at work in this discursive environment. The acknowledgement of inherited privilege actually produces the mechanisms of action for the institutional apparatus. By recognizing the status of normal students and their fated leadership positions, independent schools can channel the actions of “diversity” and “diverse” individuals to develop particular technical skills in the leader. Additionally, we will see how the focus on the development of leaders with agency transfers the responsibility for solving “diversity” and inequity from the institution to the individual.

leaders are defined largely by their ability to utilize “diversity” principles in a way that connects them to others and allows them to drive social change. The skills associated with the leader, primarily cultural competence, are derived from “diverse” experiences and critical introspection. It is the institution’s responsibility to foster conditions and devise activities that

produce these specific events for the student leader. In “Diversity Directors as Leaders,” one article from an entire issue devoted to the concept of leadership, co-directors of diversity from a school in Washington, D.C. describe the qualities of the student leader that their school has been praised for engendering:

Schools that help students think critically about diversity and explore issues of social justice will better prepare students for colleges that are actively seeking leadership in the area of diversity. Our college counselors regularly cite the ability of students to write and discuss experiences related to diversity and equity and how that ability sets them apart from other candidates. Similarly, college representatives who come to GDS comment on how our students seem to know who they are and how their identities impact the larger community. Many have commented on the fact that we have an affinity group for white students committed to anti-racism. Since colleges actively recruit for all kinds of diversity, they are looking for students who have strong cross-cultural communication skills and who know how to be successful in a diverse learning environment. (Denevi & Richards, 2009, p. 67)

Here the normal student is cast as a leader who has mastered the “ability” to present their experiences with “diversity” in a thoughtful way. This is a valuable commodity in the admissions process; in spite of not being demographically “diverse,” they are able to navigate a “diverse” college environment in a way that distinguishes them from most students. Even though the normal student has been defined by not being “diverse,” they become desirable to colleges by engaging with and acquiring the technical skills of “diversity.” The line from becoming a leader and an ally to achieving college admission is unignorable. Of greatest import is that the school’s responsibility is not to reconsider its structure or participation in broader society, but to imbue the leader with certain abilities that they may choose to act upon once they have departed the institution; the school does not take anti-racist action or reflect on its identity, it asks normal students to do so instead.

The obvious questions generated by this discursive trend is which subjects are tasked with engendering these leadership skills in normal students and how do they do so? These

responsibilities are predominantly left up to faculty of color, DEI directors/practitioners, and adult White allies. I first offer a metaphorical diagram of the relationships among these subjects and will then illustrate their various roles in the process of developing leadership through textual artifacts. White allies are responsible for two tasks, hiring faculty of color and doing introspective identity work, or engaging in what Foucault describes as “technologies of the self” (1988). Adult White allies can be teachers who work with students, but are primarily administrators who have hiring authority like heads of school and division directors. The DEI director and practitioner positions are more complex in that they are often objects of White allies hiring programs, but also participate in the process of accumulating more faculty of color. Faculty of color in turn exhibit less agency and function predominantly as objects to be hired and made visible to students (and White allies) as mechanisms for the development of cultural competency.

The adult White ally position is delineated by individuals’ capacity and willingness to reflect on and react to their own implicit biases and privilege. This sort of introspection and the expected regulatory actions that it leads to is an example of what Foucault would call a “technology of the self” (1988). Foucault describes technologies of the self as those:

Which permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality. (Foucault, 1988, p. 17)

In independent schools, technologies of the self are tools of personal exploration that lead to new forms of self-regulation, produce moral enlightenment, and may be transferred to students so that they can become benevolent leaders. One specific mechanism for achieving this outcome called Seeking Educational Equity and Diversity (SEED) is promoted throughout Era 5. The program, founded by Peggy McIntosh, involves the nomination of individuals to participate in a two-week,

residential summer program where they undertake deep, personal identity work. The expectation is that after this initial experience, participants return to their schools where, now certified as SEED leaders, they convene regular, voluntary meetings for colleagues to do similar personal introspection. Much of one issue of the magazine from 2015 is devoted to articles written by SEED leaders about their experience with the program, but this series is introduced by a piece written by McIntosh herself entitled “Teachers Self-Knowledge: The Deeper Learning.”

Included in this article are two testimonials from participants:

SEED leader Keith Burns wrote, of learning about privilege, “Here’s the magic of SEED and its ability to create vision where there was none. No one told me about my privilege. No one blatantly revealed to me that my life was something other than what I understood it to be. SEED simply welcomed me into conversations about myself and about others, about history, and about the present. And because SEED showed me how to take part in conversation, and because SEED showed me that conversation is as much about listening as it is about talking, I discovered within myself things I had not known or seen before. I discovered how much of my own experience reflected important aspects of how our human worlds of power work. And when my eyes were opened and my mind made aware, I wept at what I now saw and knew....” (McIntosh, 2015, p. 53)

SEED leader Phyllis May-Machunda wrote, “When I signed up for SEED training I never anticipated how deeply this training would transform my being. SEED has rooted social justice education in my worldview, and now I am compelled to tend and share seeds of social justice throughout my life’s work.” (McIntosh, 2015, p. 53)

These statements signal a clear discursive orientation toward the problem of “diversity.”

Privileged people are not to be blamed for their ignorance; society’s power structures have blinded them to a universal truth of inequity. However, SEED is a tool that produces new operations for White allies to enact on their “thoughts, conduct, and ways of being” (Foucault, 1988, p. 17), thus allowing them to achieve some higher level of knowledge and existence that they can use to benefit their colleagues and students.

The turn toward these technologies of self performs two important jobs for the independent school apparatus. First, it is the central means of transferring responsibility for

reducing inequities from the institution to individual actors. It is the duty of the adult White ally to resolve their own issues of privilege and prejudice, and then to facilitate their peers and students journey of self-discovery and regulation. If faculty and administrators (or students) are unwilling to “do the work,” that is their own moral failing and the school is not liable for their choices. Second, these technologies of self are mechanisms for controlling the understanding of the problem of “diversity.” The specific conceptions of inequality and privilege produced in the institutional discourse inform the material operations that individuals impose on their thinking and thus the actions they associate with moving toward an equitable future. The prime example of this is the affinity group.

During these years it becomes commonplace for individuals in independent schools to congregate with those who share a particular, visible identity. Overwhelmingly these groups form around racial or ethnic identities, but LGBTQ+ identity affinity groups are also common. The groups are allowed physical and temporal space within the school, and in some cases are even made mandatory. The ostensible purpose is for individuals to meet together to discuss their experiences inhabiting the salient identity within the institution. *Independent School* published articles about how to facilitate an affinity group programs throughout Era 5, and this activity is held up as one of the few concrete actions that can be undertaken to forward the cause of “diversity” in the independent school. The identities associated with particular affinity groups are indicative of what constitutes “diversity” in these years, of course. There are no affinity groups for low-income students or those with learning differences. There are, however, White affinity groups, which are discussed at length in the magazine. In “Examining Privilege” from 2014, Kimberly Ridley, an assistant head of school, and Ralph Wales, a head of school, speak directly to a hierarchy of otherness and the purpose of the affinity group for the White ally:

...In our work together, we've come to understand that race-based privilege sits atop the privilege pyramid in our schools, even as we acknowledge that other forms of privilege -- like those attached to gender, class, sexual orientation, and religion -- are significant players. It is in bringing a conscious, active consideration of race-based privilege into the day-to-day work of faculty and staff that we create a sustainable "engine" for equity and inclusion. (Ridley & Wales, 2014, p. 50)

The white affinity group has provided me with a space to practice articulating myself around multicultural concepts, personal biases, and racial issues that can be difficult. I have also realized that I can help push people in their thinking, and so I've drawn some confidence from working at being an active ally, not just someone who is trying, but someone who is actually doing something. (Ridley & Wales, 2014, p. 54)

The first artifact not only lays out a taxonomic ordering of marginalized identities³, but also offers this structure as a universal and natural truth. This “privilege pyramid” is the focal point for the technologies of the self that can be enacted by mechanisms like SEED and the affinity group. The adult White ally, in this case an administrator, can only inhabit this subjectivity once they have modified their own thinking by acknowledging their racial privilege and making that awareness a central, “day-to-day” regulation of their conduct. The second artifact, which is an anonymous statement from a faculty member, clarifies the role that the affinity group plays in this process of self-modification. This White ally, in a space constructed exclusively for White people, internalizes discourse about what forms of privilege are possible and which must be struggled against. At the same time, this space shapes their understanding of how they come to

³ That affinity groups are only based on racial and LGBTQ+ identities makes it clear what concepts of difference occupy that top of the “privilege pyramid.” There are two cases of Jewish affinity groups that are documented in the magazine at this time and in era 6, but no indication of groups based on social class, gender (outside of trans concerns in the LGBTQ+ group), other religions, disability, or age. Beyond the obvious positioning of racial and LGBTQ+ Others as the most deficient in the independent school context, or perhaps those who offer the most utility to the normal student’s acquisition of cultural competence skills, there are two possibilities worth considering. First, racial and sexual identity are seen as biologically natural and immutable, and therefore for people in those groups, the challenges of existing in the cultural environment of independent schools cannot be quickly resolved. Non-biological issues like socioeconomic status and religious affiliation may be more easily acted upon by the institutional apparatus, but doing so might threaten the institution at a foundational level. Second, there could be some concern that to ask students to join class, religion, or disability-based affinity groups might in some way “out” them to the community. In other words, individuals (theoretically) cannot hide their racial and LGBTQ+ identity, but could disguise their class or disability. There are problematic assumptions on many levels here, but there is a certain logic when we consider that disability and class do not generally carry positive connotations while race and sexual orientation offer visible foci for normal students to examine and learn from.

this knowledge. They are not being lectured to, instead this knowledge is cast as a product of self-discovery, thus empowering them as active agents who are capable of making change, rather than inert recipients of external knowledge. This is a crucial distinction because it is what allows for the technology of the self to take hold. If White allies are not responsible for or capable of unearthing the truth about privilege, they cannot be capable of modifying their conduct. This is also the requisite process that allows for the transference of responsibility from the institution to the individual.

What is also made evident in statements about the value of SEED and affinity groups is that utilizing technologies of the self is what distinguishes the White ally from the barrier. The barrier as an active force working against “diversity” disappears in Era 5, but what is made clear is that inaction itself is immoral. Thus, barriers are a problem, but a problem that is fixable if the White ally can operate on their thoughts and conduct. In fact, the discursive construction of the statements above indicates that, invariably, every White ally was at one point a barrier themselves, right up until the moment that they empowered themselves to modify their thoughts and conduct.

Despite the centrality of “taking action” for the image of the White ally, very few concrete “diversity” activities are outlined in the magazine. One of the few, the hiring process, becomes a visible locus for adult White allies interaction with technologies of the self and the exercise of Biopower (Foucault, 2010). The tasks of hiring are offered as ripe for mismanagement by those who have not been empowered to self-regulate; they are also a fertile ground for quantification and data analysis. In “Bias Among the Well-Intentioned” (2009) a diversity consultant lays out a protocol for rectifying a dysfunctional hiring approach and diagnosing “diversity” deficiencies in a school:

1. Provide bias awareness training for all who oversee the hiring process in the school. 2. Compile a list of faculty and professional staff of color, noting each person's position, tenure, and culture. 3. Analyze this data annually. Consider: which cultures are represented and which are not; in which departments and divisions; how long people of color have remained at the school and in departments; compare the adult percentages of color to the percentages in the student body. Document your procedures for hiring teachers and administrators to ensure that all departments and divisions are following the same process. Review these procedures annually with new department chairs and administrators. Document and track all candidates of color in all searches in all divisions/departments. Review this accumulated data at the end of each school year. The head of school, division heads, diversity director, and human resources director form the core of the review group. (Savini, 2009, p.67)

As signaled by the title, the overall narrative of this article positions well-meaning figures of hiring authority in independent schools as the key to achieving real “diversity,” but that without the appropriate self-knowledge and control, they are incapable of bypassing their own implicit biases in order to effectively recruit faculty and administrators of color. The artifact above indicates that to become White allies, not only do those with hiring authority need to adopt technologies of the self, but they must employ the mechanisms of Biopower to effectively identify, measure, categorize, and surveille People of Color. I have so far skirted the obvious fact that a White ally needs a non-white other in order to exist in any sort of alliance. Here the nature of this alliance is made explicit. The teacher and the administrator of color is made visible through their identification as an object of affiliation for the White ally. If the White ally’s subjectivity is predicated on a moral willingness to relinquish privilege, the appropriate counter-subject to receive that privilege must be found. Judgement of the worthiness of that subject is retained, by the White ally, however, and the technologies of Biopower must be employed in order to enact this evaluation with objectivity and clear-headedness.

The teacher of color and the administrator of color lack agency in these processes.

In most ways their visibility relies only on their presence as an object of White allyship. However, the primary identity that becomes an active subject is the diversity director or practitioner. According to “The State of Diversity Practice in Independent Schools” from 2010,

The "typical" diversity practitioner is a woman (75 percent), under the age of 40 (46 percent), and African American (45 percent). The average tenure is six years, and almost half of diversity practitioners are the first at their schools to hold the title of dean or director of diversity... The overall challenge that diversity practitioners face is turning their schools' commitments to diversity into concrete action. This may explain why only 55 percent of them find the work "extremely" or "somewhat" satisfying. Their most immediate needs relate to support from their schools and additional resources to help them carry out the work — including funding for training, professional development, and mentoring. (Torres, 2010, p. 22)

This information is based on a survey conducted by NAIS in 2009 and displays some of the same emphasis on biopolitical measurement as is seen in the approach to hiring. However, what indicates the active capacity of these subjects, in opposition to the passiveness of the broader category of People and administrator of Color, is that they bear responsibility for enacting change within the school. They are not White allies and they are not normal, however, they are cogs of the institution. Much like the DEI director in Era 4, they occupy an in-between space where their relationship with the institution is different than a Person of Color and their relationships with other People of Color is different than the institution's. But now, in Era 5, their relationship is about mechanisms of “diversity.” They are responsible for making material the moral principles of the institution, for translating discourse to action. That the most immediate needs of these subjects relate to concrete resources and relational support from the institution indicates that the presence of diversity directors and practitioners alone is an ineffective technique for resolving “diversity.” Yet, their visibility and clear definition is an important means of transferring responsibility away from the institution. The White Ally is a subject responsible for personal improvement first and only later for the betterment of society

through those they inspire. The diversity director or practitioner is responsible for enacting individual change in those who have the capacity for leadership by teaching them to be White allies. Personal change is not relevant for this subject. The White ally is always changing, always reflecting more deeply and pursuing morality. The diversity director or practitioner is static and is measured only by their effectiveness at making others better. Again, this represents an intermediate space where they are not active directors of institutional practices, they are subservient to them, and yet they are agents of the institution who bear responsibility for effecting change in other subjects.

Where diversity directors and practitioners exhibit a diminished degree of agency in Era 5, faculty of color display almost none. In fact, their perceptibility revolves almost exclusively around being objects of the hiring process and encounter in the test field of students' leadership development. In "Engaging the Racial Elephant," co-authored by a "diversity" consultant and Howard Stevenson, a professor at the University of Pennsylvania whose work centers on the experience of Black students in Independent Schools, the (limited) case is made for the presence of faculty of color in the independent school:

The most socially responsible thing we can do is to prepare our students to be culturally literate in an increasingly global community and to equip them to interact with a broad range of people. But we can't complete this work well without a well-functioning diverse adult community in our schools. And we can't have a diverse adult community in a school without addressing issues of inclusion and equity. Cultural or racial literacy won't appear simply because we use the word "diversity" daily. Learning how to negotiate racial conflicts won't become less stressful because we remind our schools about the ideas of social justice in our mission statements. (Coleman & Stevenson, 2014, p. 85)

While it is not new that exposure to People of Color is good for normal students, it does make a call for "diversity" specifically within independent school faculties. This migration of "diversity" as a concern within student bodies to the world of adults is an emphasis that arises in Era 6, but it is also related to the transference of the burdens of "diversity" to individual subjects from the

school. The institution needs administrators and teachers to address themselves before they can properly educate future leaders. It seems that within the scope of that process, faculty of color, who are not directly addressed here, are relevant to the degree that they facilitate learning how to “navigate racial conflicts;” their presence is required for student leaders to learn the essential tasks of cultural competence and adult White allies to demonstrate the effectiveness of their technologies of the self, but they offer little beyond that. Thus, faculty of color are crucial to conceptualizing “diversity” as a skill and an action, but exhibit limited agency for themselves.

An important feature of the production of leadership within “diversity” discourse is the utilization of data and analytical technologies. Era 5 is bookended by the introduction (2006) and relaunch (2015) of NAIS’s Assessment of Inclusivity and Multiculturalism (AIM), the successor to the MAP process that appeared in Era 3. Whereas the techniques of MAP operated primarily in the field of the biopolitical by focusing on the quantification of othered bodies, AIM takes as its object more abstract “diversity” concepts; AIM emerges out of the confrontation of “diversity,” neoliberal, and corporate discourses. At the time of its introduction, Gene Batiste, NAIS vice president of equity and justice initiatives described it as “a comprehensive instrument designed to evaluate diversity, multiculturalism, equity, and justice in independent schools,” and that the “results come in an easy-to-digest format the school can put to use in strategic planning and in follow-up training and programming” (NAIS, 2006c, p. 5). NAIS later depicts AIM as a program meant “to engage school communities in deep conversation about diversity, equity, and ‘inclusion,’ and to gather concrete data and action steps to improve their climates and cultures” (NAIS, 2014, p. 4). When NAIS revised the “instrument” in 2015, they also rehoused it within the NAIS Survey Center, which they assert “makes AIM more flexible and integrates it with the NAIS’s Data and Analysis for School Leadership (DASL) tools” (NAIS, 2014, p. 4). AIM is a

technology that NAIS makes available for the individual to evaluate, assess, and act, the hallmark skills of leaders. “Concrete data and action steps” are phrases that could be pulled from any management consulting report, but, more importantly, they suggest an objectivity and quantification of “diversity,” “equity,” and “inclusion” that have been elusive. As a producer of data, AIM allows for the measurement of the amorphous culture within schools. Unlike MAP, it does not measure a quantity of “diverse” subjects or bodies; instead, it measures a “climate,” and it does so in a manner that is “easy-to-digest.” It also embeds itself seamlessly into a broader set of leadership tools that are created by the institutional apparatus for the leader to be able to make objectively informed, active decisions about “diversity.” In combination with the technologies of self discussed above, this data-informed action defines the ultimate leader: a White ally who has done subjective work to become morally pure and the data-savvy decision maker who can lead with objective insight.

Era 5 is a moment of consolidation and coherence. Following on a period of disorder, “diversity” discourse coalesces around a concept of leadership that fuses “diversity” skills and moral righteousness in adult school leaders and student, future leaders. To the degree that “diverse” subjects are present at this time, it seems their role is mainly to provide opportunity for leaders to perform certain actions, like hiring appropriately and examining their own privilege, and gain the skill of cultural competence. Of the six eras outlined in this study, Era 5 may in fact represent an apex in that it is the most targeted in its productions of normal subjects. What comes next in the final era of this genealogy is a push further into the use of data and the technologies of self that may destabilize ethical motivations and processes for solving “diversity.”

Era 6: The Present, Data, Technocracy, and the Perpetual Process (2016 - 2021)

On its surface, the final period of this genealogy reads as a linear progression from Era 5. Upon closer inspection, however, it becomes apparent that the discourses of data and self-control meet “diversity” in a new location. In the preceding era the ideal leader arrives as the perfect model of active morality, but in the present, the ethical dissipates and technical pragmatism dominates. As this process unfolds the moral and the technical elements embodied by the leader in Era 5 separate, and in this divorce the speaking subjects of independent schools lose definition. Those who exhibit the traits of cultural competence have become a central focus, but their identifying features are vague. While race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, and socioeconomic status are variously identified as issues that cultural competence is expected to address, the subjects that correspond to these “diversity” concepts are largely invisible. One of the few remaining actors associated with cultural competence is the ally, but the image of the ally has shifted in important ways. At the same time, the refinement of the technologies of measurement and analysis play an essential role in the new logics of the institutional apparatus. The essence of technocratic tools of data and evaluation are translated to the discourse of “diversity” by framing it as a set of demonstrable and calculable skills possessed by individuals. What Era 6 is remarkable for, then, is not the coherence of Era 5, but rather an abstraction of “diversity” discourse that is couched in the language and technologies of technocracy. Amidst this abstraction of “diversity” as a problem, perhaps even because of it, Era 6 witnesses a sudden and dissonant reemergence of the student of color and LGBTQ+ student in the independent school environment, subjectivities that must utilize outside channels to make their voices heard.

The idea that “diversity” is a matter of technical skill does not entirely supplant the moral necessity of employing technologies of the self. However, as the discourse of self-control and introspection moves beyond the goal of personal enlightenment, it turns toward a focus on

pragmatism. In doing so it highlights subjects that demonstrate abilities rather than identities, subjects who have used technologies of the self to accumulate an array of proficiencies. This stands out in “Empowering the Diversity We Seek” from 2017, an article addressing “diversity” in hiring practices. In this piece, Cris Cullinan, a “diversity” consultant argues for seeking out Cultural Competence in the hiring process:

When we search for culturally competent faculty, administrators, and staff, we are amplifying our parameters to include knowledge and skills needed to work respectfully and inclusively in a multicultural, multicolored, multinational, and otherwise diverse educational environment. If we don’t make cultural competence an imperative, our schools, employees, students, and communities lose out... Knowledge and skills related to cultural competence are integral to building school and classroom environments where every person has an opportunity to reach his or her full potential and is valued for their unique qualities and contributions. (Cullinan, 2017, p. 71-72)

A central directive for this process is to “seek evidence that demonstrates a candidate is culturally competent in his or her teaching, teamwork, and leadership ability” (Cullinan, 2017, p 72). Here “diversity” hiring discourse has made a fundamental turn. In Era 5, the object of the hiring process was the Person of Color, a position defined by visible and immutable characteristics. Now in Era 6, the target of the hiring process is an amorphous individual demarcated by their possession of a set of skills and knowledges; other than being qualified for employment by a school, their only salient quality is a previous acquisition of technical abilities. The Culturally Competent person is fluid in that they may inhabit any racial, sexual, religious, socioeconomic or other identity. They might be a White ally who has performed technologies of the self or a Person of Color who has an innate understanding of racial and cultural difference in the independent school environment. Regardless, their relationship with the institution is not grounded in what they are, but in what they can do. Their utility to the institution is based on their ability to demonstrate that they have already attained these skills and knowledges, which may or may not be essential to who they are holistically. Thus, these subjects undertaking

technologies of the self is less a matter of moral righteousness and more one of acquiring and demonstrating technical facility.⁴

Part of what makes this transition to the technical and practical possible is “diversity” discourse’s reorientation toward morality. In Era 6, narratives assume that the ethical debate of “diversity” has been settled, and that the only acceptable position is as an Ally. But if the issue of supporting “diversity” has been resolved, discourse must contend with how to do more to achieve “inclusion” and “equity” since it is clear the status quo is not the ideal, especially at the moment in which independent school discourse must address the fallout of the killing of George Floyd⁵ and the sudden irruption of visibility of Black students (and Asian and LGBTQ+ Students) made possible by social media.⁶ The solution to this problem is to go further, to move from the ally to the accomplice. Jenn Salcido, a marketing and communications director, describes how at her school, “we talk a lot about allies and accomplices, and shifting from ally,

⁴ The demonstration of a commitment to and experience with “diversity,” “equity,” and “inclusion” is ubiquitous in hiring job descriptions for admissions officers, DEI directors, and heads of school from this era. Of the 231 job postings analyzed for this study, 78% included a demonstrable ability and previous experience related to “diversity,” “equity,” and “inclusion.” Even if the DEI position descriptions are excluded, 66% of the remaining hiring postings included these references.

⁵ George Floyd was a Black man who was murdered by a police officer in Minneapolis in May, 2020. This event, as just one of an ongoing epidemic of killings of unarmed Black people by police, sparked national outrage and innumerable public protests through the U.S. Similar protests took place within many independent schools in May of 2020 and gave rise to the Black@, Asian@, and LGBTQ@ Instagram accounts.

⁶ In most ways students of color have become invisible by Era 6. While racial identity is talked about frequently, beyond articles about affinity groups, these subjects speak very little. In the summer of 2020, a sudden irruption in “diversity” discourse occurs when over 200 anonymously moderated Black@, LGBTQ@, or Asian@ Instagram accounts appear. Postings from 123 of these accounts were analyzed for this study. There are several remarkable qualities to these accounts. First, it is important to note that these subjects’ voices emerge outside of the school context, as though there is so little space for them within institutional discourse that they must seek an external channel to express their experiences. Additionally, overwhelmingly the posts describe negative experiences related to racial difference and a lack of cultural competency skills exhibited by White students, teachers, and administrators. For example, there are frequent stories of Black students’ names being confused by White teachers or Black students being disciplined more harshly than their White peers. Where there are examples of socioeconomic discrimination or inequity in these posts they virtually always include racial descriptors for all parties involved. This is reflective of the double bind Cruikshank (1999) describes where subjects are only able to organize and become empowered once they fully inhabit the marginalized subjectivity that discourse has produced. In this case, the moderators of these accounts, themselves inhabitants of these positions, are screening the postings to ensure that they convey stories that they make visible the specific experiences of being Black, LGBTQ+, or Asian in these contexts.

which is a passive supporting role, to accomplice, an active role where people with privilege risk it” (Scherr, 2020, p. 112). Later in the fall of that year Judith Osborne, a DEI director, argues that to perform the appropriate self-work, allies must:

Own [self-work]. Racial identity development and other forms of identity exploration and knowledge-building are essential to the personal and professional growth of anyone in school leadership today. These competencies are no longer optional. The DEI role is often mistakenly relied on to bring other administrators up to speed. Some leaders in predominantly white institutions feel intimidated to acknowledge that they need help navigating these topics, especially—but not exclusively—around race. It might lay bare a gaping hole in their leadership skills wheelhouse. (Osborne, 2020, p. 76)

Here again the rationale for engaging in technologies of the self is to build a set of competencies that can operate in the independent school environment. Leadership is still a prevailing concentration, but introspection is no longer about achieving a personal, moral awakening that might inspire others to become allies; instead, the purpose of doing this “self-work” is to advance one’s viability as a technocratic leader, one who can establish a policy-derived protocol and clinically execute upon it without falling prey to implicit bias. In this context, cultural competence is just one of many essential proficiencies that leaders must develop in order to excel in their duties. Of note as well is that the technocratic leader is expected to do this work without any institutional aid. The DEI director is not responsible for the growth of the leader, which may indicate a further transfer of responsibility for solving inequity in the school to the individual.

Just as the motives of personal introspection have trended toward the technical, data and analysis become even more crucial to solving the problems of “diversity,” “equity,” and “inclusion,” both in the admissions process and the school environment. In “Entry Data” (2021), Barbara Eghan, an admissions director, describes her experience of joining and revamping the admissions process at her school in Washington, D.C.:

One of the first challenges I faced was inconsistent practice around the data collection of racial identity. There wasn’t a specific methodology or place to collect applicants’ self-

identified race or ethnicity... The first step in our inquiry process was to develop a data-gathering mechanism that would allow us to capture self-reported race and ethnicity information from our applicants... In 2016, we upgraded our data analysis mechanisms by migrating to an online admission database called Ravenna, which offers real-time insights into regional aggregated data from other independent schools, allowing us to compare our school-specific data with regional trends. (Eghan, 2021, p. 100)

There are several important elements of this statement's orientation toward data analytics. First, the insistence on standardizing data collection and analysis to make the data valid and comparable to other schools' represents a common organizing principle of how independent schools talk about an act upon data. Additionally, the corporate tone of these practices is unmistakable. Searching for "real-time insights" from "aggregated data" made available from an online database mimic a management consulting report.⁷ Finally, the emphasis on the collection of data about racial identity reflects an interest in the quantification of "diversity." Though the measurement of racially othered subjects in the past has functioned as a biopolitical technique, in Era 6 it appears to function more as a means of controlling institutional practice. In other words, the measurement and utilization of data is not so much a method of controlling "diverse" subjects as it is one of evaluating and demonstrating the effectiveness of the school's efforts in solving "diversity." This is a meaningful discursive turn because it preempts and deflects external scrutiny. It also gives the impression of introducing informational clarity and objectivity into the admissions process, which places responsibility on individual gatekeepers to "get it right" by drawing insights from data, rather than hiding behind opaque data.

This trend arises within the cultural environment of schools as well. While prior eras saw the invention of technologies like MAP and AIM created by NAIS, in Era 6 we find schools producing their own means of collecting, analyzing, and visualizing "diversity," "equity," and

⁷ It is perhaps unsurprising that an article in an insert called "Data Dive" from Era 6 cites a McKinsey and Company study on "workplace diversity" alongside a series of infographics about how many women and People of Color occupy specific administrative roles in independent schools.

“inclusion” data. The emergence of the “dashboard” tool for operating on these problems is outlined in “Chasing Inclusion” (2018). Kalyan Balaven, a director of teaching and learning at a school in California, recounts why her school came to develop “The Athenian School Inclusion Proto-Dashboard” and to share it among a consortium of independent schools:

All our schools already attempt to measure inclusion. But we don’t do it with a universal metric—we tend to be idiosyncratic and over-rely on narratives. We hear about the one moment of exclusion and jump to respond, and then make sense of it. This approach is fine for those who are “down with the work” or “in the know,” but is much harder for the broader community and those outside of our schools to understand. This absence of a clear measurement of inclusion makes it that much harder to hold ourselves accountable for how inclusive we actually are. (Balaven, 2018, p. 104)

The proto-dashboard was the first of a longitudinal examination of how inclusion looks at Athenian. We used it to design a process for consortium schools to develop their own dashboards, and we sought feedback from the consortium to help us refine ours further and improve our process. (Balaven, 2018, p. 106)

The article is punctuated by infographics of the dashboard, which is a matrix listing identities along one axis and the words “academic,” “meaningful,” “relationships,” “leadership,” and “belonging” along the other. Colorful pie charts indicating the level of subject positions’ agreement with statements about these terms fill the cells at the intersections. This visualization, again, looks manufactured by a consulting firm, and its production by a group of independent schools speaks directly to how the industry now conceptualizes the solutions to “diversity” as technical. Data cannot be anecdotal, it must be collected in a neutral and objective way and put to work. Only by aggregating trustworthy, quantifiable information can Leaders responsible for creating inclusive and equitable school environments make data-informed decisions.⁸ Leaders, who have acquired cultural competence tools, are accountable for operationalizing the data they

⁸ The importance of data-informed leadership and the measurement of “inclusion” and “equity” are littered throughout the job descriptions as well. This is a particularly strong current in the DEI director descriptions where nearly a third specify one of the duties of the job is developing a system for collecting quantifiable data on the state of “equity” and “inclusion” in the school.

have accumulated in just ways. The supposed objectivity of this process obviates any concerns of implicit bias; the true work of “diversity” only gets done when technocracy reigns.

Perhaps the most important element of this discursive practice is how it frames the collection and utilization of data as an ongoing process. In the above, the dashboard is in fact a “proto-dashboard;” it is not a static item, rather it is always in motion responding to subjects’ input and tracking and visualizing change. As in the case of admissions data, it produces “real-time” insights, but it also dictates that these mechanisms are never done. If the process is always measuring, analyzing, and assessing itself, there is no endpoint to its movement, and thus, no moment of resolution of “diversity.” This technology of the institutional apparatus has an analog at the individual scale as well. The idea of the perpetual process becomes the defining feature for allies (and accomplices) in the present. The logic of cultural competence for the ally and leader is laid out clearly in “Hand in Hand,” an account of how two curriculum coordinators approach developing skills in their faculty at a school in California:

One of the beliefs we hold strongly to is that cultural competency work is never “done”—there is always more to learn. As we continue to move forward, we face new challenges. A few that we are now grappling with are how to onboard new faculty who have not been on the cultural competency journey of the past few years with us and how to recruit teachers to join our committee who are more reluctant to take on a leadership role in this area. We will continue to work to find paths forward, keeping the principles of teacher leadership and involvement at the fore. (Poplack & Dlesk, 2018, p. 115)

Unlike in previous eras, in which realizing a threshold of self-modification conferred ally status, being an ally is now about constant activation. An ally does not achieve a station, they exist in a state of motion. The moment they stop “doing the work” is the moment that stop being an ally. In this statement we see the essential role leadership work plays in forming the ally as well. If one does not take action to develop leadership skills and inhabit leadership roles, then they are not

maximizing their capacity to be an ally. This element is inherent in the authors' statement that they themselves will "continue to work to find paths forward."

At both the institutional and individual scales, the perpetual process creates important opportunities and prohibits others. If data is constantly collected and analyzed, then the nuanced problems of "diversity" are every-changing. Thus, data-focused Leaders are always producing solutions while aiming at a moving target. This makes it challenging to level criticism at the individual leaders responsible for resolving "diversity." So long as leaders can demonstrate their effort, both in utilizing data and doing self-work, they cannot fail. At the same, however, they cannot succeed because constant evaluation will continue to produce new problems. In other words, if the process is eternal, there is no arrival at an outcome that can be judged; only the individual can be held accountable for their engagement with the process (or lack thereof). In "No Black@, Now What," Jan Abernathy, a strategic communication director responding to the concerns of schools in the wake of the Black@ Instagram movement explains this state of motion:

Even in schools where the values of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) are embraced by the community, the work is never done, [Head of School] Lindner says. "Like other schools, we must continue to unpeel the layered onion of complexity that surrounds these issues and operate in ways that show our commitment to being the strongest, healthiest institution we can be in spite of our reputation. We may have unpeeled more layers than other schools, but that doesn't mean we don't have work to do." (Abernathy, 2021, p. 73)

Success and failure exist on an infinite and relative spectrum; there are only achievements or shortcomings of degree. The problems of "diversity" are layered and complex and there is no absolute resolution, so a school can only be judged against its (in)ability to achieve an undefined "strongest" and "healthiest" version of itself. The inherent message is that, if the utopia has not yet been achieved, look over the horizon because the perpetual process means there is always the

hope of something better. Simultaneously, if the only requirement is effort, then the institution and the individual can only be asked to do their best, even if it fails to break the status quo.

In the end, the present is a time when “diverse” and normal subjects persist, but their racial, gender, sexual, socioeconomic, religious, and other identities cease to be significant factors in their power relations from an institutional perspective. Instead, their value (or their relation to the norm) is embedded in their willingness and effort to utilize the technocratic tools of “diversity.” This engagement is what determines the individual’s ability to become a leader, which is what every normal subject ought to strive for within the school and the position that every normal student will adopt in their future endeavors. The pivot from leadership as a moral position to a functional one is the key move of Era 6, and while perhaps less holistic than the visage of the leader in Era 5, it may offer a more fluent translation to the individualistic, data-driven, neoliberalizing trends of U.S. society.

Closing Thoughts on Individual Responsibility and Technocracy

The final three eras of this genealogy represent a significant departure from the first three. In Chapter 4 we saw how in the early years discourse conceived of “diversity” as a problem of threat. Instead, from 1999 to 2021, independent schools have problematized “diversity” as an object for technocratic operation. In Era 4, this began with a recentering of White subjects (the ally and the barrier) and Whiteness as well as a blurring of the images of students of color. In Era 5, the leader emerges as the perfect embodiment of cultural competence skills and moral righteousness and the Person of Color, both of whom take on personal responsibility for solving “diversity.” Finally, Era 6 sees a further embrace of technocratic objectivism where leaders lose almost all of their identifying features and are defined solely by their skill sets and actions.

This transition is predicated on eschewing clearly defined subjects and instead producing a set of technical skills and behaviors that are located in willing, active individuals. As this transition occurs, responsibility for solving the problems of “diversity” is rearranged and individual leaders come to bear the burden of achieving “equity,” “inclusion,” and “justice” in independent schools and society. What this seems to gloss over is the role of the institution in constructing and perpetuating the circumstances that produce inequity. If institutional discourse keeps indicating personal identity work, cultural competency, and data analysis as the levers of social change, then it is challenging to identify the role the institutional apparatus ought to play in responding to inequity. The technocratic tools of data collection and analysis further complicate this picture by constantly producing new problems for leaders to solve. What has developed, then, is a state of constant motion, but little movement.

Chapter 6: “Diversity” Among the Elite

The genealogy presented in the previous two chapters details the erratic path that “diversity” discourse has traced in the 45-year period ending in 2021. But, as Foucault tells us, the ultimate purpose of any genealogy is to construct a “history of the present” (1977), or what Ball (2011) refers to as a history of something that is “supposed to have no history” (p. 34). In order to accomplish this sort of historiography, the study set out to answer the following research questions:

- How has the problem of “diversity” been conceived in elite educational institutions over the past 45 years?
 - What is the genealogy of “diversity” discourse in independent schools and how has this discourse rendered (in)visible racial, ethnic, economic, and social inequalities to varying degrees?
 - How do continuities and discontinuities in “diversity” discourse relate to who is granted access to independent schools and what rationales are produced to justify these inclusions and exclusions?

This chapter will discuss how the analyses in chapters four and five address these questions, what this genealogy can illuminate about the operations of elite schools and subjects in the present, and how a Foucauldian theoretical and methodological approach expands the possibilities for studies of the elite. It will then address some of the limitations of this study and opportunities for future research that build on this project.

Constructing a Genealogy

In chapter one, I highlighted the essential paradox of social stratification in the U.S., that since 1976 both social mobility and income inequality have increased in tandem. I also

underscored how, even with rapidly increasing access to independent schools for students of color between 2001 and 2020, the financial accessibility of these elite schools remained stagnant. These two trends served as the backdrop for the study that sought to explore how and why certain types of “diverse” subjects were made visible and desirable by the prevailing regimes of truth in independent schools. As I asserted then, identifying how “diversity” was problematized at different moments was the key to understanding how elites and elite institutions perpetuate inequities in American society.

Chapter two performed two tasks: reviewing the established literature in the field of elite studies and developing a brief genealogy of the study of independent schools, including how the theoretical frameworks of that research have morphed over time. I then began to make the case for why a Foucauldian approach to the research of elites offered a novel and enriching counterpart to the more established structuralist and Bourdieusian approaches utilized in the field. I offered some thoughts on how FDA in particular might reshape how we think about Bourdieu’s (1986) forms of social and cultural capital and elite *habitus*, a discussion that I will elaborate on in a moment. Chapter three then described FDA as a methodological approach, Foucault’s particular understanding of discourse, his key analytical tools (archaeology and genealogy), and why *Independent School* magazine offered a unique body of statements that could be utilized to answer this study’s guiding questions.

Chapter four considered the first three eras of *Independent School* (1976-1998) and how discourses in this era fashioned “diversity” as a threat. More precisely, how subjects like working women, learning-disabled students, and racial minorities in Era 1; female students, Black and Hispanic students, and gay people in Era 2; and racial minorities in Era 3 represented different understandings of threat and the possibilities that the dangers of “diversity” produce. This began

with “diverse” subjects emerging as risks that need to be neutralized by the institutional apparatus of independent schools. “Diversity” then became a problem that could be harnessed for the benefit of normal students because exposure to others could desensitize and socialize elites to those they might encounter out in the “real world.” The third period of this genealogy highlighted the variety of ways that “diversity” intersected with discourses about international competitiveness and the potential crisis of a deficient racial minority dragging down U.S. society. I emphasized how the conception of threat in these years exemplified Massumi’s (2007) framework of preemption, which uses the generalized and uncertain description of future threat as justification and impetus to act in the present.

Finally, in chapter 5, I discussed the latter three eras of discourse (1999-2021) and how “diversity” transitioned from a threat to an action. This conversion happens as “diverse” subjects evaporate, normal (White) subjects materialize, and technocratic protocols multiply. Era 4 sees the emergence of White allies and barriers who alternately support and oppose the causes of “diversity,” “equity,” and “inclusion,” just as People of Color become hazy. Era 5 represents the unification of discourses about “diversity” and leadership as technologies of self (Foucault, 2010) and individual responsibility come to define the moral and pragmatically adept leader. Era 6 is the moment of apotheosis for the leader, who is no longer defined by racial, gender, or other identities, but only by their technical skill and constant engagement in “doing the work” necessary to achieve “equity,” and “justice.”

While this genealogy is made up of six distinct discursive eras, there are two broader epochs that may correlate with different regimes of truth. I want to stress that, in spite of how this genealogy might appear, there are no neat boundaries around these periods of time. It seems convenient that there are six eras and that they split evenly into these two general regimes of

truth, but it is important to note that the moments of change are cloudy at times. That is not to say that my choices are arbitrary, it is simply that I have selected chronological points that best approximate discursive shifts and the appearances of new or differently produced subjects. Given that qualification, this genealogy does illuminate two distinct prevailing regimes of truth in the world of elite education over this 45-year span. The first, which I demarcate as 1976 to 1998, conceptualizes “diversity” as a matter of threat. Problematizing “diversity” in this way allows for a rather narrow, but concrete set of possible solutions. One could be to eliminate the “diverse” subject by refusing their admission to elite environments, a strategy that we know was employed widely for decades and centuries predating the chronology of this study. This strategy is visible at times in Era 1 as well with discussion of excluding certain types of learning-disabled students. The other logical responses to “diversity” within this regime of truth are outlined above: neutralizing the threat by managing “diverse” subjects and harnessing the threat for the benefit of traditional elites through exposure to their deficient counterparts.

The second and contemporary regime of truth that takes shape in this genealogy, however, allows for many more possibilities. The prevailing mode of thinking now sees “diversity” as a set of skills and actions. As chapter five details, this change makes previously “diverse” subjects less relevant in the discourse of “diversity” and recenters White subjects and Whiteness. It makes good White people and bad White people, all while making “diversity” a problem that requires a technical solution that results from individual introspection and effort. Under this regime of truth, the institutional apparatus uses the technologies of data, analysis, and personal accountability to operate on the behavior of individuals, whether they are “diverse” or normal, in ways that obscure the practices of the institution itself. No longer does the institution bar entry, neutralize the interruption of “diverse” individuals, or structure interactions that utilize

subjects' otherness. Now, anyone has the capacity (and the mandate) to take action through a program of self-modification and demonstrable effort. Since this process has no endpoint, however, the problem of "diversity" is never resolved, it is only worked at. This point is key to understanding how "diversity" discourse in independent schools gives the impression of social progress while maintaining or exacerbating a stratified society.

Central in this process is the way in which the problem of "diversity" has become a problem of privilege, and in particular, White privilege. Made explicit within the discourses of this regime of truth, not all forms of privilege are equal. In fact, there is a distinct "privilege pyramid" (Ridley & Wales, 2014, p. 54) that provides a taxonomic ordering of what identities carry value in independent schools and U.S. society. By placing race at the top of that pyramid and gender and sexual orientation slightly below it, privilege is associated with biological identities that appear natural and immutable, rather than with SES, which can be fluid. While the solution to "diversity" may be about acquiring skills and utilizing technologies of the self, the most valuable privileges are ones that cannot be fully relinquished because they are imagined as innate and fixed. This implies an inverse that does not problematize a newer, racially "diverse" elite and the institutions that produce them. These subjects can achieve high SES without moral complications because they can never possess the most problematic forms of privilege like Whiteness. This likely explains the gross imbalance between articles that address racial and socioeconomic "diversity" in the magazine and the job descriptions analyzed for this study. In total, there were 320 articles or job descriptions that explicitly referred to "diversity" as a matter of race. 160 of those referred to both race and socioeconomic status (SES), another 160 to race and *not* SES, and just 12 to SES on its own, representing a ratio of over 13 to 1.⁹ This indicates,

⁹ Throughout chapters four and five I intentionally refrained from making any quantitative analysis. This was a conscious choice that I believe was more authentic to my Foucauldian approach. For Foucault, what is relevant

if not the complete erasure of SES as a problem of “diversity,” a significantly diminished and invalidated one.

The Invisibility of Socioeconomics

As outlined in this genealogy, particularly in the constructions of the racial minority in chapter four, discourses about race and SES are inextricably entangled. Obviously, this is not a unique feature of independent school discourse, as seen in the discussion of Cruikshank’s (1999) description of the Welfare Queen. The direct correlation drawn between the racial minority and low SES provided an obvious solution to diversifying the independent school: giving financial aid to students of color. But as time passed, more People of Color entered independent schools, and a new regime of truth began exercising control, these correspondences grew less defined. People of Color certainly bear the marks of low SES in discursive constructions of “diversity” in the present, however, since discourse has turned to focus on Whiteness and privilege, images of the Person of Color and low SES students are blurrier. Without its association with a particular racialized subject, SES loses its utility for elites, because on its own SES indicates no particular cultural difference that can be used as a means for learning the technical skills of “diversity.” At the same time, however, it is not hard to conceive of an alternate discursive environment in which high SES, rather than Whiteness, is the pinnacle of the privilege pyramid. To consider such a scenario, we must consider how “diversity” discourse within this alternate regime of truth might impact elites differently than what is seen in the genealogy constructed here. This provokes the essential questions raised by my study: what allows for the relative invisibility of

analytically is not the frequency of statements or whether certain discursive productions might be interpreted as “mainstream” thinking. Instead, what is of interest is what is sayable or possible within a body of statements. That even one textual reference is made is an indication of what is thinkable and sayable in a certain regime of truth, and therefore is relevant to an archaeological inspection. Here, having concluded the genealogy and stepped farther back to take a broader view of the operation of this institutional apparatus and elites in general, I feel it is relevant to consider the relative frequency of different conceptions of “diversity.”

SES in “diversity” discourse, why does this benefit elites, and what would making it visible engender?

The answer to the first question is typically a dismissive one that frames socioeconomic equality as an impossibility in independent schools. Throughout the magazine, the independent school is cast as a financial underdog; in spite of wielding outsized social and cultural influence, their status as non-profit organizations means they do not receive public money to operate (despite their tax-exempt status). The narrative follows that even with their exorbitant tuitions, these schools’ revenue is only about 70% to 85% of their actual cost of operation and they are forced to solicit donations to close that gap. This logic produces a sense of precarity, that the institution is only ever a few tough years away from ceasing to exist. Therefore any resources devoted to financial aid are a laudable act of genuine beneficence, and not a limited gesture toward socioeconomic equality. When low SES students are addressed on their own in the magazine, they are consistently described as desirably “diverse” students, but their recruitment is inherently constrained by the financial model of independent schools. In the period in which racial minorities were conflated with low SES, there was a motivation to stretch budgets to recruit students of color, but as we have seen the percentages of students of color grow since 1999 while financial aid has remained stagnant, this is not a requisite mechanism for racially “diversifying” the school anymore. Perhaps this is a legitimate constraint innate to the independent school financial model, but it also provides a convenient structural barrier that benefits elites by excluding the vast majority of students in the U.S.

The previous rationale for erasing SES relies on a practical logic, but it is validated by a broader regime of truth at work in the U.S. Prevailing discourses legitimize the belief in meritocracy, its moral correctness, and its importance for an equitable and just democratic

society. In the American past, discrimination based on race, religion, gender, and sexual orientation was not just tolerated but legally codified. In the chronological span studied here, these forms of exclusion have become taboo because racial, religious, gender, and sexual identity are commonly understood to be biological and immutable. Because these characteristics are seen as natural, they cannot be acted upon by the mechanisms of the meritocracy; to do so would appear discriminatory and unjust. But SES, understood as a simple matter of fluid resources, is the result of determination. If you work hard, you will achieve the American Dream, but if you are poor, you have nothing to blame but your own laziness. This is not a novel point; Khan (2011) has argued that “from this point of view, those who are not successful are not necessarily disadvantaged; they are simply those who have failed to seize the opportunities afforded by our new, open society” (p. 227-228). But reassessing this analysis from a Foucauldian perspective adds another dimension to our understanding.

What a Bourdieusian appraisal of the contemporary independent school environment and the elites within cannot account for is positive intent. The assumption in statements like Khan’s is that elites are deflecting the (internal or external) perception that they are bad; it is a rejoinder to the accusation they are doing something wrong, that they cling to the myth of meritocracy solely to justify their unearned standing. They are people of privilege who seek to justify their advantages to non-elites and to themselves. But that is not what this study shows is at work anymore. Elites in independent schools now exist in an environment that constantly tells them their privileges are unjustifiable and immoral; embracing White, male, cis, or heterosexual privilege is unthinkable. There likely are individuals who harbor different feelings and perspectives, but the elite produced by “diversity” discourse becomes morally legitimate only by continuously engaging with the technologies of self that distance them from these advantages.

Elites must work at relinquishing their privilege, which begins with internalizing that that privilege is inherently bad.

From a Bourdieusian perspective, this approximates elite suicide. To willingly surrender their privileges is tantamount to abdicating their position at the top of the social hierarchy. But, so far, there is no indication that that resignation is at hand. And this gets to the why behind the erasure of SES in independent school discourse. “Diversity” discourse has constructed a sorting mechanism for good and bad elites. They are all elite because of their privileged identities, but they are distinguished from one another by their orientation to those identities. Bad elites are morally condemnable because they believe their eliteness is natural, defensible, and based on their talent and hard work. Good elites deny their eliteness. They are taught and teach themselves that their privileges are unearned and must be rejected. And they try to surrender their advantages, but they cannot, because they cannot give away their Whiteness and their many other biologically founded privileges. So instead, the attempt is what matters; positive intent is the essence of being a good elite in the 21st century. It may be obvious now why the key to this entire process is the invisibility of SES.

Let us return to the alternate historical contingency in which SES occupies the peak of the privilege pyramid. If the distinction between the good elite and the bad elite is their relative willingness to relinquish their privilege, the distinction between them may not last long in this hypothetical. Whereas racial, gender, and sexual identities cannot be given away, money can. In this discursive context, relinquishing eliteness would be quite simple, and it would upend the circular path to becoming a good elite. In this world elites must make a choice: either embrace their affluence, and become unconscionable, bad elites, or redistribute their wealth and cease to be elite at all. Positive intent and eliteness become mutually exclusive. The implications for

independent schools are similarly radical. To acknowledge SES as a primary concern would generate questions about the ethics of their existence. If there is no longer an acceptable version of the elite, then the whole notion of meritocracy is threatened. If meritocracy becomes an unreliable narrative, how do independent schools maintain moral standing? The idea of selecting certain talented individuals and providing them with bright futures becomes arbitrary without reliable metrics of merit. And if the selectivity of these schools is based on a false premise of meritocracy, the institution can no longer hide the benefits it receives from a financially stratified society. To openly question these foundations is to question their very existence. Better, then, for the institutional apparatus to fill the discursive space with the “diversity” outlined in this study and obscure SES.

Limitations

To be sure, this study is an imperfect one. There is room for debate about how influential and how widely read *Independent School* is, as well as how representative its authorial voice is for the industry. I acknowledge the peril inherent in treating a single publication as the common expression of 1,603 schools who pride themselves on their individuality and autonomy. Additionally, we can reasonably interrogate the depth and richness available from analyzing a published text in order to appreciate material effects for individuals. I attempted to complicate this potential one-dimensionality through the incorporation of secondary data sources, particularly the Instagram accounts and job description. I do acknowledge that this triangulation biases toward the present. Again, while this is not ideal, if this study is concerned with material effects and constructing a “history of the present,” I remain confident that much was learned from such an analysis.

Despite the impossibility of determining the impact of *Independent School* on its intended readership within schools, the enduring run of the magazine suggests that NAIS feels it has a loyal readership who value its existence. While the magazine cannot speak for every one of NAIS's members individually, or even regionally or categorically (i.e. day schools vs. boarding schools), the goal of this study was to better understand how the *institutional apparatus* of independent schools operates as a whole; that distinctions between schools may be lost by looking at one publication may be the necessary sacrifice of a study that is aimed at making clear the broader outlines of how the industry functions. Generalizing from granular case studies in single or a common group of schools has already been the task of much excellent research (Cookson & Persell, 1985; Gaztambide-Fernández, 2009; Khan, 2011), and I believe a study focusing on published materials from a sample of schools spread across the country (for example) would likely have had less to offer the scholarly literature than what I endeavored to do. Most importantly, the goal of a Foucauldian approach to analysis is not to comprehensively measure the frequency of utterances or determine the mainstream; it is to explore what is sayable and thinkable and what is not. Judging the degree of agreement between one author in the magazine and every teacher and administrator in an independent school is not the purpose of this project. That discourse allows for one thought and not another is what I sought to interrogate.

A more important concern is how a Foucauldian Discourse Analysis of *Independent School* focused on the production of “diversity” limited the possible considerations of discursive absences and silences. FDA as a methodology is interested in the reflective surface of discourse and is meant to eschew interpretation. As such, identifying the visible is relatively straightforward. Determining the invisible is more challenging, and is possible primarily through imagining an inverse to what is visible. For example, when the “diverse” subject is produced as

Black, the normal student can safely be read as White, at least in the historical context of the U.S. What are more difficult to determine are absences when entire themes are excluded from discourse.

In the magazine, religion is almost entirely invisible, and therefore both the normal and abnormal are not made explicit. We know that many independent schools were founded with religious affiliations and, as discussed in chapter one, Protestantism has traditionally been a meaningful identifier of elites in the U.S., but within *Independent School*, this is not a meaningful topic of discourse. Perhaps this is a result of a waning interest in religion in the U.S. overall and in independent schools specifically, but it means that the material experiences of Muslims, Catholics, and Jewish people (as just several examples) are silenced, and it is not hard to imagine that these subject positions experience hardships related to their religious affiliations.

Similarly, and perhaps of greater import given the number of individuals affected, is the erasure of difference amongst those termed People of Color, particularly the absence of East Asian, South Asian, and Middle Eastern subjects. This concern is certainly not unique to this study, but the limitations of FDA make it notable here. In chapters four and five, racial others are almost always Black or Latinx; yet we know that international and immigrant students from East Asia in particular have made up an increasing portion of independent school student bodies and the subset termed People of Color. From a discursive perspective, these students seem to exist outside of the relationships that produce “diversity,” but they exist nonetheless.

These absences are notable given the way I have framed much of the final analysis around the absence of SES as a topic of discourse. My findings are certainly influenced by the way I set out to examine the relative treatment of race and class in independent schools, but I believe that the invisibility of this last groups (or set of groups) might reinforce my assertions

about the invisibility of SES. International students by definition have the financial means to pay full tuition and attend schools overseas. At the same time, East Asian, South Asian, and Middle Eastern subjects, while widely discriminated against in the U.S., are most often associated with higher SES, at least in the realm of independent schools. I am unable to confirm these statements with empirical evidence from the study since these subjects are absent, which in turn is why they are not visible in my analysis. However speculative, though, I believe that some of the reason that these subjects are not produced in “diversity” discourse in independent schools is because to do so might force a broader treatment and visibility of SES.

Implications and Further Research

This study arose out of a scholarly interest in elite studies and Foucauldian theoretical approaches as well as my personal experience as a teacher, administrator, and student in independent schools. While analyzing the magazine, I often found my mind veering in two directions. On the one hand, I could see how “diversity” discourse served as an essential technology to the institutional apparatus of independent schools and elites for all the reasons laid out previously. But on the other hand, I could not help but think of all the genuinely well-meaning teachers, administrators, students, and parents I have encountered over the years in this context. My scholarly mind has always found Bourdieu’s (1986) forms of capital and *habitus* logical and compelling, but dissonant with my experience with many of these individuals. Foucault helped bridge the gap for me. On the surface, Bourdieusian and Foucauldian frameworks may seem incompatible, but I am hopeful that this study begins to show how Foucault can expand on the structuralist interpretations of the field of elite studies rather than controvert them.

As such, I think this study is an initial answer to Cousin, Khan, and Mears' (2018) call to broaden the theoretical and methodological approaches to elite studies. In many ways, I believe the findings here further Rachel Sherman's (2017; 2018) work with wealthy New York City parents. The discursive contortions that produce a good and bad elite in independent schools look remarkably similar to the way the parents in Sherman's study constructed themselves as "good rich" by aligning themselves with middle-class values, framing their spending as reasonable and necessary, and distancing themselves from the "bad rich" who are marked by their indulgences. Both Sherman's study and my own indicate that elites are not monolithic and are not organized conspiratorially to maintain their status.

This point is the most relevant to elite studies and is the one that is made possible by adopting a Foucauldian perspective. If the elite is no longer a coordinated aristocracy, to study them as whole is a folly. What offers more scholarly utility is to examine what discourses operate within different elite contexts, what sorts of cultural capital those might produce, and what sorts of *habitus* they assign to elite subjects. In one sense, this study takes a broad look at elites across the U.S., but in another it analyzes a single segment of the elite experience. K-12 education is just one period in the life cycle of the elite subject, and it is one that focuses on preparation for the future. As such, I think more research into how "diversity" discourse operates in higher education and the corporate environment (particularly as both continue to racially diversify) could illuminate how social inequities are maintained in the U.S.

But I would be remiss to ignore the implications of this study for those well-intended colleagues I have known throughout the years. When I began this study, I was still teaching history in an independent school that saw itself as exceptionally socially progressive, even within the landscape of Brooklyn, New York. Pursuing this research alongside casual daily

conversations with colleagues about the good work they and the school were doing to pursue social justice was often jarring. They had internalized an historicism that told them that despite the inequalities they saw around them, progress was inevitable and linear. But my reading of the magazine indicated though the history of the moral universe may be long, it is not an arc, and it certainly is not bending toward justice.¹⁰ They were not being duped by an organized elite, though; this was not elite ideology at work. In fact, one of my greatest curiosities was how people who work within the school, who overwhelmingly lack the markings of being elite themselves, function as a part of the institutional apparatus that upholds eliteness. Again, a Foucauldian perspective helped close this gap. Teachers and administrators occupy the same discursive envelope as students and parents; they are subjects produced by that discourse. I think there is ample and intriguing opportunity to study how teachers and administrators perceive their roles in these systems, why they participate, and what potential for change they believe exists. I also believe that returning to this project in future years to consider what shifts have occurred in a potential Era 7 of “diversity” discourse would be valuable. The contemporary moment seems unsustainable. The irruption that is the Black@ movement is reflective of an inevitable subversion of this state of being. If a future continuation of this genealogy were performed, I suspect that the years 2020 and 2021 would represent a radical break in independent school discourses. Technocracies are rarely durable, as is the erasure of marginalized or dominant subjects. Perhaps in the coming years new “diverse” subjects will proliferate or archived ones will be revived, and the independent school will become a site of discursive struggle. Even since the conclusion of this study, pushback against “diversity” has become much more visible. In New York City alone several prestigious independent schools have had to contend with high-

¹⁰ My apologies to Dr. King (1968) for the crude inversion.

profile and public controversies related to “diversity.” A parent at The Brearley School, an elite, all-girls school, sent an open letter to the entire community accusing the school of the “indoctrination of its students” (Dutton, 2021) and highlighting things like the school’s advocacy of Black Lives Matter and critical race theory as rationales for withdrawing his daughter from the school. At the Dalton School, one of the most selective in the U.S., 120 teachers wrote and submitted to the head of school a list of 24 “anti-racist demands” including the hiring of a dozen DEI practitioners and giving 50% of funds raised by the school to the New York City public school system (Johnston, 2020). This was met with a violent backlash from many parents that ultimately resulted in the resignation of the head of school mid-year. Public actions like these would have seemed unthinkable prior to the spring of 2020, irrespective of how parents might have felt about the activation of anti-racist narratives in independent schools. With such a newly emboldened opposition to the developments of “diversity” discourse the coming years will likely produce an intriguing addition to this genealogy. However, in the present the institutional apparatus has become remarkably successful at adopting marginal changes which prevent existential reflection.

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