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Colorblindness, Comfort, and Amalgamation:
Diversity and Inclusion in California Independent Schools

By

Karen Elizabeth Eshoo

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education

in the

Graduate Division

of the

University of California, Berkeley

Committee in Charge:

Professor Heinrich Mintrop, Chair

Professor Jennifer A. Chatman

Professor Janelle T. Scott

Fall 2015

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Abstract

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Independent schools across the country - which historically have served almost exclusively the children of the elite class - have made significant strides in increasing their percentages of students of color and students who participate in financial aid in recent decades. This exploratory study investigates the manifestation of increased racial/ethnic and socioeconomic diversity in these schools' cultures, and the perception of administrators, faculty and parents of its impact. I first sought to understand how administrators, teachers, and "typical" independent school parents assign value to racial/ethnic and socioeconomic diversity in California independent schools, relative to other priorities they hold. Second, I sought to understand how these actors perceive the extent to which students of color and students on financial aid are fully included in the life of the school, insofar as they are accepted as full members of school communities with unfettered access to all school resources. Since there is a dearth of research on independent schools, particularly on topics related to diversity and inclusion, this study is a first attempt at understanding the meaning of diversity and inclusion for this specific population.

This study found that actors place high value on a positive school culture when choosing an independent school - as high a value as a strong academic program - and that the desire to preserve school cultures that feel "comfortable," "warm," and "nice" persists and deepens once they have joined a school community. While all participants in this study expressed satisfaction in the diversity of the student population in their schools, they rarely described the value of the presence of these "atypical" students from diverse racial/ethnic and socioeconomic background in moral or political terms. Instead, they tended to cast diversity as strong preparation for life in a "real world" that is increasingly globalized and multicultural, and as a value add for "typical" students' social experiences. However, this study also found that, despite these positive attitudes towards diversity, there also existed expectations for a certain level of homogeneity within their communities that served as the glue that holds the school culture together. That homogeneity is characterized by similar academic capability and attitude, as well as behaviors; these factors contribute to the positive school culture, and the value that actors' attached to it. Symbolic boundaries that exist to sort students into in-groups and out-groups and thus silence divergent and

disruptive voices, also contribute to positive school culture. While an expectation of assimilation of “atypical” students is usually rejected as outdated, expectations of amalgamation are clearly present in these school cultures. These attitudes and values have major implications for schools’ ability to build inclusive community, since the very strengths associated with communities of mostly like-minded employees and families leaves little room, if any, for recognition of differences, divergent opinions or disruptive conversations that might spark deeper organizational change.

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my students – from St. Anthony High School in Long Beach, CA, from Sacred Heart Schools in Atherton, CA; from Lick-Wilmerding High School in San Francisco, CA; and now from Vistamar School in El Segundo, CA. They have been a source of inspiration for me since that awkward day in September of 1991 when I walked into a classroom for the first time, and I remain grateful for how much I have learned from you about perseverance, generosity, and rebellion with a cause. Whether you learned from me or in spite of me, whether you shared a little or a lot of yourself, you have helped crystallize my passion and drive to establish school cultures where it is safe enough to be uncomfortable as we strive for justice and equity. Thanks for making me laugh, thanks for challenging me when I was not giving you what you needed, and thanks for always making me want to become the best version of myself possible.

Colorblindness, Comfort, and Amalgamation:
Diversity and Inclusion in California Independent Schools

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Questions about how schools can build equity amongst their students abound in educational research. In the field of multicultural education, for example, researchers have asked how schools can effectively promote access and inclusion for all students, regardless of religious affiliation, socioeconomic status, race/ethnicity, or location (Banks 1993, Ladson-Billings 1994, James, Bruch et al. 2006). Overwhelmingly, these questions focus on how *public* schools might build equity; there is a dearth of research on private schools in general, and certainly in the areas of multicultural education and equity.

This, of course, is not surprising given the elite status that private schools in the U.S. traditionally have enjoyed. According to Gaztambide-Fernandez (2009), this status stems from characteristics shared by most independent schools: a lack of reliance on public funding that leaves them free of public regulations for curriculum and pedagogy; often more expansive and sophisticated curricula than their public school counterparts; students who are positioned to become part of elite social networks because of their proximity to, and connections with, other students of that social status; school plants that demonstrate superior physical conditions and location; and a student population that is both racially/ethnically and socioeconomically homogeneous, most often wealthy and White (Gaztambide-Fernandez 2009). Independent schools are a particular subset of the private school world, and are further described by the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) as being independently governed by a board of trustees – as opposed to a public school board – and supported by a combination of tuition payments, charitable contributions, and endowment revenue – not public funds. They may be co-educational or single-sex, and they may be boarding or day schools, or a combination thereof (NAIS 2012). There are approximately 2000 independent schools in the US, and approximately 1300 are members of NAIS (NAIS 2012). This study will focus on independent schools – specifically in California – as the unit of study.

Independent schools have not had to contend with external mandates to focus on, or improve, diversity and inclusion precisely because they operate outside of the public system and are not beholden to regulations or the same political pressures encountered in this sphere. This is not to say that they are free from powerful normative mandates, of course; nonetheless, this differentiates them significantly from public and charter schools. Furthermore, since they have served a largely homogeneous and socioeconomically elite population, there also have not been internal mandates related to diversity and inclusion in most private schools for much of their history (Powell 1996). They are, and always have been, tuition-based institutions – a fact that might put them at a competitive disadvantage, especially in geographic areas with strong public and charter schools. Independent schools have persisted, however, because parents have been willing to pay for the perceived benefits of such an education for their children as described above. It is reasonable to think that parents who are willing to pay tuition must believe, to a certain extent, that an independent school will provide a superior experience that will give students advantages over students in other schools. Secondary independent schools often boast admission to elite universities, which presumably holds appeal and might be a strong enough reason for parents to choose those schools. Close contact with other similar-status families can help to maintain and even enhance social status, and many parents are hopeful that such networking opportunities will yield increased employment prospects and earning potential

(Powell 1996). While these perceptions of enhanced academic experiences, college placement, and heightened social status may or may not be manifest in any particular school – students in public schools certainly rub shoulders with high status people and are accepted into excellent colleges as well, of course – it is clear that parents are willing to pay for the experiences independent schools provide.

Some progressive independent schools have focused on building more diverse student communities for most or all of their history, usually with marginal success (Stone 1976, Yeomans 1979, St. John 1986, Semel 1992, Powell 1996). Since the 1960's, a few independent schools began to take the lead in increasing their racial/ethnic and socioeconomic diversity in response to the Civil Rights movement in the US (Powell 1996, Heskell and Dyer 2008). Other independent schools followed suit and have taken steps to increase racial/ethnic and socioeconomic diversity as well. According to the Executive Director of the National Association of Independent Schools, the mission statements of the majority of the independent schools that are members of NAIS now contain some language about diversity, whether defined as racial/ethnic, socioeconomic, geographic, or gender diversity (Chubb 2014). Student populations in independent schools now usually include some percentages of Asian, Multiracial, Latino and Black students in their populations, and financial aid programs have been established to support more students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, who are often, but not always, students of color (NAIS 2014). The average enrollment of students of color in NAIS member schools is approximately 28%, and the median percentage of students participating in financial aid programs at some level is approximately 22%. In fact, the percentage of students on financial aid has been slowly but steadily increasing over the past twelve years, the time period for which such data are available (NAIS 2014).

In California, one of the most racially/ethnically diverse states in the nation (Bureau 2011, Bureau 2013), the average percentage of students of color enrolled in California Association of Independent Schools (CAIS) member schools is 37% - well above the national average of 28% - while the median percentage of students participating in their schools' financial aid programs mirrors the national median participation at 22%.

Recent NAIS enrollment data shows that, even as independent schools have become more diverse, the average enrollment in these schools has increased by approximately 5% over the last five years (NAIS 2015). What is not clear from these statistics, however, is how and why independent schools have managed to increase diversity while also maintaining healthy enrollment overall, particularly considering the lack of external pressure to do so.

These data point to some interesting trends, but they say nothing about what is going on these schools. We do not know if a numeric increase in demographic diversity, for example, also means an openness to diversity in terms of school life or school culture. When I use the term "culture" here, I refer to "the underlying stream of values and rituals that pervade schools," and "a set of tacit expectations and assumptions that direct the activities of school personnel and students" (Hinde 2004). It also includes "norms, values, beliefs, traditions and rituals built up over time" (Peterson and Deal 1998). Diversity and inclusion, I argue, cannot simply be about counting distributions of demographic groups. Diversity and inclusion are best understood in terms of how they manifest in the lives of schools, and how they impact the experiences of members of these organizations. The purpose of my study is to explore these phenomena. This study is a first step since so little

research on this topic for this setting is available. Many independent school cultures have developed around largely White and wealthy populations, since those traits overwhelmingly have characterized most independent schools up until the last decade. The manifestation of increased diversity in these schools' cultures, and the perception of administrators, faculty and parents of its impact, is worthy of further investigation.

Purpose of Study

Given the dearth of research in this area, I conducted an exploratory study whose purpose was to describe and map the terrain by examining the attitudes and perceptions of Heads of School, other administrators, teachers, and "typical" parents – White and wealthy enough *not* to participate in financial aid - towards diversity in their schools, and their perception of strategies used in schools to include students of color and students on financial aid into the life of the school. Two research questions focus this exploratory study of beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions. First, how do administrators, teachers, and typical independent school parents assign value to racial/ethnic and socioeconomic diversity in California independent schools, relative to other priorities they hold? Second, how do these actors perceive the extent to which students of color and students on financial aid are fully included in the life of the school, insofar as they are accepted as full members of school communities with unfettered access to all school resources? In answering these questions I hope to make a first attempt at understanding the meaning of diversity and inclusion for this specific population.

I chose to focus specifically on the attitudes of this set of actors because they have significant power to either support or undermine efforts to promote diversity and inclusion; all of them, ultimately, could choose easily to leave any given independent school if they find it does not align with their values and expectations. The practical aim of this study is to help leaders in independent school to better understand dynamics around diversity and inclusion which will be useful for making more informed choices about strategies to expand on diversity and inclusion. Since typical parents and school personnel hold considerable power to either support or undermine changes to school cultures, and since staffing, enrollment and fundraising are perennial challenges for nearly all independent schools, leaders would benefit from a nuanced understanding of how diversity and inclusion is understood by these key actors and how they matter as goals or act as orientations. Independent school leaders, such as Heads of School and other administrators, also would benefit from understanding the perceptions of how "atypical" students - students of color and students who participate in financial aid - are accessing all of the benefits of their schools, whether curricular or co-curricular, academic or social.

As a student in the Leadership for Educational Equity Program (LEEP) at UC Berkeley, my focus is on the application of educational research to inform and enhance practice. Thus, while this study may contribute to the larger body of scholarship around diversity, multicultural education, or school choice for the field of independent schools, it is equally as important to me that the study be useful for administrators and teachers in independent schools who are seeking critical guidance in their own work to build and sustain significantly diverse student populations, and in further developing their school cultures to adequately support these students and provide them full access to all of their schools' resources.

As a teacher and administrator in private schools for the last 24 years, I have been a passionate advocate for diversity and inclusion for all students. My work as a principal and now as a Head of School has allowed me to work closely with colleagues and parents, and this has shaped my interest in their perceptions of diversity and inclusion in the schools they choose. And, since there is almost no research available on the role of these actors' attitudes and the building of diverse and inclusive schools for those of us who work in independent schools, I am hopeful that this research will resonate with my independent school colleagues and provide relevant information that will help shape their own practice in this area.

Structure of the Dissertation

In Chapter 2, I will present a review of bodies of research that are relevant to the research questions for this study. With regard to the question of diversity as a value, I begin with an examination of the ways that independent schools have responded to external and internal factors related to diversity and inclusion. I rely on histories of independent schools for this analysis, since there is no scholarly research from which to draw in this area. This section includes an examination of the evolution of recruitment and retention practices for students of color and students in need of financial aid, as well as some of the strategies that independent schools have used to build effective support systems for those atypical students. In this analysis, I pay close attention to the ways that administrators, faculty and typical parents perceive status, and how these perceptions relate to their judgment of quality of particular independent schools. This analysis also helps to foreshadow the themes that emerged from my analysis of the data in the study, since this body of literature provides a foundation for understanding how these concepts manifest in independent schools in California currently.

Next I present reviews of scholarly literature on these topics in order to build a broader and deeper understanding of the theories that underpin them. In order to better understand the attitudes that parents and faculty bring to bear on their choice of schools, I present an analysis of literature on school choice; this sheds more light on why parents choose "non-public" schools and the role that the diversity of school communities plays in those decisions. While researchers do not actually ask why parents do choose independent schools, the findings from these studies give a fair indication of the self-interest that likely drives parental choice of independent schools and supports what we find in the histories of independent schools. Similarly, there is research on the reasons why teachers choose particular public and/or charter and magnet schools, which points to a different set of values held by teachers, including the desire for a supportive environment. The attitudes of parents and teachers towards diversity as a value that are described in the scholarly literature are echoed consistently by the participants in this study, as we will see in the findings.

Scholarly research on attitudes towards diversity - for example the silence that surrounds issues related to diversity, or the subtle symbolic boundaries that are maintained around inclusion - is helpful in understanding the limits of notions of diversity and inclusion that leaders committed to these values may face in independent school settings. Similarly, research on the effects of so-called colorblindness, self-segregation of minorities in school settings, and tolerance helps construct a more detailed picture of the challenges that independent schools face in building inclusive communities for their

increasingly diverse populations. Understanding the scholarly debate on what constitutes diversity and inclusion also helps to make better sense of the challenges of maintaining diverse and inclusive communities in independent schools. Theories related to organizational change, specifically reculturing for equity and leadership for equity, provide some suggestions for effective ways to meet those challenges.

This body of literature, then, provides the framework for interviews I conducted with the participants from three California independent schools for this research project. One set of questions was designed to elicit responses as to how concerns for diversity and inclusion figured in their choice of school for employment or their child's education, and how these notions played out during their time at their school. My analysis focused on comparing and contrasting the participants' perceptions of their own attitudes towards diversity at those different times. The other set of questions probed participants' perceptions of how atypical students are included in their school communities, and their perceptions of the strategies schools are using, if any, to improve inclusion and impact the school cultures.

In Chapter 3, I describe the methodology I used for this exploratory study of attitudes and perceptions of independent school "executives," and administrators, faculty and typical parents from three independent schools in California. The theories that I developed based on the literature reviewed in Chapter 2 provided the overarching framework for data collection and analysis. Because of the emphasis of this qualitative study on participants' perceptions and attitudes in the context of their particular schools, the study assumes a constructivist paradigm. In keeping with this paradigm, I assume that meaning is socially constructed through experience and interaction, and that knowledge is subjective and based on context (Creswell 2000, Creswell 2009). Therefore, I used grounded theory approaches to analyze data.

My goal is to capture what is going on with respect to diversity and inclusion in the field of independent schools. Towards this end, I interviewed executives in order to understand their perceptions of the diversity and inclusion landscape at independent schools nationally and in California. I treat these spokespersons as informants who are more in tune with the ideological and political environment and are therefore much more aware of the need to legitimate independent schools in an era when diversity and inclusion are touted as universal aims of education. Perceptions of the school participants are presumably much more rooted in practical problem-solving around issues of diversity. In light of those predictions, this analysis allowed me to examine the extent to which school participants' perceptions about diversity and inclusion have evolved from what has been described in the literature, and the extent to which they align with the executives' broader perceptions of these areas.

In Chapter 4, I present findings from the interview study. Using the two research questions, the theories that underpin the recurring themes in the literature, and the themes that emerged from the executives' interviews, I first present the analysis of the executives' perceptions then subsequently present the analysis of the data from each of the three schools. The sections on each participating school include analyses of the perspectives of the Head of School, other administrators, teachers, and typical parents. These analyses clarify variations in participants' perceptions that are specific to their own school cultures, as well as variations between participants from the same groups at the different campuses.

In Chapter 5, I present a final analysis of my findings, and will focus on some of the major themes that emerged from it. First, I will discuss ways in which California independent schools are redefining the value of racial/ethnic and socioeconomic diversity, emphasizing the relative utility of diversity for typical independent school students over concerns about the broader social good or any sort of moral imperative. This set of findings stands in contrast to the evidence in the literature that demonstrated the primacy of homogeneity in independent schools for much of their history, as well as the moral impact that the civil rights movement had on early attempts to increase diversity. Next, I will discuss the cultural categories that are used to place symbolic boundaries around the meanings of diversity and the limits of inclusion. I show that these cultural symbols are valued very highly by Heads, administrators, teachers, and typical parents alike and that they place limits on schools' ability to see inequities that exist in their increasingly diverse communities. Finally, I will discuss the limits of the study itself, the implications for practice for independent school leaders, and make suggestions for further research in the area of diversity and inclusion in independent schools.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

I begin this literature review with a discussion of the ways that traditionally elite independent schools and progressive independent schools responded to external and internal factors related to diversity and inclusion. By *traditionally elite*, I mean those schools that explicitly valued and sought to preserve racial/ethnic and socioeconomic homogeneity in order to leverage it for the benefit of their rarefied population. By *progressive*, I mean those that subscribed to the tenets articulated by educational philosopher John Dewey that focus on child-centered curriculum and instruction, and that explicitly sought to contribute to building democracy – including by increasing diversity in their own schools. While deeply held beliefs related to diversity and inclusion differed significantly between these types of schools, all of them demonstrated very slow changes in their diversity landscapes. Additionally, because both types of schools explicitly valued the preservation of their school cultures – which very much reflected their homogeneous populations regardless of their deeply held assumptions about diversity were – diversity and inclusion were further limited. As I will discuss, the key differentiator in independent schools that propelled early and significant progress in increasing diversity and inclusion was the strong leadership of Heads of School within the context of a given historical situation. These Heads not only embraced the moral and political arguments of their times in favor of diversity for providing access to their schools for a wider range of students, they also allocated financial and human resources to the recruitment and retention of these atypical students.

The next portion of the literature review helps construct a broader understanding of attitudes and perspectives of school leaders, faculty, and parents typical for independent schools and the value they place on diversity and inclusion. This literature also helps illuminate the ways that faculty and typical independent school parents perceive status, both as it relates to socioeconomics and to race/ethnicity. It not only helps clarify the role that socioeconomic status and cultural affinity have played for parents and teachers in their perceptions of quality of independent schools, but also how they play into their conceptions of status as related to their schools of choice. I also highlight the themes that emerge from this literature that shed light on the challenges that deeply held beliefs about diversity pose for the building of inclusive communities. These themes provide a roadmap, then, for understanding patterns that emerged from my findings and analysis. Furthermore, the scholarly research on school choice – specifically the role that student diversity plays in parents’ and teachers’ decisions - buttresses the evidence found in the independent school histories about the value that typical parents and faculty place on socioeconomics and racial/ethnic diversity when choosing a school.

Finally, I discuss the spectrum of attitudes towards diversity and inclusion in independent schools and the research that supports this theoretical construct. Some of the attitudes I describe are informed by the literature on diversity and inclusion in independent schools and the literature on school choice, while other attitudes are informed by scholarship in areas such as critical race theory, culturally relevant pedagogy, and multiculturalism. The discussion of this research provides a framework that will be useful in the analysis of the findings in chapter four. I follow with a discussion of the scholarly treatments of the symbolic boundaries to diversity and inclusion in schools, as well as some

of the strategies for organizational change that researchers have suggested might be useful for improving inclusion – specifically, reculturing for equity and leadership for equity.

Part One: Patterns of Diversity and Inclusion in Independent Schools

Increasing Racial/Ethnic and Socioeconomic Diversity

In the late 19th and early 20th century, most elite private schools unashamedly and unapologetically recruited students from the upper echelons of society, which purposefully ensured that their student bodies remained as White and wealthy as possible. The cost of tuition alone helped to create and maintain homogeneous school communities of economically privileged students (St. John 1986). Prep schools actively marketed their homogeneous communities as major assets, and their admissions programs were designed carefully to attract “correct” kinds of families and discourage applications from those who simply did not fit the appropriate socioeconomic, racial/ethnic, or religious profile (Powell 1996). Jewish families, for example, who could well afford to send their children to a private prep school, would not necessarily be welcome. Even though Phillips Academy in Andover, Massachusetts, was established to serve “youth from every quarter,” the administration interpreted that part of its mission as narrowly as possible in order to maintain the WASP status of the community. As one Head of School wrote in 1935 regarding a Jewish student who had not been admitted, he did not blame the Dean “for trying to keep our school as predominantly Aryan as possible. If we once start to open our doors freely to members of that [Jewish] race, we shall be overwhelmed by applications. As a matter of fact, we have hundreds each year as it is.” The same Head had a similar attitude towards admitting Black students, and wrote in a letter to an alum who had asked about increased enrollment for Black students that there were already two Black students at Andover (out of approximately 700 students in the school). More Black students than this, he reasoned, “might make trouble” (Allis 1979). As one teacher from the elite Choate School described admissions practices based on his experience with boys he knew from the school, saying “I guess they pick the rich kids and the alumni kids” (Prescott 1970).

Other private schools – particularly those without boarding programs – were established as neighborhood schools, and thus developed student populations that reflected the White and relatively affluent makeup of their surrounding towns. The Park School in Brookline, Massachusetts, is a good example of a private school that was designed to be, first and foremost, a “community school” that felt “homey” to the children who attended. They intentionally recruited faculty who would relate well in this context, “Young men and women full of fun and enthusiasm with good background and the best of education who could understand the child’s point of view.” And while there was a stated desire to increase racial/ethnic diversity in the school, nearly all Park students came from WASP or well-to-do Catholic families until the 1960’s (Howland 1988).

The stereotype of the elitist independent school, therefore, grew from the examples set by schools like Philips Andover and Choate – institutions that actively sought to maintain the homogeneity of their student populations. In keeping with the historical times, beliefs and attitudes about homogeneity and exclusiveness were not spoken about in hushed tones behind closed doors, but rather were articulated explicitly to existing members of the school community and prospective families. Other independent schools like the Park School publically expressed a desire for increased diversity in order to best

serve the ideals of democracy, since those schools subscribed to progressive education philosophies. While Andover and Choate focused on perpetuating an exclusive population that would be molded in traditional upper-class values, Park was focused on creating a comfortable and “homey” atmosphere that would be child-centered and warm. Student populations remained largely homogeneous, however, regardless of which types of attitudes and philosophies were most prevalent in a given school. Exclusivity itself was an important – and highly visible – common denominator.

By the 1960’s, however, many traditionally elite independent schools began to show some signs of interest in increasing the diversity of their student bodies. There is some evidence that as early as the 1940’s, some independent schools were taking small steps towards recruiting atypical students. The landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling in 1954 and the burgeoning Civil Rights movement of the 1950’s and 1960’s certainly had some influence on these shifting priorities, particularly in independent schools in the Northeast. Independent schools in the South initially became even whiter in response to the racial integration of public schools, although over time even these schools began to seek more students outside of their typical demographic range (Powell 1996). Concurrently, discussions and arguments about the necessity of increased diversity for moral and ethical reasons, along with a great deal of political savvy in the context of that time period, “merged to create the largest recruitment effort [of Black students] in the history of independent education.” These efforts were almost always led by Heads of School (Zweigenhaft and Domhoff 1991).

Thus, societal shifts forced independent schools to examine carefully their admissions and retention policies, as well as the tolerance level of their communities for such significant changes. School leaders faced not only the challenge of recruiting atypical students and finding ways to fund their matriculation, but also of making strong intellectual and moral arguments that changing the traditional makeup of their student bodies would actually benefit the school - and by extension, the students in it (Semel 1992, Powell 1996, Heskell and Dyer 2008). As we see in Chapter 4, Heads still must try to strike a healthy and sometimes delicate balance between moving their schools forward to keep pace with the current political and demographic landscapes regarding diversity, while still maintaining positive relationships with constituents who themselves might still hold onto more “traditional” attitudes.

In the earliest years of these shifting priorities, most independent schools seem to have defined racial/ethnic diversity almost exclusively in terms of attracting Black students, and sometimes in terms of accepting Jewish students; there is very little evidence that schools considered Latino or Asian populations when re-thinking their admissions processes. Diversification at many private schools in the 1950’s could be described as sprinkling when, as Lloyd (1987) describes, “cautiously, the fashionable prep schools opened their doors to a [B]lack student here, a Jew there, some so fearful of parent reaction that they surveyed parents ahead of time, then tried bravely to swallow their chagrin when a few parents did indeed withdraw their children” (Lloyd 1987). This passive approach to recruitment of students of color is evident in some schools’ histories, which mention matriculation but are vague about any work that went into attracting these new students in the first place. St. John (1986) describes an occasion at an elite “well-known Massachusetts school” when the Head asked the Board of Trustees to approve the admission of six Black students in 1944, and that request was tabled. Six years later, the Board told the Head that

he “could enroll Negro students so long as he did not conduct an active search for them” (St. John 1986). And at the similarly elite Choate in Connecticut, where recruitment efforts for students of color were weak at best, the wife of a faculty member described the situation in 1967:

“...it seems to me that if there are ten blacks out of five hundred and sixty kids, this is a kind of tokenism that Choate can't afford. If it's ever going to be the kind of school that many people would like it to be – I feel this strongly – they've *got* to go out and get more. Instead of sending a scouting party to look for potential Choate students around the swimming pool at the Sewickley Country Club in Pittsburgh, they ought to be looking at the busboys” (Prescott 1970).

Similarly, progressive independent schools demonstrated a lack of initiative in seeking out students from atypical cultural backgrounds. Francis Parker, a well-known progressive K-12 school in Chicago, simply mentions in a “Miscellaneous” section of their historical timeline that Black students first entered the school in 1944, but does not discuss the matter further (Stone 1976). The Park School enrolled their first Black student in 1958, but the school history also does not provide any details about admissions activity, community support, or plans for financial assistance. Since this school had a stated commitment to increasing its cultural diversity, the lack of information points to the possibility that this student's enrollment was likely not the result of active engagement on the part of the school (Howland 1988). And, even though Putney School in Vermont had stated that it was “open to all races” since its founding, they also observed “not a single qualified [B]lack candidate had applied” before the 1960's. The school claimed to make a sincere effort to find Black applicants because of the stated desire for a more diverse school community, but without much thought to those students' experiences when they did matriculate. As Lloyd describes, “[w]hen they did begin to arrive slowly, most felt wholly welcome even if never wholly understood” (Lloyd 1987).

While there is ample evidence that parents held and used their considerable power to slow or stop recruitment of atypical students, there were some notable exceptions to this passive and sometimes fear-tinged approach to recruitment of students of color – with varied results. In 1944, well before the *Brown* decision, Headmistress Charlotte Dunham of the Dalton School in New York City set out to racially integrate her Lower School. By accepting ten Black students to the youngest grades -who were children of professional parents such as dentists and social workers - Dunham created a critical mass of students that would serve as a clear message about the school's values. While four families left the school at that time, and two specifically stated they were doing so “because of the Negroes,” Dalton's consistently full enrollment put most fears of so-called White flight to rest (Semel 1992). Similarly, the Principal at Phillips Exeter Academy in the 1950's, who was known for his “liberal” views on education even as the leader of one of the most selective prep schools on the east coast, applied the school's “youth from every quarter” philosophy explicitly to the school's commitment to actively recruit atypical students. Heskell and Dyer describe the admissions policy that was developed during his term of service:

“The present policy of the Academy is to admit from the list of applicants those boys who give the most promise – as boys and as students. They may be African-American or white, Jew or Catholic, sons of alumni or boys with no previous

Academy connection. They may be one-year applicants or four-year applicants, private school boys or public school boys. By character recommendation, interviews, art performance and various tests the Academy selects the “best” candidates, regardless of class” (Heskel and Dyer 2008).

Here again, it is worth noting the fact that, in contrast to Heads at other elite and progressive independent schools, the Heads at Dalton and Exeter led these efforts to increase diversity. While they did not establish radically new student populations, they took public and visible steps that may have moved the guideposts on diversity in the direction of expanding opportunities.

By the mid-1960’s, private schools began to seek help from external organizations to find and attract more students of color – again, particularly Black students – and many schools did see an increase in the matriculation of students of color as a result. Some schools, such as the Putney School, engaged the services of the Urban League, the Boys and Girls Clubs, the National Scholarship Service, and the Fund for Negro Students to reach students who otherwise would not have known about the school, much less applied (Lloyd 1987). The overwhelming majority of schools – including Exeter, Dalton, Putney, Park Day, Choate, Cambridge, and Phillips Academy Andover, to name a few – partnered with A Better Chance (ABC) for the same purpose. ABC received federal funding in the mid-1960’s to help place urban, often economically disadvantaged students of color in private prep schools, and in colleges and universities down the line. ABC also kept relatively close tabs on the students they placed, following up not just on the students’ academic performance, but also on their social lives at school and back home in their neighborhoods. The significance of these partnerships – particularly with ABC - was twofold: students of color had real opportunities for the first time to attend independent schools, and independent schools began to have to face the difficult reality of building inclusive communities into which they would bring these non-traditional students. Schools such as Exeter, Choate and Shady Hill also established summer sessions for students of color – often partnering with ABC and other organizations to recruit students for those - although none of these programs contributed much to the applications from, or matriculation of, such students for regular enrollment (Prescott 1970, Yeomans 1979, Heskel and Dyer 2008).

While most independent school histories do not provide specific numbers, they do point to a significant increase in the admission and matriculation of Black students once they partnered with ABC (Heskel and Dyer 2008). Exeter was one of the first schools to do so in 1964, and likely because of the strength of its reputation, this helped to demonstrate the power of such a partnership to its peer schools. The fact that ABC sent atypical students to independent schools who generally were deemed on par academically with typical students certainly helped to solidify these partnerships. There is some evidence that this seems to have diminished the legitimacy of the claim that admitting atypical students might result in “declining standards” in these mostly White and affluent communities at bay – claims that helped to justify and maintain homogeneity in most independent schools (Zweigenhaft and Domhoff 1991). Administrators who had expressed confusion and disappointment for years about what they interpreted as a lack of interest of communities of color in their schools began to learn what Exeter had learned years ago: independent schools actually had to work hard to recruit students of color and to *convince* them that they should apply and matriculate. Heads of School at Exeter, on the other hand,

had been directing their Directors of Admissions to cast their nets more broadly since the 1940's, and directly promoted the school to boys of different races and socioeconomic groups who otherwise would never have applied (Heskel and Dyer 2008). With that example, and with the new partnerships with ABC and other similar organizations, independent schools began to realize just how much they did *not* know about recruiting Black students.

Just as racial/ethnic diversity has eluded many independent schools for much of their histories, socioeconomic diversity also has been difficult to establish. Clearly, the fact that these are tuition-based institutions rely overwhelmingly on internal sources of funding has meant that independent schools have been accessible mostly to students whose families could afford the cost. Financial aid programs – albeit small ones that only supported a few students - at independent schools started to become more common in the 1950's, they have succeeded to some degree in increasing socioeconomic diversity. Interestingly, however, most financial aid funds usually went to children of faculty, and since such children come “mainly from non-affluent, well educated, academically committed and middle class white families,” they have been a relatively safe way to increase socioeconomic diversity for independent schools without the accompanying challenges of race/ethnicity (Yeomans 1979, Powell 1996).

As we saw with regards to racial/ethnic diversity, there are notable exceptions of schools that acted earlier to increase socioeconomic diversity. Independent schools like Exeter, Andover, and Lick-Wilmerding High School were founded by philanthropists who envisioned a range of students from multiple socioeconomic groups in their schools, and whose wishes have been interpreted to include students of color as well. Exeter and Andover were created with the expressed mandate to educate “youth from every quarter,” and while their histories do not provide statistics from the earliest days, both schools had “significant” numbers of boys from poorer families as a result (Allis 1979, Heskel and Dyer 2008). Lick-Wilmerding is the result of a merger between two schools founded to educate students in the trades, and later became a college preparatory institution; the school was so richly endowed from its inception at the beginning of the 20th century that it did not need to charge tuition until the early 1970's (Lick 1967, Lick-Wilmerding 2009). Such endowments did not always completely insulate such schools from economic crises like the Great Depression or assorted recessions over the years, and schools sometimes have been forced to increase the number of full-paying students rather than spend more on financial aid in order to protect their endowments. Because the concept of socioeconomic diversity was well established and even accepted as a non-negotiable characteristic of Exeter, for example, such a shift was little cause for celebration for at least some members of the school community.

“The price of this change was the loss of variety that had long characterized the student population and, many believed, benefitted the school...lamented [a] trustee, [it had become] ‘a student body representing families of culture and fine background, [but] It did not contain the wide varieties of American boyhood such as it had years ago. While it cannot be said that the Academy will become another St. Paul's or Groton, the question may be raised whether, even with a great number of boys getting Foundation grants and scholarships, the Academy may not lose some of the democratic complexion for which it has been famous – where the rich boy learns

from the poor boy and where the poor boy is enriched and stimulated by his association with more fortunate boys” (Heskel and Dyer 2008).

While Exeter and Andover have been able to maintain scholarship levels of approximately 30% of their student bodies (Allis 1979, Lloyd 1987), Lick-Wilmerding has been able to keep approximately 42% of its student body on its “flexible tuition program” using a hybrid model of endowment interest draw and tuition revenue allocations (2009).

Many progressive independent schools that were seriously interested in building socioeconomic diversity did not necessarily have the skills or the financial resources to do so. At Park, for example, the Head of School wrote in 1968 that “Park should reach out...to economically disadvantaged children of all colors, races, and religions. But Park should not be a school for the rich and the poor. We believe that there exists a range of families between these economic classes...whose presence would enrich the Park family.” Her letter stressed the need for “a stated philosophy,” a “program concrete in nature,” and “a search for financing.” These goals, it turned out, “were more easily stated than accomplished.” This articulation, however, was a necessary first step for the school and a strong mark of intentionality and purpose (Howland 1988). Putney began offering reduced-tuition to half of its student body as early as its first year of operation; since the school lacked an endowment, “Putney’s rich paid for Putney’s poor” (Lloyd 1987). The school has continued to offer scholarships ever since, but to a smaller percentage of the student body – approximately 30% - in order to balance the budget. Francis Parker offered scholarships to a similar percentage of its student body in its earliest years, but that percentage decreased as the size of the student body increased. By the 1970’s, it had slipped to around 17% of the student body (Stone 1976). Dalton, also a progressive school, espoused a commitment to socioeconomic diversity but struggled to enroll a critical mass of students who could take advantage of the few available scholarships. While the school was attractive to artists and intellectuals who were interested in a progressive education for their children, there is no question that those children were usually just as affluent as children of bankers and stockbrokers (Semel 1992).

Other schools have not made financial assistance a priority, whether they have strong endowments or not. Cambridge, for example, while open theoretically to a wide variety of students, often struggled to afford scholarships because of “financial stringency” (St. John 1986). Choate did not build much of a program until very recently, and seems to have lacked both the administrative leadership and parent support for one. As one Choate parent remarked in the 1960’s, for example, “Why should I support a school that takes a penniless Negro instead of my boy?” (Prescott 1970).

Given the lackluster start that most financial aid programs seem to have gotten at most independent schools, the fact that the median of 22% of students who now take advantage of some level of financial aid shows growth in the area of socioeconomic diversity. Schools like Exeter, Andover, and Lick-Wilmerding continue to lead in this area, and their extremely strong enrollments indicate at least some level of acceptance on the part of faculty and powerful wealthy white parents. The fact that these schools’ academic programs have exceptional reputations, academically and otherwise, certainly might contribute to their success in this area, although the relationship between the strength of these programs and community support for financial aid programs is uncertain given the

literature. In fact, there is little information available about what strategies other schools are using to build and maintain support for their own increases in scholarships.

These data, then, point to a pronounced lack of value for both racial/ethnic and socioeconomic diversity on the part of most traditional independent school parents during most of the last century, and an unwillingness and inability on the part of school leaders to make a compelling case for diversity within their relatively rarefied communities. The schools that actually had some success in increasing the diversity of their student bodies – particularly Exeter – had strong Heads of School who leveraged their school missions to build support amongst trustees first, and put in a great deal of work to recruit non-traditional students rather than waiting for those students to apply on their own. More often than not, however, concerns that parents would pull their children from schools that increased the percentage of students of color – whether based on concrete evidence or on assumptions – kept progress slow in many schools. Lack of funding for financial aid in many schools – whether because of tight budgets or an unwillingness to allocate funds to such programs – also kept most independent schools homogeneous for decades. This literature, then, suggests that parents who have sought out an independent school for their children have placed as little value on diversity – or perhaps even less – than their counterparts who are seeking out a public, charter or magnet school. Additionally, there is some evidence that parents have held considerable power to maintain the homogeneity of their independent schools, and that their influence constrained some school leaders who might otherwise have wanted to increase diversity earlier and more substantially. There is little information provided in these histories about teachers’ perspectives on diversity, although we can infer that those who chose either elite or progressive schools at least understood – if not accepted - the realities of the limited diversity and inclusion found in those communities.

Challenges to Building Inclusive School Communities

The literature on the history of independent schools is helpful in exploring the attitudes and perceptions of administrators, faculty and parents towards inclusion, which are often best understood by studying the strategies that schools have used to build more inclusive communities as they increased their student diversity. There is significant evidence in these histories of the challenges that atypical students faced when they matriculated at independent schools – particularly traditionally elite schools. Such school cultures could be challenging even for typical students, so atypical students usually faced even more intense social pressure. As Zweigenhaft & Domhoff (1991) point out, such schools “encourage not only the development of a collective identity, but the adoption of values that serve to legitimate privilege” (Zweigenhaft and Domhoff 1991). Not everyone succeeds under such pressures; some students, according to Cookson & Persell, become “‘prisoners of their class,’ trapped by a system they don’t accept but can’t escape; and some are destroyed by the prep school environment. This, then, was the world that ABC students entered in the mid-to-late 1960s: comfortable, often luxurious physical environments that did not necessarily make students, especially black students, comfortable, and psychological environments that could be overly bigoted” (Cookson and Persell 1985).

Most ABC students did succeed academically in these early years of matriculation, in large part because the partnership between the schools and the organization yielded a tightly woven safety net of scholastic support. And, there is some evidence that at least at

Exeter, Black and White students forged authentic friendships that lasted well beyond graduation (Zweigenhaft and Domhoff 1991). Still, even though many social problems probably could be traced to ignorance rather than overt abuse in the early years, Black students nonetheless found that they were reminded regularly that they were Black in a White community. As one student described:

“...when you are in a dorm, you *do* stand out. People do notice you, and you get a little paranoid. You are always thinking, ‘These people are looking at me’ – even when they aren’t looking at you...Before I came to Exeter, I never thought much about being black. It’s just something I was...If you’re black and you’re going to a place like Exeter, you have to think about your blackness because you are being reminded about it all the time” (Anson 1987).

Along with the challenges of fitting into a White social culture that did not seem willing or able to change to meet their needs, Black students also had to contend with challenges of going home to their neighborhoods that greeted them with misunderstanding, confusion, or mistrust. Zweigenhaft & Domhoff found that the earliest ABC students managed those challenges well for the most part, although as time progressed such challenges seemed to increase in intensity and frequency (Zweigenhaft and Domhoff 1991).

Even with these early successes in many traditionally elite schools, negative racial stereotypes persisted. In fact, isolated incidents involving Black students –whether major or minor – seemed to carry disproportionate meaning and representation amongst many White parents, students and staff in these independent schools. Take, for example, the story of Edmund Perry, a Black student from New York City who in 1985 had recently graduated from Exeter and was planning to matriculate at Stanford University. Perry was shot by a White police officer on the Upper West Side of Manhattan, and at first much of the press coverage of the incident portrayed it as a clear case of institutional racism that brought down a promising young man of color. After further investigation, it became clear that Perry had in fact assaulted the police officer before he was shot, and that he also had been dealing illegal drugs for some time (Anson 1987). For those who had been skeptical about diversity in independent schools, the Perry case was strong evidence that students of color did not and could never really belong. “The implicit message underlying much of the coverage of ABC graduates who did not make good runs...even with the opportunities provided by elite prep schools like Exeter and Choate, black kids from the ghetto are still, well, black kids from the ghetto” (Zweigenhaft and Domhoff 1991).

Since most of the administrators and faculty at independent schools, like the students they taught, were White and middle-to-upper class, there was a significant empathy gap when it came to understanding the experience of students of color there. And while independent schools often touted their so-called character education programs that supposedly turned out students who demonstrated good grooming, perseverance, and manners, such training did not include strategies for interacting well with students from different racial/ethnic or socioeconomic backgrounds (Howland 1988). As one Head of School at Choate stated, admissions officers would “look for character: sound, balanced boys of integrity who have already heard something about contributing – in their families, on a newspaper route...”(Prescott 1970). While such criteria may have applied to boys

from diverse backgrounds, it mostly likely applied to boys with similar levels of privilege as well. And, as Powell points out, the cultural elitism of many independent schools was based on embracing “higher values” that rejected American popular values – in short, expecting excellence instead of mediocrity (Powell 1996). Because of the insular nature of many independent school communities, increased diversity often became associated with lowered standards, which did nothing to help non-traditional students feel authentically included in the life of the schools.

Progressive independent schools were just as challenged to create inclusive communities as traditionally elite schools, even though they subscribed to the Deweyan philosophy of using schools to build democracy and drive social reform. Since many such schools were essentially neighborhood schools that catered to the families who lived nearby, their school communities naturally reflected the WASP-y, relatively wealthy populations in their cities and towns (Stone 1976, Lloyd 1987, Howland 1988, Semel 1992). The tension between philosophical commitments and practical realities became part of the fabric of these institutions. As Semel points out:

“[t]hat their populations were often composed of children of the affluent upper middle classes, while posing a political problem for progressives, was nonetheless a reality. Thus, any discussion of the history of the Dalton School as a progressive school must take into account this progressive paradox. Can a school that educates affluent children, however artsy and intellectual, truly educate for democracy?” (Semel 1992)

While pedagogy and curriculum certainly furthered the progressive cause in these schools, the makeup of the student bodies did little to demonstrate practically the most basic of progressive ideals.

As we saw in the previous section, independent schools began to allocate financial and human resources to the recruitment of atypical students beginning in the 1960’s, and over time demonstrated some success in increasing the number of atypical students in their communities. However, resources to provide guidance for these students once they arrived usually were weak if they existed at all. The histories do not point to any pattern of advocacy or other forms of support for atypical students until very recently, nor do they describe any education for school communities about diversity and its impact on those communities. Rather, once students were admitted it seems that the schools usually assumed they required the same support as typical students – no more and no less. As we will see in Chapter 4, the executives in this study point to a need for community education and for targeted support for atypical students, as do some administrators and faculty at the participating schools. However, the participants who I consider to be the outliers amongst the school participants described the invisibility of the challenges that atypical students face in their school as they perceived it, noting implicit expectations for assimilation and a lack of desire to understand the different experiences of these students.

In fact, in many independent schools during the earliest years of their diversity efforts, faculty and staff focused on building a so-called “colorblind” school community that did not explicitly recognize differences. At Cambridge, for example, administrators and faculty felt that discussing students by categories rather than as individuals was contrary to the spirit of the school (St. John 1986). Similarly, most students and faculty at Putney were

unaware of any common or collective experiences of non-traditional students for decades because it was never considered or discussed publically. Lloyd describes this situation as fraught with “the perils of an innocence that pretended no differences existed,” where students might be unhappy or even in pain, but that these conditions would be invisible to most of their teachers and peers. Naïveté could hurt others, as one WASP alumna wrote: “Not knowing prejudice, we did not appreciate the pain of it” (Lloyd 1987). Often, the smooth running of the school masked the separation between typical and atypical students, which went unnoticed by most faculty and staff. At Shady Hill in the 1960’s, for example, “[b]ecause there had been no overt hostility, race relations in the school had not been presented to [the principal] as a problem, but he realized...that both groups were, in fact, depriving themselves of the opportunity to be better acquainted” (Yeomans 1979).

As we will see in Chapter 4, prioritizing the “smooth running of the school” over discussions of diversity and its impact remains a characteristic of independent schools now. The importance of a nice and comfortable community often precludes administrators, faculty and parents from asking probing questions about the experiences of atypical students, since responses might disrupt that culture. The executives discussed the dangers of “papering over” differences within schools, which can serve to marginalize atypical students, while the outliers in each of the participating schools described what they perceived as systematic dismissal of the different – and oftentimes negative – experience of atypical students in the school. These comments are juxtaposed with those of the other participants, who perceive their schools to be integrated, not assimilated, and who usually interpret the lack of complaints from atypical students as evidence of their full inclusion in the life of the school and their satisfaction with their experience.

There do seem to have been some shifts in focus over time in many independent schools especially as schools worked to increase the critical mass of non-traditional students in their communities. The Board of Trustees at the Park School established a Multicultural Community Committee as early as 1977 to examine the “climate” of the school that made it difficult for students of color to feel fully included in the community. The work of this committee resulted in improved practices in the Admissions office to develop stronger relationships with families of color, and the Board always has at least one member of color as well. However, the challenges of attracting new families of color – as well as faculty of color – remain (Howland 1988). Dalton focused mostly on learning differences rather than racial/ethnic or socioeconomic differences until the late 1980’s and early 1990’s, when the school community developed a “consensus opinion that the student body must be made aware of what it is like to be a minority student at Dalton; also that the student body addresses issues of multiculturalism” (Semel 1992). Exeter, often a leader amongst its peer schools in these regards, took concrete steps towards institutionalizing multicultural awareness and education. In the late 1980’s, the Head of School stated that “[i]t is no longer feasible for kids to graduate from the old Ivy League and walk out into a world that is going to be WASP and Anglo-Saxon. It isn’t there anymore, so it is up to us to prepare them for that world.” She elevated the Associate Dean to Dean of Multicultural Affairs, who would bear responsibility for monitoring the experience of students of color, and for leading the community in the study of multiculturalism in mostly extra-curricular programs. This gave rise to increased vigilance and action on campus to respond to acts of hate and intolerance; it was no longer the prevailing belief that just because “different” kids are there that “they are doing just fine” (Heskel and Dyer 2008). And while many

independent schools now have Directors of Diversity or an equivalent on staff, Lick-Wilmerding tried out new position for a Dean of Equity & Instruction who would oversee multicultural education in both the curricular and extra-curricular programs. As the Assistant Head of School wrote at the time that the position was established, “[i]n short, we know that good teaching is necessarily equitable teaching – that which holds all students to the highest standards, ensures that they are fully known by their teachers, advisors and coaches, and is characterized by teaching methods that recognize and capitalize on this knowledge to create dynamic classrooms” (Eshoo 2010).

Most independent schools have weakly associated excellence and character education with multiculturalism and diversity – if at all - until recently. Schools like Exeter and Lick-Wilmerding that have had more success in building a critical mass of non-traditional students have evolved their staffs and programs much more deeply than schools that have had less success. For those independent schools with smaller populations of non-traditional students “multiculturalism...[can] be safely embraced as desirable, democratic and undivisive because the programmatic and financial efforts of embracing it [are] minor” (Powell 1996). Thus, small-scale and relatively superficial efforts suffice in many independent schools because, quite simply, they can.

These histories also indicate that, when atypical students did matriculate at independent schools, the school cultures remained largely unchanged and thus, less than accommodating. Even once independent schools began to target underrepresented groups for admission, their numbers did not reach critical mass. Such students usually were expected to assimilate in their new school communities, often without explicit guidance about how to do so. As in the case of Edmund Perry, atypical students - who usually were Black - who faced challenges or experienced significant failures became symbols of the dangers of integration in independent schools. And programmatically, noblesse oblige usually provided the foundation for most charity and service programs, which usually helped to perpetuate the pattern of students’ separation from communities of color and lower socioeconomic status.

Elite attitudes and school cultures, then, were perpetuated by processes that relegated these lesser know groups to “other” status. Stereotypes could persist because they usually went unchallenged – either theoretically or empirically. This study not only explores actors’ perception of diversity and inclusion in their schools, but also enables practitioners to identify strategies that help to shift school culture to build greater community support for diversity and more inclusive school communities.

We must consider, then, the other factors that might have similar or even greater impact on actors’ attitudes in independent schools, and that over time a “new normal” might become established that has little to do with the direct work with school personnel. While there is compelling evidence that independent school parents can be expected to have little to no interest in choosing a school that promotes diversity and inclusion – which will be demonstrated further in the following section - there is also evidence that the independent school diversity landscape is starting to change. The overwhelming majority of independent schools include some language about building diversity, access and/or inclusion in their mission statements, and some independent schools actually have been successful in building diverse student bodies.

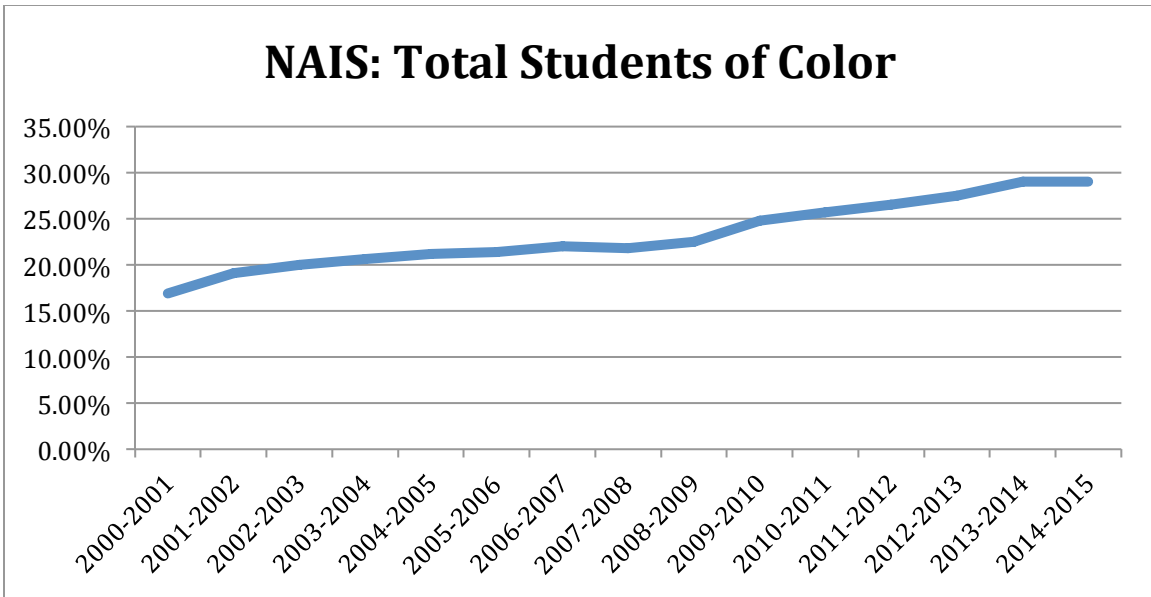
Since this literature is mostly focused on independent school histories prior to the last decade, it raises questions related to current attitudes and perceptions of diversity and

inclusion in independent schools now that will emerge from my analysis of the findings in Chapter 4. First, I will examine the perspectives of the three executives on the state of diversity and inclusion across the broad landscape of independent schools, specifically with regard to the ways in which they perceive that administrators, teachers place value on diversity and the extent to which independent schools are building inclusive communities. The themes that emerge from this analysis, then, provide the framework for exploring the other participants' attitudes and perspectives. I first examine the way that administrators, faculty, and typical parents articulate the value they place on diversity in their independent schools now that most independent schools have become more racially/ethnically and socioeconomically diverse during this last decade. Next, I examine the ways in which the power structures at the participating schools – especially the power held by typical parents and the Heads of School – seem to impact diversity and inclusion in those communities. In particular, because the leadership of Heads usually has been a key reason why some schools were able to make progress early on, I will examine the role of the Head in managing diversity and inclusion and making the case for those values within the community – including with typical parents who do not embrace those values.

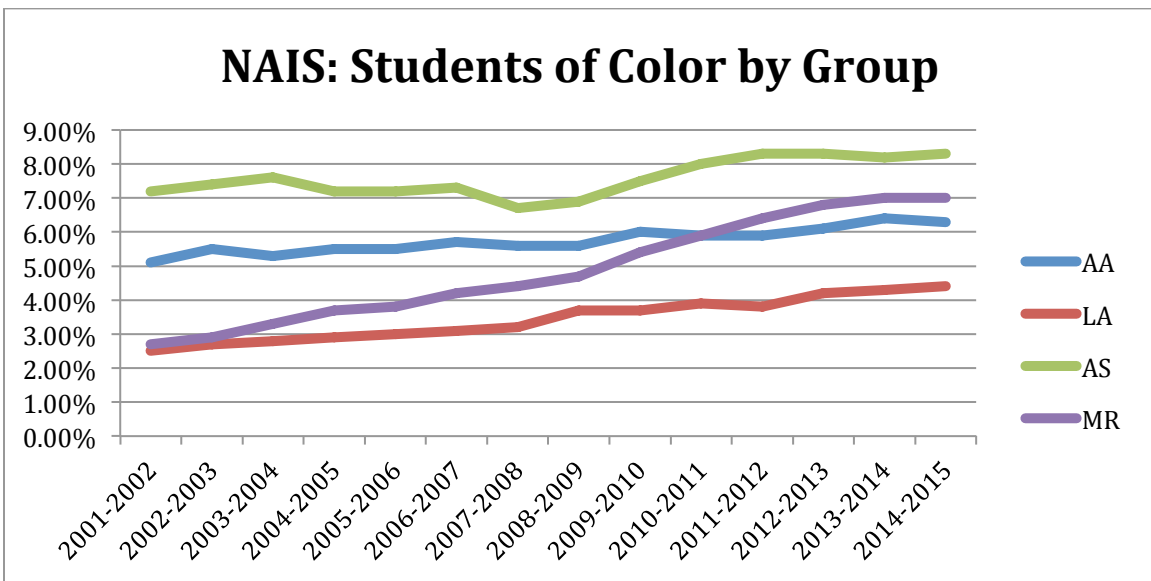
Current Trends

The data on independent schools that NAIS gathers and analyzes each year is based on the voluntary submissions from member schools. While all member schools are encouraged to participate fully in data collection, not all schools submit responses to all questions. Nonetheless, the data that have been collected over the last 14 years provide a useful snapshot of enrollment and financial aid shifts in independent schools across the nation. The data are reported separately for day and boarding schools, and also include aggregated data for all member schools. There is no distinction between religious and secular schools available.

During the 2014-2015 school year, the latest for which statistics are available as of the writing of this paper, 1098 member schools participated to some degree in the annual statistical survey, of which 903 identified as day schools and 195 identified as boarding schools. These most recent statistics show that students of color make up 29% of total enrollment; Asian students are the most well represented group (8.3% of the total population), followed by Multiracial students (7%), African Americans (6.3%), and Latinos (4.4%). A median of 22.5% of enrolled students participate in their schools' financial aid programs, and the average grant covers 47% of the actual tuition cost. While these numbers may not point to high levels of racial/ethnic and socioeconomic diversity in independent schools, a look back at the last fifteen years of data shows steady increases in both enrollment of students of color and student participation in financial aid. The following graph demonstrates that steady increase in enrollment of all non-White student groups since 2000-2001:



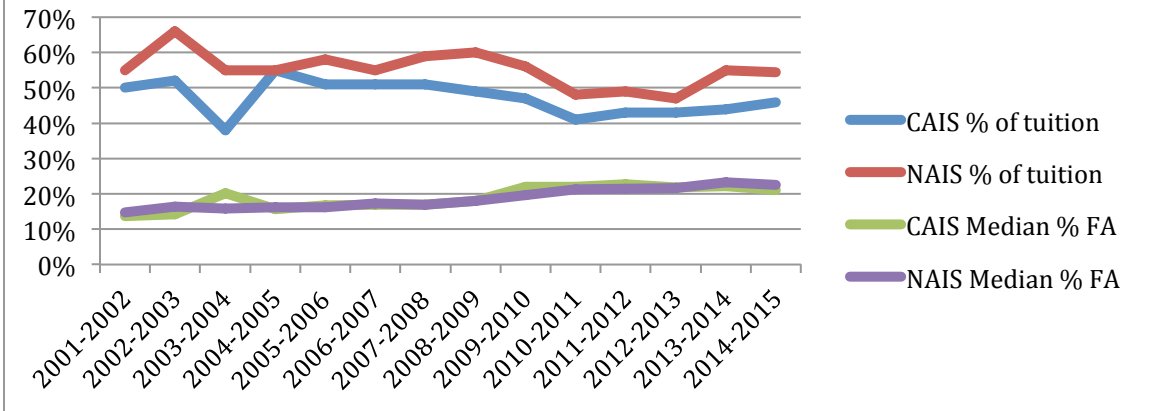
The following graph shows the increases in racial/ethnic diversity by group since the 2000-2001 school year:



The steepest increase has been amongst students who identify as Multiracial, while African American and Asian students have grown the most slowly. And while the reported percentage of Latino students has almost doubled, that group remains small considering they constitute about 16% of the total US population.

Both nationally and in the state of California, the median percentage of students participating in financial aid has increased steadily as well. Furthermore, as the percentage of participants has risen since 2000-2001, the average grant has shrunk to cover less tuition. In fact, the statistics for both groups are striking similar for this time period:

CAIS-NAIS: % Tuition Covered & Median % FA Participation

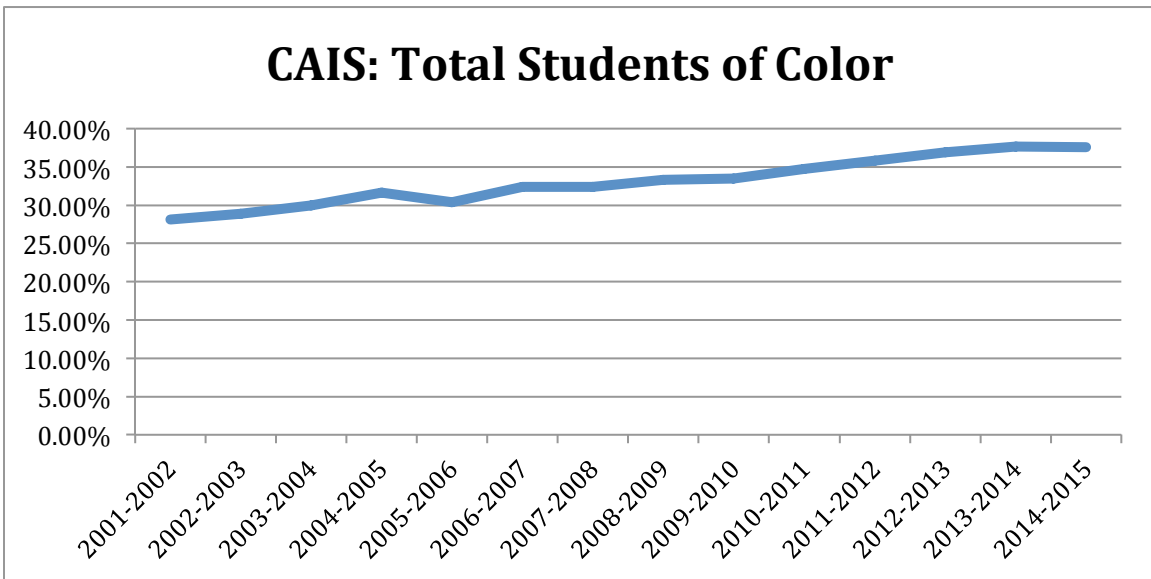


Since more students participate at lower levels than before, this is an indication that schools are working to stretch the financial resources they have to meet the needs of a broader group of students than in the past, and likely are giving smaller grants to more students as a result.

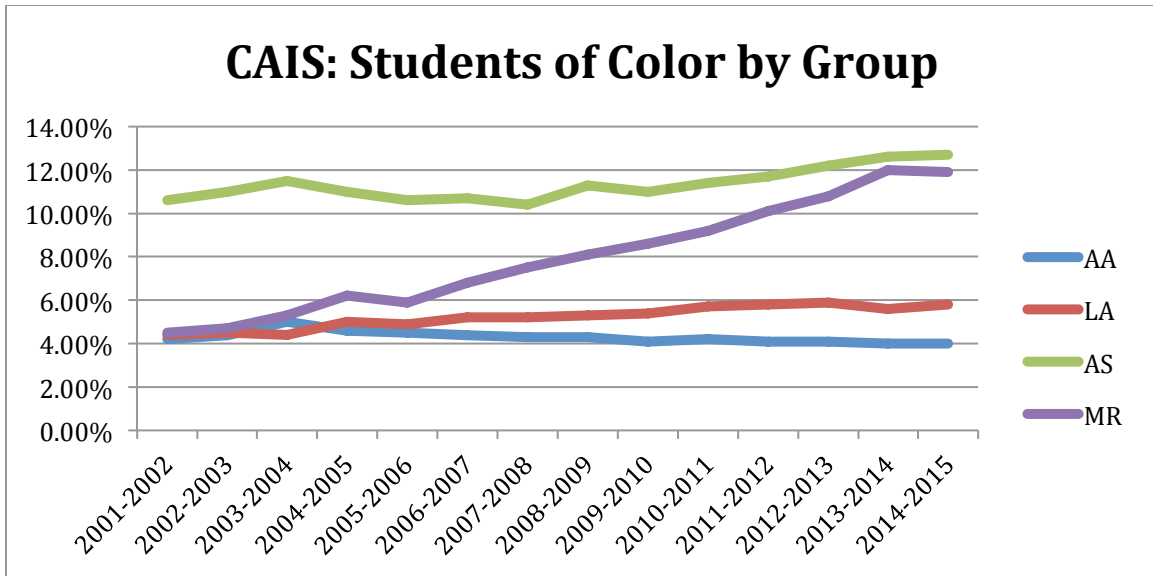
CAIS relies on NAIS for its demographic data, so the statistics presented here reflect the responses of CAIS member schools who participated in the annual statistical surveys administered by NAIS. In 2014-2015, 160 of 215 CAIS member schools participated in the survey, but again, not all schools answered all questions in the survey.

Similar to the national landscape, there has been a slow and steady rise in the percentage of students in California independent schools who identify as people of color since 2001-2002:

CAIS: Total Students of Color

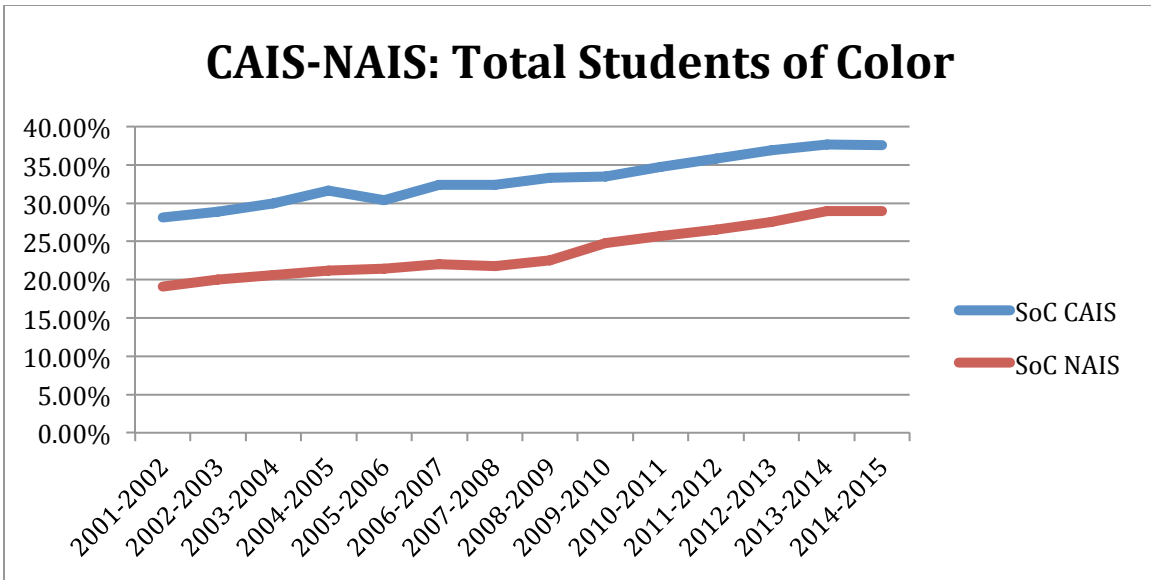


When examining that increase by the top four non-White groups, some interesting trends emerge:

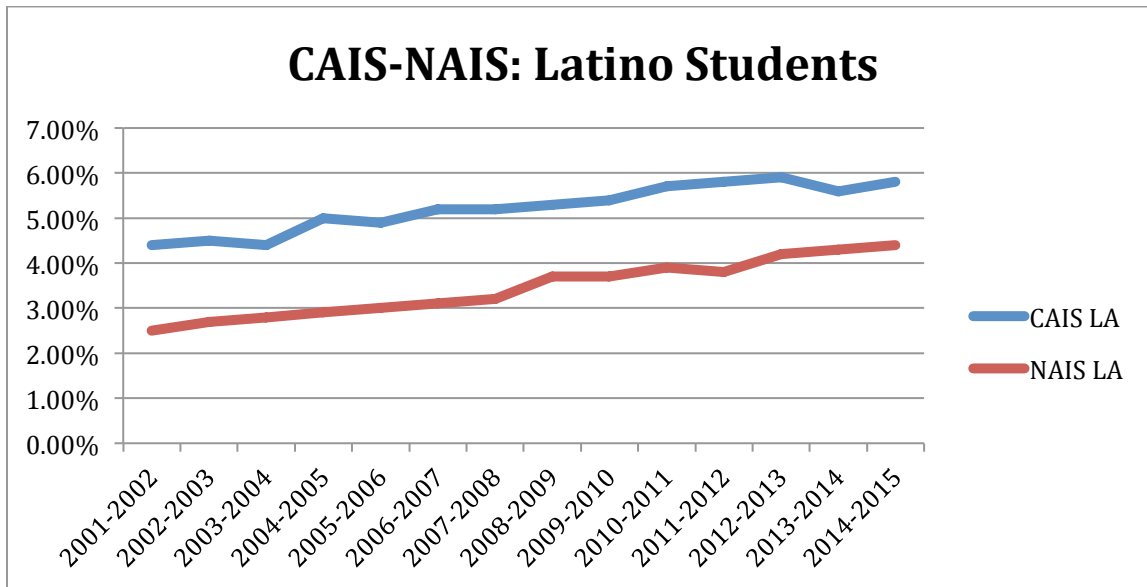


African American enrollment has decreased slightly over this time period, just as that population has shrunk proportionally in California during a similar time period (Walters 2011). On the other hand, in a state that is now majority Latino (Gutierrez 2014), the enrollment of Latino students has grown but remains low compared to other groups. The sharpest rise in enrollment has occurred amongst students who identify as Multiracial – who are catching up quickly to students who identify as Asian - which is not surprising given the increase in people in California and the nation who identify as such (Yen 2009). Unfortunately, at this time NAIS does not ask its participants to capture the different identifiers of those in the Multiracial group, so we cannot determine the degree to which the other groups might be represented within that Multiracial group; such data would provide an even more nuanced understanding of racial/ethnic diversity within CAIS schools.

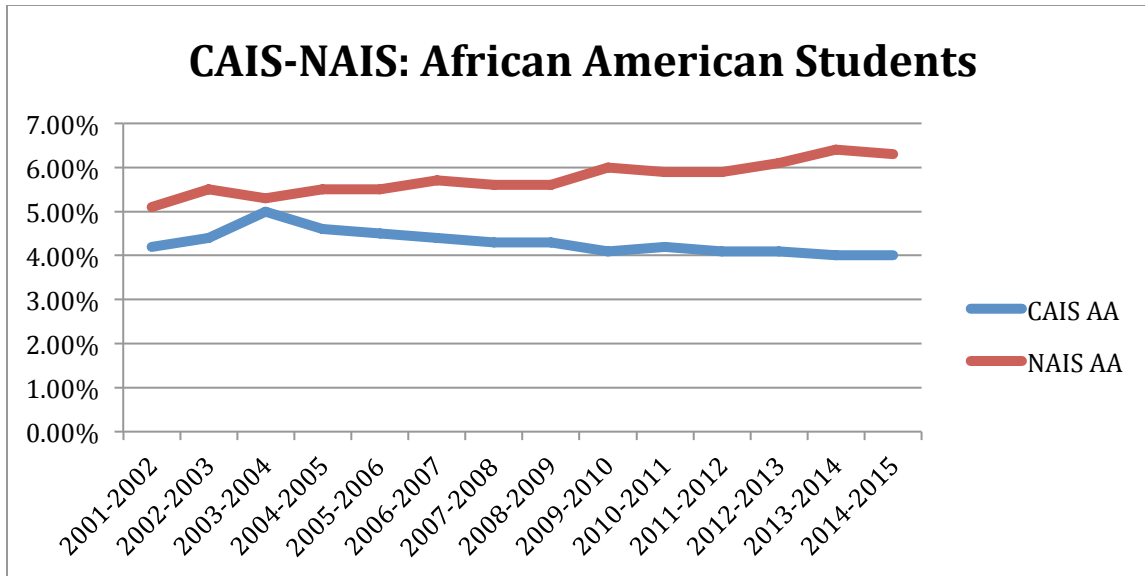
When comparing the enrollment changes of these key groups nationally with California, then, there is no question that the trends are largely similar. California schools, of course, reflect the overall diversity of the state since enrollment percentages of the top groups tends to be higher than the national averages. When taken as a whole, for example, enrollment of students of color in California shows the same trend but manifests at higher levels:



Trends in the Asian and Multiracial groups look very similar in their trajectories, and largely reflect national and state population trends as well. On the other hand, while Latino enrollment has risen slowly and steadily nationally and in California, it remains low relative to the overall population:



However, there is some evidence that the African American population is dropping nationwide and in California, but only California independent schools seem to be reflecting that decline:



In summary, racial/ethnic and socioeconomic diversity have increased in independent schools nationally and in the state of California since 2001-2002. California certainly boasts higher percentages of students of color than the national averages, which is a reflection of the diversity in the state to a large degree. However, the percentages of African American and Latino students are still low relative to the general population, even in California. And while the percentage of students who participate in financial aid has risen at the national and state levels over this time period as well, this has coincided with a decrease in the amount of tuition that is covered by financial aid.

Part Two: Diversity as Value in Choosing Public, Magnet and Charter Schools

In developing a broader understanding of the value parents and faculty place on diversity and inclusion, it is helpful to examine the evidence provided in research on school choice. It has been demonstrated by multiple researchers that parents consider many factors besides race/ethnicity and socioeconomics when choosing a school of any kind for their children. Religious preference has been shown to be the most reliable factor that impacts parental decision-making, in that parents who state their religious preference end up enrolling their children in religious schools very often (West 1988, Schmidt 1992, Buddin, Cordes et al. 1998, Betts and Fairlie 2001, Yang and Kayaardi 2004). Yang & Kayaardi also demonstrate that while the location of a school plays into parental thinking, its impact is lower than the other factors (Yang and Kayaardi 2004). Interestingly, while parents across the board indicate a desire for academic quality, it often is not as significant a factor in parents' decision to choose a school for their children. Manna (2002) showed that even when asked about such basic indicators as teacher performance, school discipline, or the amount their child had learned in previously attended schools, parents left those schools even though they expressed significant levels of satisfaction in these areas. This leads Manna to conclude that these factors are not as important as one might think (Manna 2002).

The literature that focuses specifically on parental choice of magnet and charter schools provides some more useful insights on the question of the roles of race/ethnicity and socioeconomic status, especially since parents usually have to apply to a charter school or enter a lottery for a spot; this is more closely aligned with admissions processes for independent schools. Some studies suggest that given the choice, White parents will seek out homogeneous schools for their children. Garcia (2008) examined enrollment data and found that White students in particular often left their well-integrated local schools for more homogeneous charter schools. While families often claim that they are leaving in search of a better academic program, such programs in the charter schools the children later attended demonstrated similar performance levels as they ones they left (Garcia 2008). Cobb & Glass (2003) also found significant examples of segregation in charter schools. Their research highlights examples of schools located in a mostly minority neighborhood that have mostly White students, which serve as some of the most obvious examples of severe separation that cannot be attributed to residential segregation (Cobb and Glass 2003). Saporito (2003) examined segregation patterns in magnet schools, and his findings are similar. When White families and families of higher socioeconomic status have a choice, they tend overwhelmingly to avoid schools with high percentages of non-White children; these schools often struggle with safety and academic problems as well. It is the choice itself, he argues, that ultimately causes re-segregation to occur (Saporito 2003).

Some research shows no significant difference in importance between race/ethnicity and socioeconomic status for parents who are searching for a school (Goldhaber 1999), but researchers have demonstrated that the demographic makeup of student populations holds significant value for such parents. Even with increased opportunities for parental school choice, not all parents actually engage in much, if any, search process, and researchers have examined search processes in order to determine general patterns and differences between particular groups of parents. Buckley and Schneider (2003) studied the relatively small group of parents who are willing to engage in a multi-step school search process, whom they refer to as “marginal consumers,” and present evidence that these parents often engage in some “comparison shopping” amongst available school options. Marginal consumers are most likely to search first for - and thus likely prioritize - information on student population, and then move onto information on academic quality. This research does not utilize any interview data and thus does not provide reasons why parents choose to search this way; rather, it focuses on the patterns that emerge from an analysis of marginal consumers’ search histories (Buckley and Schneider 2003). Saporito & Lareau (1999), however, found explicit evidence that families use race as a key determinant in choosing a school. According to the results of quantitative and interview data from a large sample of families of 8th graders, White and Black families use different criteria when choosing a school for their children - Whites tend to favor first the schools that have larger White populations, even if they do not demonstrate high levels of academic achievement or safety, while Blacks look for schools with lower poverty rates before other factors (Saporito and Lareau 1999). Rapp & Eckes (2007) found similar evidence of this kind of preference amongst parents who made the choice to enroll their children in charter schools (Rapp and Eckes 2007). In other words, this research seems to indicate that race and socioeconomic status come before performance in the hierarchy of decision criteria when parents chose a school. This research is strikingly similar to what

was described about typical parents' attitudes in the independent school histories, particularly parents who chose traditionally elite schools.

Some researchers have shown that socioeconomic status – of parents themselves and of the student populations at the schools they consider – is the most important factor in parents decisions (Yang and Kayaardi 2004). Wamba & Ascher (2003) found that parents of higher socioeconomic status were more likely to perceive of themselves as “able choosers,” and thus felt empowered to search for options of charter schools regardless of their level of satisfaction with their current school (Wamba and Ascher 2003). Goldring & Phillips (2008) engaged in interviews with parents who had submitted at least one application for one child to a magnet school in Nashville, and found that only a tiny percentage of them considered leaving their current public school because they were completely dissatisfied with it. For those families who considered a private school (including an independent school), their socioeconomic status, informal networks with other parents, and desire for involvement in their children's school produced the most significant pulls in that direction (Goldring and Phillips 2008). Manna found the same to be true in Milwaukee, and showed that even when asked about such basic indicators as teacher performance, school discipline, or the amount their child had learned, parents expressed significant levels of satisfaction despite the fact that they left those schools. (Manna 2002). The idea that higher status families who have access to high performing public schools might choose an independent school, and why factors other than academics and teacher quality – perhaps a “homey” school community - tracks closely with what we saw above in the independent school histories as well.

While the literature on parent satisfaction with their school of choice is quite limited, Goldring & Shapira (1993) demonstrated a connection between parents' satisfaction with their school of choice and their feeling of empowerment and involvement in the school. However, they also point out that parents of lower socioeconomic status are more likely to feel satisfied than their higher socioeconomic status counterparts. In Goldring and Shapira's study, all parents are given the same space to get involved in the schools, but it is the higher socioeconomic parents who would like, it seems, to be allowed to be even more involved in the school than they are (Goldring and Shapira 1993). And, as we saw above, since high-status parents have always been the majority in independent schools, this desire to be involved often has manifested in the power and influence they can exert to promote or stifle change within their school communities.

It seems that, in addition to religious affiliation, socioeconomic status probably has more to tell us about parents' desire to choose a non-public school than any other factor. Race/ethnicity of schools' student population likely has an impact as well – mainly because parents look for more homogeneous student populations rather than heterogeneous ones - although likely not quite as much as socioeconomics. Ultimately, the literature points to a concern amongst parents who engage in search processes about status in general, more so than traditional markers of academic excellence. The tendency for parents to prioritize status over performance in public, magnet and charter schools raises interesting questions about the ways that typical independent school parents might perceive and understand status in their independent schools. While we have seen that typical parents in traditionally elite independent schools strongly perceived racial/ethnic and socioeconomic homogeneity to be a marker of status and quality, we will see that the parent participants

in my study seem to perceive value in *assimilation* within their more diverse school communities.

Because I also consider the value that faculty place on diversity in their independent schools, it is important to consider research on the factors that they consider when choosing a school as well. Researchers often have studied why and how teachers choose public, magnet and charter schools in the context of research on teacher retention and burnout. Retention of strong teachers is a challenge for many districts across the country, although for districts that serve lower socioeconomic status populations – which also tend disproportionately to serve people of color – this challenge is much more pronounced (Moore Johnson 2003). While there is some evidence that demonstrates that teachers and administrators might be attracted to schools that focus on underserved populations, researchers have demonstrated that teachers are most likely to stay at schools that provide reasonable teaching assignments, basic support, accessible and effective leadership, and opportunities for professional development. Even those who place value on racial/ethnic and/or socioeconomic diversity in their search for a school are unlikely to remain in their positions if they feel that they are not able to teach effectively in the school environment (Brouwers and Tomic 2000, Moore Johnson 2003, Neufeld 2014). There is also some evidence that trust between teachers and their students, and between teachers and their principals, is an important factor for retention and the avoidance of burnout (Brouwers and Tomic 2000, Price, Nienke M. Moolenaar et al. 2015). While these studies do not delve as deeply into the choice process for teachers as the previously discussed studies do with parents, they point to the importance of support, trust within the school community, and compliant students for teachers when they choose a school.

It at least seems reasonable to expect that the racial/ethnic and socioeconomic profile of an independent school will have some impact on parents' decision to have their children matriculate in the end, although along with other factors. As we have seen, race/ethnicity and socioeconomic status have been tightly connected in independent schools to the point of being almost indistinguishable; overwhelmingly the populations have been White *and* wealthy, and the most traditionally elite schools remained as such until relatively recently. In fact, there is evidence that this kind of homogeneity was appealing to typical parents and thus was preserved intentionally. Because independent schools are more diverse now, this research raises some questions about the importance of diversity for typical private school parents when they consider independent schools. One executive sees a future for independent schools in which typical parents will demand racial/ethnic and socioeconomic diversity, which certainly is a departure from what we see in this literature and the literature on independent schools. The executives' optimism stands in contrast to the body of research reviewed here, which suggests a strong propensity on the part of parents to choose schools that keep them with members of their own race and/or socioeconomic class. The executives' optimism also stands in contrast to the parents in this study; as we will see below, they gave no direct indication that they valued or prioritized diversity and inclusion when searching for a school. The implication for independent schools that are trying to increase diversity, then, is that such actions may drive traditional families to more traditionally homogeneous schools.

What both the independent school histories and the scholarly literature in this area demonstrate is that status matters to *all* parents regardless of their own socioeconomic status. However, it is clear that the lower the socioeconomic status of the parents, the more

likely it is that factors like safety and academic performance will play a larger role in their decision making process. The higher the socioeconomic status of the parents, the more likely it is that they will seek out schools that provide high-status communities, while treating factors like safety and academic performance as givens. The attitudes of high-status parents in the public system, as described in the scholarly literature, are remarkably consistent with those described in the independent school histories.

Part Three: Conceptualizations of Diversity and Inclusion

I follow with a discussion of the scholarly treatments of the symbolic boundaries to diversity and inclusion in schools, as well as some of the strategies for organizational change that researchers have suggested might be useful for improving inclusion –

In this section, I discuss a spectrum of attitudes towards diversity and inclusion in schools and the research that supports these theoretical constructs. These conceptualizations of racial/ethnic and socioeconomic diversity and inclusion guide my analysis of the empirical material I gathered for this study. I first discuss the attitudes that characterized elite independent schools before the civil rights era, which emphasize homogeneity and the perpetuation of class, political, and social power structures that reproduce inequity. At the other end of the spectrum I discuss attitudes that are undergirded by critical theory, which emphasize the deconstruction of those power structures that have been designed to deny equitable access to education, political influence, and economic opportunity. Finally, I discuss a set of attitudes I associate with multiculturalism and tolerance, which falls somewhere in between those two ends on the spectrum in that it is characterized by openness to and tolerance for diversity and inclusion, but also by ignoring structural inequality. The concept of symbolic boundaries helps me capture the limits people put around full inclusion without being outright exclusionary. Lastly, I discuss concepts and strategies that might reduce the impact of those symbolic boundaries in schools - specifically, reculturing for equity and leadership for equity.

Attitudes Towards Diversity and Inclusion

The Primacy of Homogeneity

The first set of beliefs and attitudes that I consider revolves around the idea that homogeneity and exclusivity are justified and deserved, marking superior culture and merit. We saw how this belief played out in traditional elite schools which sought to enroll almost exclusively the children of the most privileged families. Cookson and Persell's book (1985) on elite education, *Preparing for Power*, is an indication of the intentionality and explicitness of the aims of these schools to deny access to other classes and cultures - not only to their schools, but also to subsequent higher education and other social and economic opportunities that would flow from the personal connections and cultural capital that would be gained from partaking in elite schools (Cookson and Persell 1985).

Clearly, such attitudes are no longer considered mainstream even in the most well heeled elite institutions. Kahn (2011) for example, describes that the children of the wealthiest legacy families at St. Paul's, the school he studied, are often not well-liked by faculty or peers, and often do not hold the kind of social power within the school community as might be assumed. While all students at an elite school like St. Paul's may share a sense of superiority because of their enrollment, status *within* the school is more

often attributed to merit of one sort or another – academic success, athletic prowess, or personality (Kahn 2011). This is not to say that these kinds of independent schools have eliminated exclusion based on race or class on their campuses, or that they have embraced more radical notions of democracy, equity and access. To be sure, they still serve a highly rarefied population of students who have been creamed from many different kinds of schools and backgrounds. Nonetheless, even these elite independent schools have abandoned the language of exclusion and have begun to extol the virtues of diversity. Some, such as Philips Exeter, have been trailblazers in this area as well. As the independent school literature demonstrates, of course, the extent to which these are more than superficial attempts to create inclusive communities remains a question.

Critical Theory

On the other end of the spectrum of beliefs and attitudes towards diversity are those that focus on the deconstruction of social, political and economic structures that effectively deny equitable access to education, political influence, and economic opportunity to members of minority and/or marginalized groups, and the active construction of new systems recognize and empower those groups. Advocates begin with the assumption that we live in a racist and classist society that systematically seeks to exclude marginalized groups, while reinforcing the power and privilege of the dominant groups. In order to dismantle those systems and create a fully inclusive society, members of the dominant group must be taught to recognize their own privilege and power that they exert over marginalized groups, while subordinate groups are taught and encouraged to express their own identities rather than assimilate with the dominant group.

Of course, members of the dominant culture will work to preserve their positions of power and influence, to the detriment of minority groups (Oakes 1997, Brown 2004, Theoharis 2007, Jean-Marie, Normore et al. 2009, Theoharis 2009). Many researchers have used critical race theory to explain the reach and pervasiveness of this tendency. Solorzano (1997) defines critical race theory as “a framework or set of basic perspectives, methods, and pedagogy that seeks to identify, analyze, and transform those structural and cultural aspects of society that maintain the subordination and marginalization of People of Color.” He also identifies five themes that run through this research: (a) the centrality of race and racism and their intersectionality with other forms of subordination, (b) the challenge to dominant ideology, (c) the commitment to social justice, (d) the centrality of experiential knowledge, and (e) a transdisciplinary perspective (Solorzano 1997, Solorzano, Ceja et al. 2000). Jean-Marie et. al (2009) argue that critical race theory challenges the popular U.S. notions of neutrality, equal opportunity and democracy, which function to conceal the manifestation of racism in political, legal and organizational, and social systems (Jean-Marie, Normore et al. 2009).

Researchers have used this theory to suggest multiple ways to undermine and dismantle the racist hierarchies that characterize the education system, and often point to the responsibility of principals and other school leaders to spearhead these efforts. Freire (2000) argued that school leaders must be trained “to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions, and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality” (Freire 2000). Others point to a need for critical reflection on the part of school leaders that will enable them to recognize implicit and explicit forms of oppression, and the courage and conviction to work against that oppression and advocate for the underserved

(Brown 2004, McKenzie and Scheurich 2004, Theoharis 2007, Jean-Marie, Normore et al. 2009, Theoharis 2009). As Jean-Marie writes, “[g]iven this perspective, school leaders are potentially the architects and builders of a new social order wherein traditionally disadvantaged peoples have the same educational opportunities, and by extension social opportunities, as traditionally advantaged people” (Jean-Marie, Normore et al. 2009). Drawing from critical and political theories, Banks (2008) identifies five elements of what he calls multicultural education; this is more appropriately discussed here than in the next section on liberal multiculturalism because it is anchored in critical theory. Those elements include (1) content integration, (2) knowledge construction process, (3) prejudice reduction, (4) an equity pedagogy, and (5) empowering school culture and social structure. While each of these elements is distinct, it is impossible to understand them in isolation because they are so tightly interconnected. While content can be defined and analyzed on its own, for example, it is relatively meaningless until it is in the hands of teachers and students in classrooms. Similarly, prejudice reduction certainly is a positive goal in theory, but it becomes relevant when it is actually implemented in a school culture that can sustain it authentically (Banks 2008).

Other scholars have discussed for the need for teachers to implement culturally relevant pedagogy, defined by Ladson-Billings (1992) as a “pedagogy of opposition” that focuses on recognizing and celebrating oppressed people’s culture, thereby subverting the assimilationist pedagogies that usually characterize the U.S. education system (Ladson-Billings 1992, Ladson-Billings 1995, Ladson-Billings and Tate 1995). Teachers, in this conception of diversity and inclusion, actively fight the status quo that usually is reinforced implicitly and explicitly in the classroom, and teach students to examine social, political and economic structures critically so that they are more empowered to dismantle them (Ladson-Billings 1992). Others have advocated for anti-racist education, which tend to focus on multiple racial/ethnic groups rather than just African Americans, and which emphasize the need for policies and practices to align in opposition to the inherently racist notions of tolerance and multiculturalism that dilute identity and thus promote assimilation (Troyna 1987, Short 1996).

Whether training leaders to make a significant impact on deconstructing racist or otherwise unequal systems, or training teachers to better empower their students to mobilize for the same purpose, far-reaching, challenging, and politicized perspectives characterize this attitude.

Liberal Multiculturalism

Multiculturalism was understood in the 1970’s-1990’s in most western democracies as the celebration of diversity – specifically cultural differences – as a counterargument to the explicit and rampant racism of earlier decades. It was conceived as a pluralistic philosophy that theoretically includes Whites as well as people of color, and whose support for strategies and tactics associated with it is often seen as necessary for broader social and political change (Jacobson 1985, Golden, Hinkle et al. 2001, Abernson 2003, Plaut, Garnett et al. 2011).

Kymlicka (2010) has argued that this conceptualization has largely failed because it did not actually benefit marginalized people politically, socially or economically. In fact, it may have served to further marginalize those it was intended to help, and tends to resonate less in current societies than concepts like tolerance and social cohesion. Now the debate has

shifted into a post-multicultural framework for a “post racial” era, which he argues is flawed but broadly appealing nonetheless (Kymlicka 2010). Furthermore, since most Whites do not believe that multiculturalism is related to them or holds any benefit for them, they usually do not support initiatives associated with it.

While both critical theorists and multiculturalists have explicitly and implicitly critiqued liberal political theorists for their tendencies to overemphasize equality in favor of homogenization of cultures and beliefs, Loobuyck (2005) has critiqued multiculturalism for its overemphasis on difference to the detriment of communal political and cultural values. He defines liberal multiculturalism as a pluralistic philosophy with an egalitarian approach, one that “seeks maximum accommodation of differences in religious, cultural or ethnic origin in a stable and morally defensible way, in private as well as in public spheres.” However, he also holds that when liberalism and multiculturalism conflict, the principles of liberalism - which, again, are egalitarian in nature - ultimately should prevail. Thus, while he makes a great deal of room for the recognition, celebration, and tolerance of differences, he rejects the notion that some groups should have more rights than others since that flies in the face of liberal tenets of tolerance, freedom, and equality (Loobuyck 2005). Since this

Liberal conceptions of multiculturalism in education also focus on more egalitarian approaches. In her review of literature in multicultural education, Castagno (2009) identifies six approaches that are found in the field - three of which help clarify liberal multicultural mindsets. She refers to education for amalgamation as approaches that emphasize commonalities amongst different groups in an effort to reduce prejudice. While such approaches are not as conservative as those that promote assimilation of minority groups into the dominant culture, these more liberal approaches do promote the melding of many cultures to create a new one. Education for pluralism goes a few steps further, however, and emphasizes the differences between groups in order to preserve those identities, and to promote co-existence and diversity as a value. She also describes education for cross-cultural competence, where students develop the skills necessary for functioning successfully in their own and in others’ cultures. These conceptions represent a certain middle ground in multicultural education that is characterized by the recognition of differences between groups at some level, but that also stops short of educating students to recognize the roles of power structures and privilege in the perpetuation of oppression. Liberal multiculturalism also does not expect students to use their knowledge, skills, or “critical consciousness” to take action and effect social change. Rather, the liberal multicultural advocate is more likely to be interested in promoting understanding and harmony in cultures where every can get along (Castagno 2009).

Since liberal multiculturalism supports but does not always require the recognition of differences, it seems to leave open opportunities for members of certain groups to avoid acknowledgement of differences and conversations about the differences themselves and the impact that differences make for those from more marginalized groups. Related to this lack of acknowledgement of differences as it pertains to race is so-called “colorblindness,” which is the belief that racial categories do not matter, should be dismantled, and should not be considered when making decisions such as hiring and school admissions. Logically, those who share this perspective would be likely to avoid conversations about race since they believe that race itself is meaningless. This stands in opposition to the concept of multiculturalism, which is the belief that group differences should be acknowledged and celebrated, and that ignoring such differences actually causes harm to minorities (Sleeter

1991, Richeson and Nussbaum 2003, Plaut, Thomas et al. 2009). Some researchers have argued that colorblindness ultimately serves to reinforce existing political and social power structures, since it necessarily removes the possibility of considering race as a determining factor in anyone's place in current society. It also allows Whites to cast themselves as progressives in a "post-racial" America while relieving themselves of any responsibility for continued inequities that otherwise could be connected to race (Gallagher 2003). There is some evidence that those who profess to be "colorblind" actually hold deeper racial biases than those who favor multicultural views, and that the systematic silence around race that is a manifestation of colorblindness is actually harmful to minority children's view of themselves (Gallagher 2003, Richeson and Nussbaum 2003, Pauker, Apfelbaum et al. 2015). According to these researchers, then, Whites ultimately are protected from discomfort and responsibility for racism through the mechanism of colorblindness.

The presence of colorblindness might serve other purposes within a school community as well, such as the promotion of high morale amongst community members, a general sense of comfort when people can get along. Researchers who have studied school effectiveness have identified characteristics of positive school cultures that seem to be present in successful schools. Barth (2001), for example, described the need to build school cultures that are "hospitable" to learning, while Hoy (1990) pointed to the presence of high academic standards, appropriate leadership, and collegiality in schools that demonstrate high student achievement (Hoy 1990, Barth 2002) Miles et. al (1971) also recognized the importance of focused and well communicated goals, along with a cohesiveness of identity and a strong sense of morale amongst community members in healthy organizations (Miles and Francis 1971). MacNeil et. al (2009) focused particularly in the role of strong leaders in effective schools, and demonstrated the connection between high achieving schools and the ability of principals to build and maintain the overall health of their organizational cultures. This research points to the importance of strong relationships between community members for building positive school communities that will support students' learning – presumably *all* students' learning. It also suggests – similar to the literature on school choice – that feelings of safety amongst community members contribute to their ability to create optimal conditions for students' learning (Bulman 2004, MacNeil, Prater et al. 2009). However, the heavy emphasis of this conception of effectiveness on cohesion, homogeneity, and consensus might obstruct diversity and inclusion. The power of the dominant culture of any school to squelch divergent voices for equity that might lead to discomfort and disruption could, in fact, derail what might be a stated commitment to building an equitable school. While independent school parents and teachers might define school effectiveness somewhat differently than their public school counterparts, the literature seems to justify their desire for a closely knit school community that is characterized by strong relationships, consensus, and high morale. The manifestation of these effectiveness markers in school cultures, then, provide a foundation for understanding the value that parents and teachers place on these elements.

According to other researchers, placing a high priority on positive relationships within an organizational culture can obscure the tensions that exist amongst members. Making sure that people feel comfortable, get along, and avoid conflict can leave problems unresolved, which in turn makes the culture less inclusive than it might be otherwise. Already in 1958, Lerner (1958) discussed the particularly American emphasis on comfort

and fun, and the widely accepted belief that these are rights of every citizen that characterize the pursuit of happiness. They are also recognizable and legitimized symbols that can actually justify exclusion and guard against angry and “un-fun” people:

This, right or wrong, is a revolutionary new idea in the world. It directs effort toward creating those conditions of life which enable people to ‘take things easy.’ The old puritan ethic (or perhaps, more exactly, simply ‘Protestant’), with its emphasis on effort, ambition, achievement, struggle and success, has yielded to a whole new array of words expressing the new conception of right conduct and the good life. The shift is from ‘getting on’ to ‘getting along.’ The emphasis is on “being nice.” (Lerner 1958)

The primacy of comfort – or, the desire to avoid discomfort – described by Lerner also has been studied in the context of perceptions of diversity, specifically with regards to the ways in which Whites demonstrate a lack of awareness of minorities’ experiences and perspectives and avoid uncomfortable situations that are related to race. Bell and Hartmann (2007), for example, explored perceptions of diversity in metropolitan areas, particularly with regards to the difficulty that White participants demonstrated in talking about inequality. They found that while these participants tended to idealize concepts related to diversity, they also tended to ignore their own experiences with people of other races and oversimplify the complexities associated with racial constructs. This desire to avoid acknowledging the challenges of diversity, much less discussing such challenges, is presented as evidence of White privilege that serves to protect Whites from having to experience discomfort around topics related to diversity (Bell and Hartmann 2007). Eliasoph (1999) also studied the ways that people talk about race in everyday, “natural” conversations; she found that the very act of speaking aloud publicly about race is usually assumed to be too dangerous by Whites and thus is systematically avoided. This avoidance she argues, is one way that racism is perpetuated within communities and broader society (Eliasoph 1999).

In order to further understand the need that Whites feel to shield themselves from discomfort around race, it is helpful also to consider research on self interest. Research on the role that self interest plays in attitudes towards affirmative action is particularly relevant. Researchers have described that attitudes are shaped by the perception of benefit – either concrete benefit, such as attaining a particular job or entrance to a particular college, or abstract benefit, such as job satisfaction that stems from working with a more diverse group of colleagues (Tougas, Beaton et al. 1991, Tougas, Brown et al. 1995, Kravitz, Klineberg et al. 2000). Aberson (2003) argued that, in the context of affirmative action policies that target racial/ethnic minorities, Whites cannot gain concrete benefit from such policies. However, he suggests that Whites could perceive abstract benefit for themselves nonetheless, which could lead them to support affirmative action programs (Aberson 2003). This research suggests that Whites who see a direct benefit to themselves (or their children) from increased diversity in a school – such as social skills that enable students to cultivate working relationships across differences that better prepares them for jobs down the line – are more likely to support diversity than if benefits are cast as moral imperatives that benefit society as a whole.

The intersection of colorblindness and self interest, then, is useful when considering how attitudes towards diversity and inclusion are constructed. On the one hand, colorblindness is often held up by Whites as a goal and symbol of progress, without much consideration for the negative effects on minorities. Those who profess colorblindness, then, guard themselves against any detriments of a diverse community by simply refusing to acknowledge that those differences exist. If I “don’t see color,” for example, then I cannot be expected to discuss any privileges – or lack thereof – that might be associated with color. Acknowledging difference using neutral or egalitarian language can be much more comfortable for White, but also effectively delegitimizes the range and variety of experiences that are based on race. Because this attitude is so common amongst Whites, the literature on school choice suggests that schools might be more likely to convince White parents to jettison such attitudes only after they have joined their communities.

One way that attitudes towards diversity might be tested on campuses is the practice of self-segregation. Students might self-segregate based on race/ethnicity, class, geography, gender, sexual orientation, or any combination of these. Researchers have considered the advantages and disadvantages for minority students to self segregate on school campuses, as well as the implications for school communities when this happens. Tatum (2003) argues that self-segregation is not objectively positive nor objectively negative, but rather can have positive or negative effects on individuals and communities depending on the reasons that minority students self segregate. Students who wish to spend some time with those who share similar experiences based on race/ethnicity or socioeconomic status, for example, gain comfort and support from one another, and still could access other groups and connect across differences as well. However, students who self segregate because of institutional barriers to inclusion that prevent them from accessing other groups – perhaps because certain courses or activities are unavailable to them for academic or financial reasons – are at risk of becoming increasingly marginalized (Tatum 2003). Some researchers have suggested that Latinos and Latinas in higher education need to form tight relationships with each other in order to be successful, since colleges and universities maintain academic and political structures that necessarily exclude them from the support that is more easily accessed by other students (Villalpando 2003, Chavous 2004, Chavous 2005, Yosso, Smith et al. 2009). And, there is some evidence that self segregation is more likely to occur as schools become more heterogeneous, leading to a rather ironic re-segregation of schools that have worked hard to become diverse but have not become integrated as a result. Obviously, this has implications for both majority and minority students, often negative (Moody 2001). As other researchers have suggested, “intergroup” friendships only develop in earnest when students are able to spend a good deal of time together so that they are more willing to disclose more of their personal beliefs and feelings; this requires a school community that has worked to remove the academic and financial barriers that would prevent such relationships from forming and thus reinforce the types of segregation that serve to marginalize minority students. Such marginalization can also lead to the reinforcement of racial stereotypes amongst faculty and administrators because of the visible emphasis on groups instead of individuals, which further serves to alienate these students and maintain existing power structures that favor the majority (Crozier and Davies 2008, Davies, Tropp et al. 2011).

Comfort, self-interest, colorblindness, and self-segregation, then, all could function as limits to inclusion within organizations. If members are most interested in maintaining

high levels of comfort and niceness in their organizations and profess colorblindness as an asset, they might object to self segregation for any reason since it calls attention to the differences that do exist and are objectively visible. Maintaining a comfortable atmosphere also requires the avoidance of controversy and controversial topics, so engaging the members in work to reveal differences in experiences and perspectives might be avoided lest it challenge assumptions and cause unrest. It is important to consider the impact of these limits, then, in organizations that espouse some degree of a commitment to multiculturalism, since all seem to undermine its general tenets.

Symbolic Boundaries That Limit Inclusion

Liberal multiculturalism has replaced outright exclusion in favor of appreciation of cultural diversity. But this appreciation can co-exist, as critics have pointed out, with less visible and explicit ways of exclusion. While there may be certain visible and explicit challenges that schools are likely to speak about openly – such as funding financial aid programs – many of the boundaries that impede progress are largely symbolic and subtle. Their impact, however, can be significant. Lamont (2002) argues that symbolic categories that are formed from the material of cultural traditions, scientific discourses, etc. demarcate in-groups and out-groups. Symbolic boundaries are tools that social actors use to separate others into out-groups in order to generate feelings of group similarity and membership. Social or economic status is associated with symbolic validation, and this validation helps people form their identities and thus separate themselves from those who do not share that same status. Those who share membership in high status, dominant groups, then, can easily dismiss “out-group” people who do not possess the same level of social or economic status or the symbolic validation associated with it, and who also do not demonstrate the behaviors of those in the “in-group.” Lamont draws a distinction between these symbolic boundaries and social boundaries, which are the visible manifestation of unequal access to material and immaterial resources. Thus, symbolic boundaries necessarily give rise to social boundaries, and help create the conditions by which groups acquire status and lay claim to resources. She argues, however, that symbolic and social boundaries are equally real; the relative invisibility of symbolic boundaries should not lead us to believe that they have less impact on group or individual status (Lamont and Moln 2002).

Social boundaries also might be constructed, for example by social and cultural capital. As conceived by the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (cf: 1984, 1991), social capital is the power that one gains because of one’s connections to others within a particular organizational field, while cultural capital refers to the knowledge and understanding of norms of behavior within a field, whether implicit or explicit. Social and cultural capital both are assigned to individuals by the existing members of the field (in aggregate) who possess the power to both define and interpret norms. Since individuals operate in multiple fields throughout a lifetime – school, workplace, church, social groups, etc. – it is likely that each individual will have different levels of status depending on each field and the norms that exist within it. Social and political structures, then, are reproduced since the gatekeepers of each field are in a position to control status – and thus, opportunity – for individuals within the group (Bourdieu 1984, Bourdieu and Thompson 1991). If a school is one field, for example, then students and parents build social capital within the school based on the relationships they develop with other members of the community, but only as

defined as acceptable within that school community. Cultural capital is built by spending enough time within the school to understand which behaviors are acceptable and which are not, and acting accordingly. While some of these expectations have been codified, and while mentors might exist to help new members of the community begin to understand the processes for building capital, many norms and expectations are unspoken and camouflaged in such a way that new members might be granted less status as a result of their inability to read people and the culture effectively.

Many scholars have relied upon these theories in their research on the ways that social and cultural capital operate in the context of schools. Cookson and Persell (1985), for example, describes the formal academic and informal social and cultural education that elite independent school students receive, especially in boarding schools, which ultimately prepares those students to operate successfully in similarly elite universities and in the upper echelons of the business world that is populated by similarly educated people (Cookson and Persell 1985). Zweigenhaft (1993) discusses the increasing percentages of students of color attending independent schools, and their experiences in those contexts amount to teaching them how to “act White” so that they can successfully navigate White organizations in the future. Students of color do not just get to know White, high-status students, they also learn how to speak with them and their parents in such a way that they will be accepted despite their racial/ethnic background (Zweigenhaft and Domhoff 1991, Zweigenhaft 1993). In both cases, while students of color are more prevalent in independent schools than in past decades, the implicit expectation is that they assimilate with the dominant White culture in order to earn social and cultural capital. As Read (2003) argues, these “atypical” students are present for academic learning and co-curricular experiences, and can take good advantage of those opportunities that can propel them towards good colleges and stable careers. However, because they have to check their authentic selves at the door each day, so to speak, in order to have access to those opportunities, these students never fully own the school or their experiences the way that students from the dominant culture do (Read, Archer et al. 2003). According to Torres (2009), these experiences amount to culture shock for students who are systematically “othered” by the dominant culture within school communities, thus diminishing their experiences and perpetuating inequities (Torres 2009).

Lareau (1999, 2003) extends this conceptualization by adding class as another mediating factor for “atypical” students who enter school communities. Furthermore, she argues that Bourdieu’s theory has been interpreted too narrowly by many scholars to be rigidly deterministic, when in fact there is often room for negotiation and nuance as community members look to build social and cultural capital. She argues that most community members experience some moments of inclusion, which contest the status quo, and some moments of exclusion, which reproduce the status quo. So, while a Black parent may experience more moments of exclusion than a White parent, for example, a middle class Black parent may experience more moments of inclusion than a lower class Black parent. Since the dominant culture ultimately decides who is awarded capital and status, it is possible that the more traits and attitudes that individuals share with dominant culture, the more capital they will command. It also is possible that individuals’ willingness to conform might have an impact. The specific context of each school will be another determining factor. Regardless, the constant negotiation and renegotiation that happens

within communities is always mediated by the dominant culture, and the power they have to include or exclude members (Lareau and Horvat 1999, Lareau and Weininger 2003).

This research raises interesting questions about what might or might not be acceptable in any given independent school community. Peterson and Kern (1996) argue that elite U.S. society has shifted away from the snobbery of past decades and embraced a more omnivorous attitude towards highbrow and lowbrow activities. They point to a departure from the ethnocentrism that used to dictate social groups and relationships, and a move toward more cultural relativism that allows even the well heeled to openly enjoy some activities that used to be associated with lower class groups and people of color. So, while blues – associated with Blacks – and bluegrass – associated with poor Whites – used to be shunned by the upper echelons of society in favor of opera, now wealthy Whites do not think twice about listening to gangsta rap. While a wealthy, White student certainly would not relate to gangsta rap the same way her Black, middle class classmate would, she can still appreciate it and enjoy it privately and publically. Some of this can be attributed to an increasing attitude of tolerance of difference across the country (which, of course, is not to be confused with acceptance), and some of this can be attributed to generational changes in political thought and cultural consumption. The structures that used to divide race and class starkly have given way to a new way of envisioning group status, which no longer involves the crude suppression of other races and classes, at least in middle and upper class settings, but instead allows the dominant culture to appropriate their art forms, their language, their mannerisms, and their peculiar ways of socializing (Peterson and Kern 1996).

In chapter 4, I will spend considerable time analyzing the extent to which these symbolic and social boundaries manifest in the schools that participated in this study. Understanding that the desire to build social and cultural capital exists for every student at every school, regardless of background, it is important to understand the ways that administrators, teachers, and typical parents view this process for atypical students and make meaning from their observations. The extent to which they perceive differences in the ways that typical and atypical students navigate the culture and successfully interpret the unspoken and unwritten norms will provide some clues about the degree to which the schools are, in fact, fully inclusive of both types of students. Just as importantly, the extent to which these adults can identify both “moments of inclusion” and “moments of exclusion” for atypical students will, in and of itself, shed some light on the ability of the school to continue to shift to best accommodate atypical students. In order to shed light on the subtler boundaries that exist, it is important to highlight both what is said and what is *not* said about diversity and inclusion by the participants. In particular, the outlier participants are helpful in giving voice to otherwise implicit and unspoken assumptions about what is acceptable in school communities.

Support for Inclusion

In this section, I consider the research on two concepts related to effective support for inclusion. First, I will present literature on reculturing organizational communities, specifically in order to increase equity amongst students in schools. The challenges of reculturing in general, and reculturing for equity in particular, are well documented, and will provide some perspective about the difficult work that independent schools could do to improve inclusion for atypical students. I also will present literature on the important

role that school leaders - particularly principals as equivalents of Heads of School in independent schools - play in increasing equity in their school communities. This literature provides a framework for understanding the choices that principals could make to improve inclusion within their organizations.

I began with the assumption that administrator, faculty, and traditional parent support is necessary for diversity and inclusion to increase in independent schools. As was demonstrated above, those groups have determined the speed with which racial/ethnic and socioeconomic diversity has increased in independent schools over time – particularly school leaders and parents. After all, independent schools are tuition-based schools of choice that rely on parents for their very existence, and they rely on administrators and faculty to deliver programs that will put students in the best position possible to achieve outcomes valued by parents. As we have seen from the school choice literature, high status parents may choose more culturally and economically homogeneous schools for their children if they are available to them.

It certainly seems that for much of their history, independent schools attracted parents who preferred a homogeneous school community for their children, and that parents chose independent schools for their homogeneity and (supposedly) superior academic program (Fuess 1917, Stone 1976, Semel 1992, Dalton 1999, Heskell and Dyer 2008). For an independent school that is serious about increasing diversity, then, part of their task might be to convince parents and teachers to actually act *against* their own status interests, to reconsider their values and assumptions, and to open up to situations that may create discomfort for parents and staff. As we saw in the literature on self interest as it relates to attitudes towards affirmative action, it seems clear that independent schools would need to make a compelling case to typical parents in particular that diversity presents a benefit, whether concrete or abstract, for their children. And yet, as we saw in the literature on the primacy of comfort and niceness, the tendency to avoid any controversy within a school might be enough to hinder both diversity and inclusion for atypical students.

The literature on reculturing organizations, especially reculturing for equity, provides concepts and categories that help clarify what “going against the grain” of traditional notions of diversity and inclusion might entail. Schein (1985) describes three elements of culture: artifacts, values, and assumptions. While artifacts are easily observable in a school (e.g. - the buildings and use of space, the schedule, etc.), and while values usually show themselves readily as well (e.g. - the espoused educational philosophies about how teachers believe students learn, etc.), assumptions are, by their nature, more hidden (e.g. - racial biases) (Schein 1985). Make significant change in these areas, in “the way we do it around here,” and a foundation can be built upon which all other change efforts can be implemented with greater effectiveness. Based on this concept, stated commitment to diversity and inclusion in schools would not be enough to change those cultures significantly; the hidden assumptions about race and class also must be confronted and transformed in order to improve inclusion for atypical students.

This is no mean feat, however, according to Oakes (1997). The perceived overlap between race and ability remains a major obstacle in reculturing schools, whether in trying to de-track the curriculum or any other significant shift. So long as people believe that those without power will never be able to attain it, and as long as those in positions of power actively work to preserve their power, society will remain stratified and schools will

continue to serve groups of students poorly. It is only through bold action that this will begin to change (Oakes 1997).

The implied theory of action at work in these two studies, then, is if people's deeply held beliefs and attitudes are changed, then they will be better able and more likely to change their practice; by changing their practice significantly, schools can become more equitable. These conceptions provide a useful framework for my analysis of participants' interviews, since it was important to go beyond their espoused beliefs about diversity and inclusions to understand the deeper assumptions they held that helped to place limits on inclusion. They were also helping in exploring the extent to which the interplay among many elements – such as school strategies for reculturing or increased proximity to peers from different backgrounds (Niemann 1999, Niemann and Maruyama 2005), to name a few – are necessary precursors for cultural change, natural offshoots of cultural change, or a combination of both.

Shields (2004), for example, points to the need to break down the “pathology of silence” that surrounds talk about race and justice, and the chronic avoidance of issues surrounding differences because of the assumption that differences in and of themselves are negative. Deficit thinking about students is a symptom of that pathology, and the fear and anger that keep people from dealing with it is ultimately what perpetuates it. Ultimately, this can only be tackled if members of school communities enter into relationship with one another, which must be led by a “transformational” leader (Shields 2004). Such efforts to work with public school teachers have had limited success, however (McDiarmid 1990, Sleeter 1992, Lawrence 1997), which raises serious questions about realistic expectations for efficacy of independent schools' work with their faculty, staff and parent communities.

The literature on independent schools does point to the importance of Heads of School, and there is other research on leadership for equity and social justice that can provide a framework for understanding the role that Heads might play in improving inclusion in their schools. Most draw from theories such as Adult Learning Theory, Transformative Learning Theory, and Critical Social Theory to support their suggestions for increasing awareness of leaders about inequities in schools as a necessary precursor to bold and courageous action. Theoharis (2007) acknowledges that certain core leadership traits are shared by all good leaders – such as facilitating professional development and encouraging collaboration between teachers – successful leaders for social justice apply a focus on increasing equity in everything they do in such a way that it actually changes practice. So, while all good leaders in schools utilize data to influence decisions and push for higher achievement, a leader for social justice might utilize that data to focus resources on the most struggling and underperforming students in the school first. In short, equity is the lens through which all mundane and strategic tasks are undertaken and implemented (Theoharis 2007, Theoharis 2009). Jean-Marie et. al (2009) also note that it is the responsibility of school leaders to advocate for the underserved, even though they are not usually taught how to do so. They argue that leaders who possess high levels of awareness of oppression can develop enough courage and vision to impact the structures of inequity within their schools and beyond. With proper training and support, they see that “school leaders are potentially the architects and builders of a new social order wherein traditionally disadvantaged peoples have the same educational opportunities, and by extension social opportunities, as traditionally advantaged people” (Jean-Marie, Normore

et al. 2009). John Chubb, the educational researcher and current President of the National Association of Independent Schools, also has written about the need for “courageous” leadership to build more equitable independent schools, and echoes Theoharis in maintaining that all great leaders unite their constituents around “noble missions,” which includes equity and justice. However, he also points to the need for leaders to continue to build their own cultural competence for this to happen in ways that do not go as far as Theoharis and other would:

“We need leaders who can facilitate both consensus and change on matters of diversity and inclusion, now as much as ever. To accomplish this, we should also recognize, as I certainly have, that our personal cultural competence is far from perfect. The cultural differences that we think we appreciate, we likely do not understand accurately or completely” (Chubb 2015).

This literature suggests that if reculturing is necessary for enacting deep institutional change in the cause of equity, then strong leadership for equity is likely the means by which it becomes possible. If independent schools are to get beyond espoused beliefs about diversity and inclusion and wrestle with deeply held biases about race and class on the part of parents, students, and staff, it will take more than a trusting community to do so. School leaders will have to be willing to engage in their own reflection on their biases, as well as the structural inequalities that exist throughout society and that are manifest in their own schools. And, they have to be willing to engage their communities in this kind of reflection and learning in order to enact real change. Theoharis’ research includes an analysis of the strategies that leaders for equity utilize in order to sustain their work in the face of often significant resistance and challenge that take an enormous personal toll. While many of these strategies likely would be useful for any leader, like engaging in shared decision making and practicing mindful communications, others he identifies include making time to volunteer with underserved communities as a reminder of the importance of social justice work seem specifically applicable to this kind of leadership (Theoharis 2007). Because independent school cultures are just as ingrained as any other organization, if not more so, the challenge to lead any process for reculturing would be pronounced.

Part 4: Conceptual Framework

The theories reviewed in this chapter provide the conceptual framework that both informed the design of my study, and guided the analysis of the data. A conceptual framework is a useful way for a researcher to describe her understanding of the topics being studied, and to highlight the interrelationships between the key factors involved (Miles 2014). At the outset based on the literature, I theorized that administrators, faculty, and typical parents would claim to value diversity to an extent, but that outcomes like college placement would be much more meaningful to them. I also expected that their experience of the school culture would carry significant value as well, as would their status as community members. Finally, I expected participants to be largely unaware of any challenges to the level of inclusivity at their schools, especially if they expressed satisfaction with their experiences there. However, in all of these areas, I expected that there likely would be a significant between the perspectives of employees and the perspectives of parents, since employees have the opportunity to impact policy and

observe student interactions in ways that parents do not. While the conceptual framework I present here certainly stemmed from these theories, I also utilized grounded theory approaches in my analysis that helped to isolate different perceptions and reveal new patterns.

The literature reviewed in this chapter provides the conceptual framework, then, that both emerged from and guided the analysis of the data in Chapter Four. As we have seen, attitudes towards diversity in independent schools seem to be influenced by *perceptions of quality and status*, whether that status is connected to elitism in more traditional independent schools or to democratic ideals in progressive independent schools. The relative homogeneity of student populations in these schools, then, might reinforce notions of quality and status that emphasized shared values that were based on shared backgrounds. It also can reinforce the privileges enjoyed by typical independent school students and their families, and their dominant power within their schools communities.

The narrow conception of diversity in independent schools as increasing the number of Black students seems receded, especially considering the increase in students of color across the board in independent schools today. However, as broad conceptions, it is important to consider the role of *multiculturalism* in building diverse school communities and in establishing *inclusive cultures*. Multiculturalism as conceived by independent schools offers a way to have cultural and class diversity, but without the dominant culture having to tackle the uncomfortable and difficult topics of racism and classism. Outright exclusion and the articulation of the self-interest to maintain cultural and economic status are no longer legitimate. It is necessary in the current day and age for schools to embrace of diversity, but it is not yet necessary for schools to embrace full equity and inclusion. New symbolic boundaries are subtly advanced that maintain an elite foothold on organizational cultures, and the power to allocate *social and cultural capital* as they see fit. Lower status groups can earn that capital, ultimately, if they agree to *assimilate*.

Strategies that might help to weaken these deeply held beliefs and perceptions and help improve inclusion are *reculturing a school community for equity* and *leadership for equity*. Schools leaders who understand the power of deeply held beliefs to hinder progress towards inclusion, and to perpetuate privilege and power, can learn to recognize their manifestation in all aspects of school culture – from social interactions to policies to curriculum. Any work they do to disrupt these patterns is risky, of course, especially considering the lengths that most schools will go to preserve their comfortable and nice cultures. Bold leadership is necessary, however, to bring about the significant changes that can give way to improved inclusion for atypical students.

Chapter 3: Research Design, and Methods

In this chapter, I present the research design for this exploratory and descriptive study, which is structured mainly as a case study and also relies on methodologies borrowed from the grounded theory approach. I include a description of the data collection and analysis methods I used, and explain the steps I took to ensure rigor, reliability, and validity.

Methodology

The phenomena under investigation here are well suited to a case study design. Case study research can be an effective tool for understanding the “how” of a contemporary phenomenon (Yin 2009). This research study is a qualitative case study of the state of diversity and inclusion within the organizational field of independent schools. An organizational field can be understood to be a set of organizations which do not necessarily share geography or even specific goals, but which are recognizable as a unit because they provide similar services and products to the same consumer group and demonstrate a high degree of interaction and comparison (DiMaggio and Powell 1983, Fligstein 1990, Wooten and Hoffman 2008). Fligstein (1990, 1997) also argued that organizations that have a high degree of can influence others within the field when so-called “institutional entrepreneurs” are able to reshape norms and thinking across the field (Fligstein 1990, Fligstein 1997, Wooten and Hoffman 2008). Independent schools do, in fact, share common denominators in terms of their governance and financial structures, and in terms of the makeup of their employee and client bases. These similarities make it possible to make comparisons between independent schools. In addition, individual schools regularly interact with national and state organizations that provide an organizational umbrella for the field.

In designing this study, it was necessary to choose an approach that would allow me to analyze the field at multiple levels and incorporate a variety of perspectives I chose to focus first on three actors I will refer to as “executives,” two of whom have worked extensively with independent schools nationally and one of whom has worked extensively with independent schools across the state of California. They provide the broadest perspectives on diversity and inclusion within the organizational field itself. I then focused on the perspectives shared by employees and White parents who do not participate in financial aid at three secondary schools in the state of California, who could provide insight drawn from their day-to-day experiences within their individual school communities. I chose to work with participants from three schools because I was able to recruit only a relatively small number of individual participants from each school so as to build a robust enough data set for analysis.

I did not intend for this study to establish causality or to be predictive, which would favor other research methodologies (Yin 2009). Understanding the degree to which actors support diversity and inclusion may point to the strengths, limitations, and possibilities of school leadership for related initiatives. Additionally, the degree to which participants’ experiences within school communities impact and influence their levels of support over time may provide a different set of insights. The thoroughness and attention I gave to describing and analyzing these perspectives provide credibility so that readers can more readily consider their relevance for other contexts within the field (Stake 2006, Creswell 2009). The findings of this study are informative and useful for independent schools that are focusing on diversity and inclusion. They suggest conclusions and possible directions

for schools to implement strategies, but they are insufficient to be considered generalizable. The strength of this study lies in its ability to reveal details and nuances of participants' perspectives on diversity and inclusion, which can be helpful to school leaders who are designing and implementing programs to improve diversity and inclusion. At the same time, the findings themselves do not constitute a how-to manual for schools, but rather present a range of concepts that can help guide schools in creating their own action plans.

The case study design that I used to frame this study was driven by analytical techniques borrowed from the grounded theory approach. I will describe those techniques and the reasons for using them later in this chapter.

Case Selection

The participants were purposefully selected to allow for close examination of issues of interest in this study – specifically, the extent to which administrators, faculty and typical parents in independent schools value diversity and perceive inclusion, and to which spokespersons in the field, the ideologues, so to speak, make their points (Creswell 2009). Because of my limitations as a researcher – including the timeframe for completing the study and my ability to collect adequate amounts of data – I limited my data collection to three executives and participants from three independent secondary schools in California. I chose to include the perspectives of the executives in order to provide a multi-leveled picture of diversity and inclusion in independent schools in the US, as well as the more specific context of the state of California. Since this study explores the state of diversity and inclusion in the field, these executives function as spokespeople for the field. Because the executives are necessarily disconnected from day-to-day life in schools, I also chose to include the perspectives of administrators, faculty and typical parents at three different California independent schools to provide perspectives grounded in that day-to-day experience.

I chose to work with California schools because I know schools and Heads of School there well since it is where I always have worked, and I knew I would stand a better chance of convincing Heads to participate in this study if I were known to them. I also was interested in working with schools in California because the state is racially/ethnically and socioeconomically diverse, so independent schools in the state have a better chance at increasing diversity and inclusion than independent schools in states with more homogeneous populations. I searched for participating secondary schools from all parts of the state that were relatively similar in size, and that reflected national and state trends for enrollment of students of color and financial aid participation as much as possible. I looked for schools that were not located close to one another, and that would not be in competition with one another for the same students. I also looked for schools where I had not worked and thus did not have strong relationships with most people in the school so that I would be unknown to most of those who might choose to participate. The goal was that, in my position as an outside researcher who had no authority or influence over participants or their children, I would be well-positioned to establish sufficient feelings of trust and safety – particularly around anonymity when discussing sensitive subjects like diversity and inclusion. Finding three schools that would participate was an arduous undertaking. Most schools did not want to be studied, and did not want to be scrutinized

through visits on their approach to diversity. I discovered through this process that the issue was truly sensitive.

The three secondary schools that agreed to participate are, in fact, in different areas of California, and definitely not in competition for the same students. Their sizes are relatively similar, and I was unknown to most of the participants. However, I knew all three Heads of these schools moderately through our professional connections in the small world of independent schools. In fact, the existing connections I had with each Head, while not deep, helped me to convince them to participate in this research. Indeed, I inquired with at least 20 schools around California about participation before engaging South Hills School, Four Corners School, and West Academy; many did not respond to my request to discuss participation, and other declined to participate after I described the project to them. All of the schools, including the ones that chose to participate, are unfamiliar with research such as this because so few researchers study independent schools, and this added to my challenge of securing participating schools. While my professional connections to the Heads of the three participating schools enabled me to proceed with my research, it also means that my interviews with the Heads themselves – and to an extent, the other participants from the schools – likely are undergirded by some biases that would not exist if I had been working with schools in which I was completely unknown. In contrast, the executives themselves are researchers and understand the value of such studies that will contribute to the field; each of them agreed almost immediately to my request for participation, and also agreed to be named in the study.

I chose to work with stand-alone secondary schools for many reasons. First, the chances that students and parents would choose the school together are higher than for elementary schools, which would offer valuable insight into the role that diversity might play in the decision making process. Second, more families are willing to travel longer distances to send their children to secondary schools than elementary schools, and schools that can draw students from many different areas are more likely to be diverse. Secondary schools usually have larger financial aid budgets than elementary schools, so there was a higher chance that these schools would be more socioeconomically diverse. Finally, since I am much more familiar with secondary schools since I have spent the majority of my professional life at that level, I was more interested in studying that subgroup of independent schools in California.

I employed purposive sampling in this study (Creswell 2007) that attempted to capture a variety of perspectives in the field. I chose to use executives and participants from three schools in order to work with a cross-section of schools so as to gain the most insight into the state of diversity and inclusion in the field of independent schools. This also allowed me to gather data from enough participants that I would have an adequately robust data set for my analysis. Because I am most interested in the perspectives of actors who traditionally have held the most power to enact change in independent schools regarding diversity and inclusion, and who continue to have that power, I chose to interview the same groups of participants at all three schools: Heads of School, administrators, faculty, trustees, and White parents who potentially hold sway over financial aid decisions. I did not specify criteria for the race/ethnicity or socioeconomic status of any of the participants except parents. I assumed for the purposes of this study that the power to effect change was more closely connected employees' positions than to their background. The parents I recruited, however, all identified as White and did not

participate in financial aid when they agreed to participate in the interview. I was most interested in this group because they fit the traditional profile of independent school parents, and because they can exert significant control over schools because of the tuition they pay and the donations they can make. Their support of schools' efforts around diversity and inclusions is crucial to the success of the schools' strategies in this regard; successful reculturing and improvement of diversity and inclusion necessarily relies on the support of this group.

Data Collection

The backbone of qualitative research is extensive data collection from multiple sources of information (Creswell 2007). Because the focus of this exploratory case study is participants' perceptions, interviews were the primary data source for the study. While I also used statistical data on independent schools across the country and in California, interviews were by far the most important sources for this project. Interview protocols were structured to ask questions in a fluid rather than rigid manner, while taking care to ensure that questions were asked in an unbiased fashion (Yin 2009).

Because I would be asking questions that would probe deeply held beliefs and possibly some assumptions about race/ethnicity and socioeconomic backgrounds, I had to approach the development of interview protocols, and the interviews themselves, carefully in order to encourage honest responses. Social desirability bias occurs when participants respond to questions by choosing to report what they perceive to be "correct" or socially acceptable, and can skew data and analysis significantly because it is so pervasive (Fisher 1993). One way I sought to address this challenge was by engaging in relatively moderate prior instrumentation for a number of reasons. While my research questions and conceptualization provided the framework to construct initial protocols, I did not know the particular parameters of the social settings of the participants; closed-ended questions would have been inappropriate. Therefore, while I left enough room in my interview protocols for follow up questions, I also resisted the urge to ask too many questions during the interviews that were so direct that they might elicit less than honest responses. Some of the research suggests that asking a small number of indirect questions might be helpful in avoiding social desirability bias, but questions of that type were usually not as appropriate to this study as they might be for a market research study (Fisher 1993). Finally, while I was interested in participants' explicit descriptions about diversity and inclusion, I was equally interested in their silence around related topics. Thus, while it was appropriate at times for me to ask follow up questions, there were also times when follow up questions would have obscured important and relevant indicators.

Since it also was important to avoid impacting the interviews in my role as the researcher, I chose to design instruments with open prompts that would allow me to listen rather than talk most of the time. Since I conducted all of the interviews over the telephone, I was able to avoid excessive verbal cues or distracting body language, as well as interruptions whenever possible. I did allow for follow-up questions as necessary, asking for clarification and examples as appropriate in order to gather more information about deeply held beliefs and assumptions whenever possible. By allowing responses to stand on their own without any indication of validation or condemnation from me as much as possible, however, participants were more likely to share more honestly (Seidman 2012, Miles 2014).

I conducted telephone interviews with all participants that I recorded, including the executives and the participants from each school. I interviewed each participant once, and on average each interview usually lasted for approximately one hour. The interview transcripts, then, became the primary data sources that I used for my analysis. I used a reputable transcription service to produce those transcripts, which were usually returned to me in approximately three days when I could begin my analysis.

Data Analysis

Since this study was designed to explore how participants from the three schools placed value on diversity and perceived their school communities to be inclusive, these questions provided the framework within which I began my analysis of the data. Just as the concepts that flowed from the literature review shaped my plan for data collection – in this study, interviews – they also were the lens through which I analyzed the data I collected (Yin 2009). Furthermore, owing to the grounded theory approaches I used for data collection and analysis, the conceptual framework itself developed more fully as I interviewed participants, which then helped to identify and implement the multiple levels of analysis required to answer my research questions.

The first step in my analysis was to read each transcript carefully and change names and other identifying information within each transcript document. I then uploaded the documents to the online qualitative research software program Dedoose, where I began the multi-step process of analysis. I developed an initial list of parent codes deductively based on the concepts I expected to find based on the literature and common sense, and began to sort the data according to these codes (Creswell 2009, Yin 2009, Miles 2014). During those initial analyses, I allowed the data to drive the revision of those codes as I added child codes to further tease apart the responses (Miles 2014). For example, I began with codes for school choice that included academics, extra-curricular activities and diversity, but later added more child codes to help identify characteristics of “comfortable school cultures” as I found that participants often described them. Sometimes this required me to go back to transcripts I had previously coded in order to search for this evidence. I also began to create memos to keep track of themes that seemed to be emerging, which allowed me to consider my own reactions to the conversations along with the participants’ responses (Creswell 2007). Each time I engaged in more interviews, I added additional categories that emerged which required me to re-code previously coded transcripts. Disappointingly, the Dedoose site crashed in April of 2014 after I had completed coding all of the transcripts, so I had to reconstruct the excerpts and codes before proceeding with the rest of the analysis.

During the next levels of analysis, I clustered the data to identify patterns of responses by school, as well as by constituent group. As those patterns began to emerge, I identified categories to sort and condense the data by school group. This gave way to further analysis as common themes amongst the schools and the constituency groups began to surface. This approach allowed me to begin to see both the peculiarities that existed within each school and constituency, as well as the attitudes that seemed to be shared across all participants. The synthesis of the data that flowed from these levels of analysis necessarily required me to refine my conceptual model, and sharpen the language of my research questions. Those categories then allowed me to synthesize the data even further to prepare for the writing of the findings. These processes are a reflection of the

influence of grounded theory on my analysis, which allowed me to engage in multiple cycles of coding and reflective analysis, then develop broader categories that tied back to my initial concepts (Miles 2014).

Validity and Reliability

In case study research it is important that the researcher document the procedures of her study carefully (Yin 2009). Qualitative validity refers to the procedural steps taken to ensure the accuracy and credibility of the findings based on a high level of rigor employed in the study itself and the analysis of the data that is produced (Creswell 2000, Creswell 2009). There is some disagreement amongst qualitative researchers about the definition and role of reliability in qualitative research (Golafshani 2003). While reliability of findings in experimental or statistical studies is usually based on the replicability of results because of robust data collection or experimental procedures, qualitative reliability is often based on the degree to which the phenomena under investigation are treated thoughtfully and carefully in order to produce understanding (Datnow and Yonezawa 2004). Overall, I rely on Creswell and Miller's understanding of validity, borrowed from Schwandt (1997), that emphasizes the accuracy with which participants' perspectives on the social phenomena under investigation are presented (Schwandt 1997, Creswell 2000). To that end, I incorporated numerous strategies to ensure rigor and enhance the credibility of my findings that were most appropriate for the study I designed that I will discuss below.

This study rests firmly on a constructivist epistemology: I am interested in understanding participants' perspectives about diversity and inclusion and how they construct meaning around those topics (Creswell 2000, Creswell 2007). Creswell and Miller emphasize the importance that a researcher's epistemological lens holds for identifying the most effective ways to ensure validity (Creswell 2000). One method appropriate to the study design and my epistemological lens, then, was triangulation of the data. Triangulation involves the use of multiple data sources to develop a deep and comprehensive understanding of data. The particular method I used was triangulation of sources, which allowed me to examine the consistency of different data sources – in this study, the three executive and the participants from each of the three case example schools - that were gathered using the same method of interviewing (Patton 1999, Cohen and Crabtree 2006). This occurred during the multiple levels of analysis I used to test for the convergence of the conclusions I was drawing during that process (Miles 2014). This analysis also allowed me to seek disconfirming evidence as I identified patterns amongst the participants' perspectives, and isolate the outliers in order to contrast their perspectives with the others. The value of disconfirming evidence and identifying outliers for validity in this study is that it allowed me to more clearly identify what the emerging patterns did *not* demonstrate, and also to check for the relative representativeness of the perspectives of the participants (Creswell 2000, Miles 2014). As we will see in Chapter 4, there was at least one outlier from each of the three schools that shared a very different perspective on inclusion in their school communities than most of the other participants. While there was a clear pattern of belief amongst most participants that the presence of visible minorities and racial/ethnic mixing between students was clear evidence that their schools were well integrated and inclusive, the outliers presented an alternative view of their school cultures characterized by lack of access and the frequency of microaggressions.

It also was important to test my conclusions with others as I went along, while still adhering to the highest level of confidentiality for the participants from the three schools. To that end, I engaged in member checking with my graduate student peers and my graduate advisor, who could provide feedback about my analyses and conclusions. I specifically relied on the perspective with one particular peer who is also a Head of School in an independent school, since he could provide me with feedback based on his knowledge of that context (although not the participating schools, of course) (Creswell 2007). While I did email two of the three Heads of School to ask some clarification questions about statements they made, I did not share any of the other data with them before the publishing of this dissertation.

Finally, it was important to establish researcher reflexivity (Creswell 2000), since there was the potential for an advocacy bias in this research. An advocacy bias occurs when the values of the researcher potentially affect the conduct of the study or the findings. Among the factors that can contribute to an advocacy bias are the researcher's hope of finding a program, practice, or intervention that is working, the desire to reach conclusions that are useful to others, and the desire to generate findings that will stimulate action (Stake 2006). I have spent my career as a teacher and administrator in private schools, and have been a passionate advocate for diversity and inclusion. My work as an administrator has allowed me to work closely with colleagues and parents, which has shaped my interest in their perceptions of diversity in the schools they choose. And, since there is little to no research available on diversity and inclusion in independent schools, it was important not to over-reach when drawing conclusions from the study for the purpose of providing a possible roadmap for others to follow. In order to avoid this advocacy bias, throughout the research process I had to reflectively examine how my background and work as a practitioner might impact my analysis. This possibility made it even more important, therefore, to engage in the methods described above. As themes emerged from the data, I intentionally sought and reported evidence that contradicted or undermined the general perspective and emerging themes of the study. By acknowledging this contradictory evidence, readers can weigh for themselves the merits of the claims, increasing the credibility of the study (Creswell 2009, Miles 2014).

The constructivist lens through which I viewed the data, then, is itself the reason I do not claim generalizability of the conclusions that I draw here. Another researcher certainly could employ the same data collection and analysis methods in different states using different case examples and gather different data that might yield very different conclusions. For that matter, a researcher could choose to study more than three schools in California – perhaps schools with more traditional programs and cultures - interview more participants, and possibly draw different conclusions. However, I made every effort to collect and analyze data with consistency and transparency in order to ensure valid claims for the field that I was able to capture. The cross-section of schools that participated, combined with the broad perspectives of the executives, produced insights that emerged from this analysis that can be helpful to independent schools as leaders seek to problem-solve and enhance diversity and inclusion in independent schools (Creswell 2007, Yin 2009).

Chapter 4: Findings

I begin this chapter with the findings from my interviews with three executives who function as spokespeople for the field: John Chubb, President of NAIS; Eugene Batiste, the former Vice President for Equity and Justice of NAIS; and James McManus, the Executive Director of CAIS. These participants are engaged in data analysis, strategic visioning, and direct work with independent schools, and their comments reflect their ability to identify and articulate trends regarding diversity and inclusion. Each has a unique perspective on a particular portion of the field of independent schools, both because of his past experiences and his current role in the organizations I will profile here. I treat this set of informants as sources for the more elaborated discourses or ideologies on diversity and inclusion that one would expect national and state level leaders of a given field to develop. While these leaders described some significant shifts in administrator, faculty, and parent attitudes towards diversity from their vantage point, the attitudes that they describe certainly align with the multicultural attitude towards diversity that I discussed in the literature review above. While the executives' perceptions of schools as relatively free from the extreme preference for homogeneity that traditionally characterized independent schools, and also significantly less militant than attitudes that would align with critical theory, it is clear from the rest of my findings that the schools I studied favor liberal conceptions of multiculturalism more than the executives would expect. And, while they point more explicitly to social boundaries that exist for "atypical" students, their silence around the symbolic boundaries that prevent full inclusion for those students are useful in analyzing similar silences from school participants around those boundaries. I use the comments from the executives, then, as aspirational benchmarks for school level participants that then become the organizing concepts for the analysis of the participating schools.

Next I present findings from interviews with Heads of School, other administrators, teachers, and typical independent school parents - at three schools in California. Each school represents a unique organizational context. In order to capture this variation, each school and the associated findings are presented separately. I provide specific characteristics of each school such as general location and mission statements, along with an analysis of each school's enrollment and financial aid data in order to compare them to the national and state statistics. The varieties and similarities amongst the organizations themselves the participants' add more depth to our understanding of diversity and inclusion in independent schools.

The broadest categories that I use to organize the findings for each school are, of course, drawn from my research questions on diversity as value and perceptions of inclusion. Because all of the participants' perceptions are manifestations of multicultural attitudes towards diversity and inclusion, I sort the data into categories for analyzing these perceptions. First, I examine the ways in which participants explicitly describe the value they place on diversity. Next I discuss limits to inclusion that are related to cultural and social capital, whether stated explicitly and implicitly; and any evidence of leadership and/or reculturing strategies at play in each school. Finally, I summarize and compare the findings for the executives and the three schools, situate these findings in existing literature, and note areas for future research.

The Independent School Field

The National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) was established in 1962 to serve private, independent schools across the country, mainly in matters of curriculum and pedagogy. Today, NAIS also provides resources for its 1400 member K-12 schools in the areas of professional development, school operations, assessment and data analysis, governance, and government relations. Because NAIS has been tracking statistical data on enrollment since 2000 and financial aid since 2001 – both nationally and regionally – it provides information key to understanding the evolution of diversity and its current status in independent schools in the broadest sense (NAIS 2012).

The organization lists equity as one of the four pillars of its “refreshed” mission this year, and provides a number of different services for member schools around diversity and inclusion. NAIS has been engaging in work around diversity almost since its inception, first establishing an Office of Minority Affairs in 1969 on the heels of the civil rights movement and early attempts to increase racial/ethnic and socioeconomic diversity in independent schools. By 1989 it had been renamed as the Office of Diversity and Multicultural Services, and is now known as the Office of Equity and Justice. That office began sponsoring the annual People of Color Conference (PoCC) for faculty and staff in NAIS member schools in 1986, and later added the Student Diversity Leadership Conference (SDLC) to accompany it (NAIS 2012, NAIS 2012, NAIS 2013, NAIS 2014).

CAIS serves approximately 215 schools and approximately 85,000 students across the state in areas of accreditation, professional development, governance, and technology. The organization acts as an accrediting agency in partnership with the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) (CAIS 2014). Unlike NAIS, which employs approximately 57 full-time employees, CAIS is relatively leanly staffed. In addition to the Executive Director, employees include directors of accreditation, professional development, governance, and technology, as well as an administrative assistant; there is no position that is dedicated to equity, diversity or inclusion. In addition to the employees, CAIS also utilizes a Board of Directors structure that is made up of Heads of School, and elementary and secondary boards of standards made up of Heads and other administrators.

Findings, Part 1: Executives’ Perspectives on *Diversity and Inclusion*

Demographic trends have had significant impact on independent schools, according to John Chubb, particularly in terms of enrollment. Increased mobility for many families means that they are less likely to stay in one area for long periods of time and become attached to a SIS. “[A]ll of that moving around has disrupted the traditional patterns of independent school tenants. And, I think for the better, because now independent schools are trying to appeal to all kinds of families” (Chubb 2014). Chubb also claimed that the days of the nearly homogeneous independent school are just about over, and while a few schools in California and the Northeast still fit the stereotypical model of an elite private institution, most have been evolving away from that model over the last 20-30 years. Chubb argued that as local economies impact city and neighborhood demographics, independent schools that once enjoyed excellent reputations with local families are often forced to change their marketing and admissions strategies to meet the demands of a significantly different community (Chubb 2014).

As Chubb pointed out, many schools are now increasing the number of financial aid participants by offering smaller awards to more families as a result, although he did not

specify the racial/ethnic backgrounds of students who participate. According to data provided by NAIS, tuitions continue to rise steadily for independent schools; the average median tuition for secondary day schools in California was \$33,750 for the 2014-2015 school year, a 24% increase since the 2009-2010 school year. However, a median of 21% of students participated in financial aid (at some level) in 2014-2015, while a median of 22% of students participated in 2009-2010. The average award in 2009-2010 was around \$13,000, however, while the average award in 2014-2015 was about \$15,000 (NAIS 2010, NAIS 2015). What Chubb did not address in his comments and what is not clear from these statistics is the difference in participation in financial aid by students of color and White students.

Chubb also claimed that, in addition to these pressures, parents are beginning to show an interest – sometimes even an expectation – that independent schools will reflect the racial/ethnic and socioeconomic diversity of the country as a whole and their specific neighborhoods. Chubb argued that while the elite used to look to independent schools to help them actively avoid meaningful contact with those from different cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds, more and more parents are actually becoming skeptical of independent schools that are not demonstrating a visible commitment to building a diverse school community. As he stated, “...I don’t think middle class parents are hungry to have lots of disadvantaged kids in their schools per se, but I think that they want a school that aspires to – they want a school that holds equity and diversity in high regard, and that is not uniform, is not all rich kids, not all White kids – whatever the case may be. I think that’s a pretty widely held point of view”(Chubb 2014). This statement seems to point to a subtle boundary, then, for inclusion of students who may be deemed to be “too disadvantaged” to be accepted in independent schools, whether understood to be social, economic, or intellectual. The way that schools explicitly and implicitly define acceptable levels of difference, then, is worthy of further exploration later in this chapter.

Beyond simply enrolling students from different backgrounds, Chubb also claimed that parents are looking for independent schools that will serve the greater public good in some way, not just benefit the students who attend these schools themselves. As he stated, “...I think most schools also believe that the reason to do that is not only to serve a public purpose, but also to provide kids with more realistic education where all kinds of students are exposed to a range of students so that students who can pay a full tuition don’t just attend school with other children whose parents can pay a full tuition.” Still, while schools usually articulate an underlying philosophy regarding diversity and equity, he said that he thinks that “...a pragmatic school, will try to create a real world environment for their kids” (Chubb 2014).

What I think is happening is that schools see more and more families wanting an educational environment and a peer group for their kids that is representative of today’s society and of the communities in which families live...I think what parents really mean is they want a place that is operating in the spirit of the common good, and that doesn’t smack those elitism and separatism” (Chubb 2014).

Chubb did not elaborate on this claim, nor did he provide anecdotal or other evidence for its veracity.

Like Chubb, Gene Batiste claimed that independent schools no longer seek to build racially/ethnically or socioeconomically homogeneous communities. He also said that he

has observed that, as a result of increasing the percentage of students of color and students on financial aid, more and more schools are seeking advice from consultants like him on how to best integrate these atypical students into their school communities. “I saw a steady increase in the number of inquiries and requests for me to present on racial/ethnic diversity,” said Batiste. “I wasn’t doing this work when I first started in 2000...”(Batiste 2014).

Batiste argued that independent schools are actually in a better position to build more diverse communities than many public schools because they are schools of choice, and are not limited by the segregated residential patterns that shape public school district student populations – wealthy or otherwise. He went further to say that this reality could be a key factor in attracting prospective families who value socioeconomic diversity in particular. “I think schools are going to have to be...realizing the unique positions that they’re in as independent schools, to have socioeconomic and class diversity, versus our public school counterparts...because of property taxes and where schools are situated, and how that seems to match the lack of socioeconomic and class diversity in public schools” (Batiste 2014). Like Chubb, Batiste described a future where independent schools will be compelled to make more significant changes regarding diversity and inclusion if they are to survive, and described current attitudes trending in that direction. Since his perspective is grounded in his work as a diversity consultant, he provided more empirical evidence to support his claims. However, he stopped short of elucidating the nuances in parent opinions that still might serve to limit diversity and inclusion.

Jim McManus of CAIS described his own observations of these trends towards acceptance of - and possibly expectations for - diversity in California independent schools. He also said the parents, and also said that he has observed that parents are increasingly aware that diverse student populations serve the practical need of preparing students for life in a multicultural, globalized world. “I can see the light bulbs going off with people who have resisted it in the past because they want their kids to do well, to have jobs, to work in teams. (McManus 2014). Still, McManus said that these kinds attitudinal changes should not obscure the steep learning curve that most independent schools have had to contend with as they become more diverse:

“Particularly when I was an administrator and...I saw it as a priority to have a diverse community for any number of reasons...what I noticed was – at least, this was say, starting 1980 or so – I had a number of people who needed heavy convincing on the proposition that a diverse school is a stronger school – inherently stronger, and better for all kids who are there. And some people would not believe it, no matter what you said, and I just accepted that. I think as time has gone on – and this probably started happening, maybe in the early ‘90s – I noticed a number of schools beginning to put language into their mission statements that included some reference to diversity, or multiculturalism, or inclusion. And I think throughout the ‘90s and into the new century, that became almost common for schools to do that”(McManus 2014).

McManus drew a distinction between the blunt stereotyping he observed in independent schools in the 1980’s and 1990’s, and the current attitudes towards diversity amongst prospective parents that seem to rest on the most practical considerations.

McManus held that, as California itself has become increasingly racially/ethnically and socioeconomically diverse, residents' experiences with people from different backgrounds have increased in frequency, and possibly meaningfulness, in ways that can reshape their perspectives. While he described prejudices that still exist in independent school communities— such as a White parent who worried aloud that the presence of Blacks and Latinos in a school would lower the academic standards while the presence of too many Asian students would raise standards too much – he also said that he has observed more and more traditional independent school parents and staff at least expressing support for building more diverse school communities. “...And, in some cases, there’s a genuine understanding of the richness that can come with a diverse community” (McManus 2014). As with Chubb and Batiste, McManus also did not offer clues on the limits that still might exist amongst parents' and employees' attitudes towards diversity. Again, it is unclear just how much diversity is enough for school communities, even those that have become more open to it conceptually.

And yet, there was also agreement amongst these executives that at the end of the day, the strength of any independent school rests first and foremost on its academic program and, by extension, on its ability to place students in excellent colleges and universities. So, while these participants argued that there are practical reasons that a diverse learning environment is beneficial to all students and that more and more parents are interested in “buying” for their children, its value still pales in comparison to the academic program when they are searching for a school. Of course, this does not align with the literature on school choice, which points to the power of social status and cultural affinity across race and class – which is missing from their comments. While they claim that the power of status and affinity are waning, research certainly suggests otherwise.

The parental attitudes towards diversity that the executives described, then, align most closely with the liberal multicultural attitude discussed in the literature review. All three point to an absence of preference for homogeneity, but none described any radical notions of change at work in the field of independent schools. Rather, the multicultural attitudes they described are characterized by a certain degree of self interest on the part of parents, in that they can see the practical value for their children to develop social skills in a diverse setting. While Chubb discussed the possibility that some would be interested in diversity as it serves a “public purpose,” this is far from the more radical ideology of change associated with critical race theory and related attitudes.

Furthermore, while the executives described the moderate changes that have taken place in the field over the last 20 years, they did not discuss as directly the forces that have, in fact, placed limits on those changes. The ideology of change they described is far from radical, and instead favors practical motivations for having a somewhat diverse school community. It is appealing to prospective parents that a school appears to enroll some “different” students, but perhaps not so different that the traditional markers of an independent school culture have been significantly disrupted.

All three executives discussed the increase in support for diversity and inclusion they have observed amongst current parents and employees towards diversity and inclusion, and all cited the growing increases in budget allocations at most schools for financial aid programs as evidence of that support (Batiste 2014, Chubb 2014, McManus 2014). While scholarship programs of any kind were few and far between in the earliest days of most independent schools, there certainly has been a steady rise over the last 15

years. Directing resources to such programs is an expensive choice that schools are making, and Chubb pointed to the changes in distribution that have taken place in particular since the economic downturn of 2008 (Chubb 2014).

McManus also has seen financial aid budgets increase in California independent schools over the last decade, which he said flows from increased understanding amongst school leaders and trustees that tuitions are simply out of range for the majority of Californians. Of course, the recent recession highlighted the need for financial aid for a growing number of families who might not have needed such support in the past, but who found themselves out of work or facing reduced responsibilities and income. Beyond the practical considerations, however, McManus said that he has encountered trustees in particular who do not see inherent value in building a socioeconomically diverse student body. While he discussed his strong belief in leveraging available data on topics such as family income and peer school financial aid programs to present a strong case to boards that are considering action in this area, even those statistics do not always create a sense of urgency. (McManus 2014). He said that while such attitudes are becoming less common as personal experiences reshape perspectives, parents who can afford to both pay the full cost of tuition for their children and also support the school's fundraising efforts are often the ones who are also tapped to serve as trustees. The implicit claim here, then, is that the wealthiest parents are often those with the hard and soft power to place limits on the level of socioeconomic diversity in a school, and often are the least compelled to champion this kind of diversity.

Batiste acknowledged that a "regionality" exists that impact of attitudes towards diversity, and that the local realities of any area – for example, racial/ethnic makeup of the population, local industry and economy, etc. – will provide context for any conversations and strategic planning at schools (Batiste 2014). At the same time, all three executives point to the availability of statistical data – both local and national – along with increased professional development opportunities, that schools can leverage to broaden their thinking. However, they did not discuss the extent to which certain schools make more or less use of these resources, and the reason why schools might choose not to use these resources in the planning and decision making.

In responding to my questions about strategies that independent schools could consider in order to build more diverse communities, Chubb spoke of the need for schools to articulate their values around diversity consistently, but also emphasized the need to do so in a market-sensitive way. He also described the power that the Head of School has to articulate the school's values, while walking the fine line between challenging various constituencies without alienating them. "So, my guess is Heads say that this is something that we believe in deeply, but we go about it without talking about it a lot or something. I suppose that does make sense...I think it depends on the community" (Chubb 2014).

Chubb also argued that schools should remain cautious about promoting their commitment to both racial/ethnic and socioeconomic diversity during and after the admissions process with traditional families, lest those families find such commitments to be alienating. "Very few people," he said, "are truly interested in seeing their tuition dollars go to other students, and because independent schools rely on full-pay families for their very survival, it would be unwise to over-emphasize the structure of budgeted financial aid." And, as the number of families who can afford full tuition for independent schools shrinks, and competition for those families increases, schools have to tailor their marketing

efforts to maximize the possibility of attracting the families they need. In doing so, Chubb allowed that it also might benefit some schools to de-emphasize racial/ethnic diversity along with socioeconomic diversity (Chubb 2014). These were perhaps his most explicit warnings against going overboard with diversity; if the existing community members represent the market as he described it, then clearly they will only tolerate so much talk or action.

Batiste and McManus pointed to the need for strong communication as well, and Batiste emphasized the responsibility of Heads of School in leading their communities in frequent conversation about the inherent value of diversity in light of their school's mission. They both stated that practical considerations should be articulated, but when those considerations often are emphasized over values, the implicit message sent is that the school cares almost exclusively about the practicalities (Batiste 2014, McManus 2014). Batiste cited Wanda Holland Greene, the Head of the Hamlin School in San Francisco and who is African-American, as a leader who prioritizes the articulation of diversity as an inherent value that undergirds all of the other academic work that the community undertakes. By using the school's commitment to diversity as the foundation for improving the academic and social achievement of all students, he described that Greene effectively couples what often are seen as discreet and even unrelated concepts, and thus builds shared responsibility amongst colleagues and parents for furthering these goals. Batiste also said he has observed a real need for "enlightened" Heads who are White to take initiative in leading their communities towards a better understanding of the benefits of diversity for all students – not just students of color (Batiste 2014).

Since McManus acknowledged, however, that there has been "a kind of quieting-down of the talk about diversity" as schools have pursued other goals and responded to pressing needs, he identified the need for schools to be clear in all of their communications – admissions collaterals, open house speeches, etc. – about their commitment to diversity and its connection to the school's mission, rather than avoid discussing it for fear of alienating some. Since those who do not resonate to that message likely will not be good fits for a school that is committed to diversity and inclusion, he reasoned, and since those who are intrigued are likely to want to learn more, there are more opportunities that schools can take in these regards. He also specifically mentioned how powerful the voice of the Head is in this work, and that Heads who speak about the school's values at every opportunity, not just during admissions, set the tone and move the conversation to the forefront. The Head is also uniquely positioned to work with the Board to ensure that trustees prioritize diversity in their own recruitment of new trustees and in their governance focus. Beyond that, the Head can demonstrate leadership in this area by ensuring professional development opportunities exist not just for colleagues but for the parent community as well, which can help schools move beyond the "international lunch festival" approach to diversity and towards a more nuanced understanding of the values it presents for the students and the larger community (McManus 2014)

In summary, all three of these executives say that they have observed shifts in attitudes towards racial/ethnic and socioeconomic diversity over time, and the relative value that parents, faculty and staff place on diversity within their independent schools. They ascribe significantly more interest in diverse independent schools on the part of prospective parents than ever before, although they acknowledge that the academic program is still likely to be the most important deciding factor for families. Not only do

these claims diverge from the research, they also leave out considerations of status and affinity and their impact on attitude during and after the choice process. While Chubb spoke most directly about some form of a moral imperative to build diverse communities in SIS (“public purpose”), the three executives seem to agree that practical considerations such as enrollment and long-term financial sustainability still carry the most weight as schools look to take meaningful steps in these areas. Meanwhile, the philosophical underpinnings of these decisions are often unarticulated and deemphasized, especially as schools retreat from the deeper and more difficult conversations around racial/ethnic and socioeconomic diversity. All three executives, however, pointed to examples of Heads of School who regularly articulate diversity as a core value for their institutions, and the impact that can have on other members of the community. None of them was clear, however, about the degree to which such emphasis actually might help to change the attitudes of other members of school communities. While they described a field that has undergone a major shift away from the stringent attitudes for homogeneity of the past, they also indicate the many limits to diversity and inclusion that exist largely in the silence that accompanies any efforts therein.

When discussing attitudes towards inclusion in particular, Chubb and Batiste acknowledged that independent schools certainly have their work cut out for them – good intentions or not. Both claimed that most public and charter schools across the nation have not achieved the levels of diversity that many independent schools have built over the last 10-15 years, mainly owing to the fact that those schools reflect the cultural and socioeconomic character of their neighborhoods. Still, considering how few models there are in any realm for the difficult task of building inclusive communities, they acknowledged the challenges that independent face in this work (Batiste 2014, Chubb 2014).

As we saw in the literature, independent schools have often viewed a successfully integrated school community as a version of the “melting pot,” one in which people from of different backgrounds gradually lose their differences in favor of a singular identity. This is a popular version of cultural assimilation, which requires those from minority backgrounds to blend into the dominant culture so that they do not diverge from the established cultural norms. Chubb argued that assimilation should not – and certainly is not meant to be – the goal that schools should hold as they diversify their communities. Rather, the experience of learning with and from students from many different backgrounds should be part of any student’s experience in school, and independent schools must work to create the kinds of conditions that will foster those authentic experiences. While he noted that schools that do not adequately acknowledge the real differences that exist amongst students end up “papering over” diversity and losing opportunities, he also cautioned schools against “exacerbating those differences” unnecessarily. Schools that implicitly or explicitly encourage students to “clump” together based on race/ethnicity or socioeconomic status, he said, are missing opportunities to build more inclusive communities. Finding that balance is challenging to say the least, he acknowledged, and many schools lack the resources and expertise needed to better leverage the potential richness of the diverse communities they have built (Chubb 2014). Once again, Chubb was an advocate for balance when it comes to inclusion – acknowledge differences to an extent, but never so much that these differences create discomfort. While he does not explicitly state who is being protected from discomfort, the implicit argument is that members of the dominant culture have only limited patience for this kind of work on inclusion.

McManus described that until schools can identify what they will actually do differently as a result of having a more diverse community, and implement some new programs and practices to respond to the new realities, true integration and inclusivity will continue to be elusive. Even so, he claimed, it is not clear that the lack thereof would necessarily be visible to those in the dominant culture of these school communities, unless critical incidents occurred that highlight the real differences between students of color and students on financial aid and the rest of the student body in ways that are more uncomfortable. McManus recalled conversations with some traditional parents who were otherwise supportive of the school's work to build a more diverse community, but who were nonetheless uncomfortable about experiences their children were hearing about the experiences of "other" students in their classes:

"...we had, in some classes, 4 or 5 out of 60 kids who were from East Palo Alto, and there was some unease in classrooms where they talked about, in class discussions, how you could gauge from the sound of the gunshots at night when it was finally time to get under the dining room table to protect yourself, because they were just getting too close. And I did have some parent comments on, you know, "What are you exposing my daughter to?" and on and on, but...we're exposing them to the lives lots of different people live, and this is good" (McManus 2014).

An accompanying challenge for schools that de-emphasize diversity, as identified by both Batiste and McManus, is the tendency that faculty-staff and parents have to collapse racial/ethnic and socioeconomic diversity. This tendency usually manifests generally as the assumption that students of color also participate in financial aid, and can have an impact on efforts to recruit families of color. They claimed that in addition to perpetuating stereotypes amongst students and adults, such assumptions may discourage more targeted marketing to different racial/ethnic groups that might otherwise help increase the critical mass that many schools say that are looking to improve (Batiste 2014, McManus 2014).

While there is, of course, a relationship between race/ethnicity and socioeconomic status in the US and in California in particular, and while Black and Latino families are at least statistically more likely to need financial assistance to attend many independent schools, Batiste and McManus indicated that the landscape is evolving – albeit slowly – so that more families of color might be able to afford more tuition to attend independent schools (Batiste 2014, McManus 2014). And, while Chubb held that schools must be careful not to alienate traditional families with their talk about diversity, McManus warned that independent schools in California in particular have not been very successful in attracting significantly more Latino families, even as the Latino population of school-age children in California has surpassed the White population:

"We can't live with that disconnect for very long before several really strategic developments happen. One is, Hispanic families see our schools as irrelevant. Two, we basically yield half the potential market to everybody else, because we're not connecting with them. And three: our kids walk through the doors of their school and walk out, however many years later, without really understanding what it's like to interact on a daily basis with kids who come from a certain culture, language, and sometimes a situation that's a saga of more recent immigration into a country, and

what that's like for them, and what that's built in them in terms of character, and attributes, and where a lot of the population of California will be coming from in the future, in terms of their electing officials, working collaboratively in offices, or wherever" (McManus 2014).

The three executives offered very different sets of suggestions for strategies that independent schools could consider as they work towards more inclusive communities. Chubb emphasized the need for schools to control costs as much as possible, and to consider alternative models for facilities use, staffing, and even small class size – a sacred cow within the independent school world but whose value, he said, has been “oversold” (Chubb 2014). By setting forth academic potential and performance as the primary common denominator shared by students, Chubb argued that schools could leverage parents' main interest in academic quality and still talk about diversity without overemphasizing it. Once families have joined the school community, any direct work that can be done to “fully integrate” students and avoid “clumping” by race/ethnicity or socioeconomic status would have a positive impact on student experience within the school culture, and by extension, could help build support for the school's diversity efforts amongst the full pay families who would be more likely to see diversity as a value-add (Chubb 2014). Again, Chubb reflected the measured approach to inclusion that he also offered for diversity, emphasizing balance and comfort for the dominant culture. There was no indication of the need to focus on reculturing for equity, and instead he indicated more symbolic boundaries that surround the full inclusion of atypical students.

Batiste focused on the sustainability of financial aid programs, and in particular, pointed to the need for schools to broaden their view of financial aid beyond tuition assistance to include supplemental costs of attending independent schools as well. He pointed to a trend amongst many schools to extend assistance to financial aid participants for “ancillary” items not covered by tuition like uniforms, books, and school trips as a way to provide equitable access to the full experience of life at the school. Beyond finances, Batiste also saw the need for schools to examine their current practices through the lens of cross-cultural competence and sensitivity (Batiste 2014). Unlike Chubb, Batiste took a more explicit step towards reculturing with that last suggestion, but he did not offer specifics about how schools should do this work. Still, the fact that he discussed “sensitivity” indicates a somewhat softer approach to inclusion than might be suggested by proponents of culturally relevant pedagogy or other multicultural strategies. While he was more explicit, then, about the need for schools to wrestle more openly with challenges to inclusion, he seemed to be searching for measured ways to do so.

McManus shared Batiste's desire to see schools increase supplemental financial support for families who participate in financial aid programs. He also saw the need for continued education around topics related to diversity, including and especially at the Board level. Beyond that, McManus specifically pointed to the need for Boards to intentionally and consistently increase the racial/ethnic and socioeconomic diversity of their own membership. Even more important for the health of the school communities is the difficult (but not impossible) task of increasing the number of teachers of color in independent schools, which could have a significant impact on all students' experience, regardless of race or class (McManus 2014).

McManus also identified the need for schools to broaden and deepen student and adult diversity education, and to move beyond just the “international lunch festival” approach to diversity and towards academic programs that include diversity topics and thus encourage honest and nuanced conversations. He also advocated for utilizing current demographic and economic data to highlight the challenges and opportunities of having a more diverse community, a strategy that he said he has seen work effectively with all adult constituencies within schools. One of the most important strategies, according to McManus, is leveraging the personal experiences of members of the school community to frame the need for time and attention to matters of inclusivity. He recalled a particular experience with some parents and trustees at a school where he was the Head, when:

“...we were in a development committee meeting, and one of the blond, white moms got off on how the school had too many Asians, and this was going to hurt fundraising, which was another argument that people had...and it was one of those junctures that was kind of a turning point, because the two guys – the two White guys who were sitting there in dark suits, going off to their high-tech and banking jobs – resisted, but politely. One of them was married to an Asian woman; another had adopted a Korean orphan” (McManus 2014).

Heads of School, according to McManus, are in a unique position to make the most of situations like that when they occur – either by stepping up to facilitate more conversation, or by stepping back and letting the other people in the room take the lead. The Head also has to pay close attention to the pace of change, and the degree to which it can be accelerated through action or not. The changes that come to any school are “...not always visible to the people who are clinging to the past and feeling disturbed by cultural change” (McManus 2014). Here, McManus expanded upon the need for strong leadership from the Head during the choice process to include leadership for equity within the existing school community. While he certainly did not suggest that a Head take a radical position on inclusion that would severely disrupt her community, he did indicate the need for the Head to lead visibly and consistently in keeping these topics in front of all members of the community. His comments come closest to the kind of leadership described in the literature on organizational change and leadership for equity.

Summary

Each of the executives based their claims about diversity and inclusion on their observations of independent schools, and perhaps because they have spent different amounts of time in different capacities in those schools, their ability to ground their perspectives in specific empirical evidence differed significantly. All seemed to point to a set of liberal multicultural attitudes towards diversity in schools that emphasize a more egalitarian approach than might be favored by scholars of critical theory or more radical proponents of multiculturalism. Of the three, McManus was the most direct in suggesting sustained and explicit efforts to reculture school communities for equity, while Chubb advocated for the most careful courses of action so as not to alienate the dominant majority. Batiste seemed to come down somewhere in between, offering suggestions that would challenge some deeply held assumptions on the part of the majority, but not so much that they might resist the conversation or further work.

They also gave some clear signals about where the potential danger zones might be in independent schools with regards to equity, and their silence – or lack of supporting empirical evidence – often was the best indication of the social and symbolic boundaries that exist. School communities, and specifically the dominant cultures that exist within those communities, have a limited capacity for anything that is explicitly related to diversity and inclusion, so school leaders have to be economical in their foci on them. While there is no explicit suggestion for how much cultural or class diversity amongst the students is enough, there were strong indications that there certainly might be such a thing as “too much” of one or both. All three explicitly pointed to the limits that financial aid places on socioeconomic diversity, and obviously that is a clear indication that there can be too much socioeconomic diversity such that it renders the school financially unstable. Only McManus spoke directly about the connections between financial aid and the racial/ethnic diversity it often makes possible. Chubb, on the other hand, cautioned against discussing the financial aid model with full-pay families since they likely would not support their tuition dollars being allocated to other students. While none explicitly suggested an ideal percentage of students of color in any given school, they indicated that White families might be less comfortable with what might appear to be higher percentages.

What these executives seemed to agree upon is the desire in independent schools to maintain the comfort of their typical parents – and, by extension, faculty and staff as well – with regards to anything having to do with diversity and inclusion. Chubb certainly recommended that schools pay close attention to typical parents’ capacity to tolerate difference, and recalibrate their messaging as necessary to maintain their engagement and support. Bastite and McManus recommended more direct courses of action to change the hearts and minds of that population – not with abandon, of course, but characterized by clear intentions and strong leadership. Chubb’s suggestion indicate that there are limits to the impact schools can have on parents’ and employee’s attitudes, and that attitudes are changing largely because of shifts in perception at a broader societal level. Bastiste and McManus seem to suggest that those limits might be mitigated to an extent by strong leadership, especially by Heads of School. All three acknowledge the tensions that remain in independent schools around diversity and inclusion, but they all stopped short of naming the forces that help to sustain and perpetuate those tensions. In the following sections, I will examine the extent to which those tensions are evident in the perceptions shared by school community members, and the extent to which the social and symbolic boundaries described in mostly implicit ways by the executives seem manifest in those schools.

Findings, Part 2: South Hills School

South Hills School serves 500 students in grades 7-12. The school reports a student population of 51% who identify as White; 30% Asian; 9% Latino; 6% African American; and 4% Middle Eastern. The school does not report any students who identify as Multiracial. Compared to NAIS and CAIS averages, South Hills has higher percentages of students of color overall, and in particular has a much higher percentage of Asian students. While the African American and Latino percentages are a bit higher than the NAIS and CAIS averages as well, the percentages of these groups still reflect an underrepresentation that mirrors the national and state scenes. Because of the size of the Asian population, and because of participants' perceptions of those students' academic and social successes within the culture, I will highlight the impact of this group on the school's efforts to build inclusive community later in this section.

29% of the students at South Hills participate in the financial aid program, and the average grant covers about 50% of the cost of tuition. Again, this puts South Hills higher than the medians for both NAIS and CAIS for participation, and slightly higher than NAIS and CAIS for the average percentage of tuition covered by the grants.

South Hills publishes its mission and vision statements along with an honor code on its website; none of them contains the terms equity, diversity, or inclusion. This differentiates them from the majority of independent schools that include one or more of those terms in their statements.

I interviewed a total of sixteen people from South Hills school for this study, including administrators, faculty, staff, and parents. Some interviewees had more than one role at the school, such as some parents who also have served on the Board of Trustees and some staff members whose children have attended the school. The following chart provides details for each interviewee:

Interviewee	Role 1	Role 2	Student 1	Student 2	Student 3 ¹
SH.AD.1	Admissions	None	None	None	None
SH.AD.2	Faculty Dean	None	None	None	None
SH.AD.3	Development	None	None	None	None
SH.AD.4	Student Dean	None	None	None	None
SH.AD.5	Finance	Parent	Grad	Grad	None
SH.AD.6	Head	None	None	None	None
SH.PT.1	Parent	None	Grad	10th	None
SH.PT.2	Parent	None	Grad	Grad	8 th
SH.PT.3	Parent	None	Grad	9th	None
SH.PT.4	Parent	Trustee	Grad	12th	9 th
SH.PT.5	Parent	Staff	Grad	Grad	None
SH.PT.6	Parent	Trustee	Grad	Grad	12 th
SH.TC.1	Teacher	None	None	None	None
SH.TC.2	Teacher	None	None	None	None
SH.TC.3	Teacher	None	None	None	None
SH.TC.4	Teacher	None	None	None	None

¹ Since some participants played multiple roles at the school, such as parents who were also trustees or staff, this chart is designed to incorporate all of the possible identifiers for all participants and provide appropriate identity information for each individual.

The school is located in the town of Renton, which is adjacent to the city of Broompton. While the median household income in California was about \$57,000 in 2011, the median household income in Renton was \$137,000 and \$72,000 in Broompton. The median house or condominium value in California that same year was \$357,000, compared to a median of \$858,000 in Renton and \$600,000 in Broompton. Renton's population is majority White (67%) and Asian (26%); Broompton's population is more diverse, with Whites (37%), followed by Latinos (32%), Asians (18%), and African Americans (10%). South Hills certainly attracts students from other nearby towns as well, most of which have demographic profiles in the range of Renton and Broompton. Clearly, however, the school most closely reflected the more rarefied population of Renton than it does Broompton or other surrounding communities. Some members of the South Hills community noted the relatively narrow group of students the school served, and discussed ways to increase representation of Black and Latino students who did, in fact, live close enough to the school that they could attend.

In this and the following sections on the other participating schools, I will present the findings for each school under the sub-headings of attitudes towards diversity, and symbolic and social boundaries for inclusion. I will include an examination of these concepts as they relate to participants' choice of school, as well as their experiences since they have joined the school community. As with the data from the interviews with the executives, I will pay close attention both to the explicit comments shared by the participants, as well as the implicit comments and silences that indicate deeply held beliefs and assumptions, and invisible parts of the school culture. This approach allows me to compare and contrast the perspectives of the executives with life "on the ground" at each school, and to connect this data to the literature on related concepts.

Attitudes Towards Diversity at South Hills School

None of the participants from South Hills said that they went looking for a school that had a stated commitment to diversity or that showed signs of a diverse student community. The Head said he was most interested in a school that valued interpersonal relationships, and noted that during his interviews, "...it was just a lot of human interaction, a lot of human engagement (SH.AD.5 2014). Similarly, none of the other administrators at South Hills mentioned diversity as a characteristic they specifically sought nor something that they found notable during the interview processes; as one administrator at South Hills said, "I just saw it simply as a good school and a nice community" (SH.AD.1 2014). Most of the teachers I interviewed said that the positive school culture was appealing to them when they were considering their positions as well. The frequency with which other factors mattered was very scattered amongst this group; there were no mentions of the quality of the academic program and only one mention apiece for academic freedom and small class sizes – characteristics that certainly distinguish independent schools from public and charter schools, if nothing else. SH.TC.3 is the one teacher who did talk about the importance of academic freedom and small classes, and had joined South Hills after having spent time in a struggling charter school; the other interviewed teachers all came from other independent schools.

When I asked administrators why they thought parents chose South Hills for their children, all of them speculated that parents were mostly interested in the academic programs, the generally positive reputation of the school, and the positive school culture;

while teachers said that they did not have many conversations – if any – with parents about the reasons why they chose their school, they guessed that academics would be a top priority and that diversity would not be a factor for parents when they chose the school.

The most common responses from parents to questions about the factors that influenced their choice of school align closely with teachers' and administrators' educated guesses. The positive school culture was a major factor in their decisions most often, and the South Hills parents described the "feeling" they got from visiting the school and getting to know school community members during the admissions process as an important reason why they were compelled to join. Unlike the administrators and teachers, just as many parents identified the strength of the school's academic program as another major reason they chose the school, and the distinct but related criterion of the generally positive reputation of the school was meaningful for all of the parents as well. In fact, all of these parents attributed their final choice to the fact that their children felt more comfortable there. One parent summed up her son's preference as such: "I think what ended up being the discriminating factor in the end was that our son felt a lot more comfortable, and felt that the environment was warmer and more – he just felt more at home..." (SH.PT.1 2014).

No interviewee mentioned the school's success in college placement amongst the reasons that helped them decide to accept a position at South Hills or have their children attend. To be sure, some parents mentioned the more visible characteristics of the school, such as class size and facilities, as factors in their decisions. At the end of the day, however, it was the "vibe" of the school community that swayed them and their children.

What we see here is that, at least during the choice process, participants seem to have had what can be described as a neutral attitude towards diversity. It was neither a specific characteristic they sought, nor a factor in their final decision. This is not completely reflective of the literature on school choice, which suggests that the racial/ethnic makeup of a student body is an important factor for parents, and somewhat less so for teachers. However, the focus on a comfortable community where these participants and their children would "fit" is a possible indication that they were paying attention to the balance of cultural and class diversity in the school that the executives described. If the parents in particular had found a community at South Hills that was visibly more diverse, that might have reduced their feelings of comfort enough that they may have considered a different school. The fact that no one mentioned that they either looked for or found diversity, but that they all mentioned that they found a nice community, supports this possibility.

The Head did not identify diversity as a major priority when he first took the position, but instead focused on the development of a faculty who could help deliver on his vision for an excellent academic program that would be rooted in a clear understanding of adolescent intellectual, social, and emotional development as his top focus. He did not make an explicit connection between building a strong faculty and increasing diversity or building an inclusive community. However, he did describe his work to increase socioeconomic diversity early in his tenure as an important initiative, one that he saw as a long-term commitment to increasing the financial aid incrementally, which resulted in significant growth in budget allocations and in the percentage of students who could participate. At the time of this study, about half of that financial aid budget was supported by foundation grants and targeted fundraising, neither of which was in place when he took over. This kind of fundraising remained a priority for the SH Head, who said he always

kept his eyes and ears open for anyone who might have a particular passion for financial aid that might translate into financial support.

The Head said that later in his tenure he explicitly sought to increase the percentages of students of color on campus, and that he also brought in a new Director of Admissions who was charged with developing outreach programs to recruit Black and Latino students specifically. The Head acknowledged that building a financial aid budget later allowed South Hills' to have a more racially/ethnically diverse student body; the fact that the school was "anti-financial aid" before he took over meant that there had been little cultural diversity as well. While the SH Head said he did not face much vocal criticism, if any, about the school's commitment to socioeconomic diversity and the related benefits for racial/ethnic diversity, he also said he was aware that even now "there's certainly no widespread agreement among the parent body that that's an appropriate use of tuition dollars" (SH.AD.1 2014, SH.AD.5 2014).

Nonetheless, the Head expressed confidence that parents and colleagues understand the underlying philosophy and aims of the financial aid program at South Hills, both from a practical standpoint and from what he calls the "social responsibility" standpoint. He did not share specific evidence on which he based this perception. He said that he understood that he is more likely to convince parents that their children will benefit from a diverse learning community – which he said is still not universally accepted amongst parents at the school – than making an argument that such diverse communities can have larger, societal impact. "I think they understand, because I think we articulate it...I would have to say, compared to some schools and some areas, we have less support for the social responsibility argument. And so the one that has more appeal is the, "My student is going to benefit from a richer, more cosmopolitan education." He did not, however, share any strategy for convincing faculty and staff of the same concept, and simply stated that they "understood" (SH.AD.5 2014). The argument in favor of diversity that he puts forth, then, is very much rooted in the self-interest of the parents, who presumably want their children to gain advantages during their time at the school. He is practical in choosing this argument since the school is located in a relatively wealthy community that is likely less interested in the broader political and social implications of diversity. Those arguments are much more likely to disrupt the comfort that is clearly valued by these parents as well, so they represent an approach that is likely unnecessarily radical.

The Head did not express complete satisfaction with any of these efforts to promote racial/ethnic and socioeconomic diversity, and noted that he wants to see more Black and Latino students in the school and would like to have a larger financial aid budget available. With regards to racial/ethnic diversity, he believes that the school "should be able to" increase the enrollment of Black and Latino students since there are communities with large populations of Black and Latino families that are close enough to the school that it is reasonable that they might be able to attend. He said has been working closely with the Director of Admissions to develop new outreach strategies, and that current Black and Latino families are helping both with the development and the implementation of these strategies.

The other administrators and the teachers I interviewed from South Hills expressed a desire to increase the current levels of racial/ethnic diversity, but were not as clear that the school should have more socioeconomic diversity than it had at the time. Three administrators and one teacher – SH.AD.1, SH.AD.2, SH.AD.5, and SH.TC.2 - have been at the

school long enough that they have observed the increases in both racial/ethnic and socioeconomic diversity from the beginning of the Head's tenure. SH.AD.1 credits the Head with providing the vision and clarity of purpose that supported these increases. The other administrators also described the "strong" leadership that the Head has demonstrated in these areas, and said that they that the entire school community – including and especially parents – are well aware that both racial/ethnic and socioeconomic diversity are non-negotiable and valuable parts of the school culture at South Hills. As one administrator described, "It's more [the SH Head]...most people see the value of that" (SH.AD.2 2014). This group of participants talked explicitly about the positive role that diversity plays in the school community, and all of them described that they view diversity as a major reason why their community is a positive one. It is notable that all of the administrators expressed similar value for diversity within the school community, whether they have always known the school to be as diverse as it is now or have seen diversity increase over the years. Either way, they seem to have developed this value once they joined the school, and they all credited the Head for consistently articulating this value explicitly in ways that supported and enhanced their own personal experiences with the school's diverse population.

The other administrators and teachers – SH.AD.2, SH.AD.4, SH.TC.1, SH.TC.3, SH.TC.4 - described the SH Head as a visionary who always keeps the big picture in front of everyone, provides clear direction for the school's strategic initiatives, and respects colleagues and parents that elicits reciprocation. However, while the previous group offered examples of the Head's leadership on diversity without direct prompting, this group focused on other areas of his leadership when asked the same question and did not offer commentary on his leadership on diversity. This group also did not offer comments on the value of diversity for the school community or for themselves as employees. This group also did not share comments that indicated an urgency to build and maintain a diverse school community.

Both of these groups of administrators and teachers expressed high levels of satisfaction with the school, and none of these participants pointed to any serious issues with the culture that need attention – including diversity. While a few said they would like to see more racial diversity, most said that the current levels should be maintained. These attitudes seem to reflect the liberal multicultural conception of diversity, then, where differences are acknowledged but not to the detriment – or in this case, discomfort – of the dominant majority. Furthermore, these attitudes make the possibility of reculturing, as described by Schein, unlikely since there does not seem to be a problem that needs fixing.

The respect the Head commands amongst the various constituencies at the school, according to the administrators, is probably one key reason why there is a lack of vocal disagreement from any constituency with any of the school's goals for diversity, or even questions about how any of these goals manifest in recruiting or financial aid. However, some of the administrators certainly suspect that there exists a spectrum of parental attitudes towards diversity that are less visible but nonetheless present. When discussing parents' perspectives on funding financial aid through tuition revenue, one administrator described, "[w]e've had people, very few of them over 24 years, say they don't – a conservative voice and they probably because they're not – they're in the minority and [the SH Head] would not support it" (SH.AD.4 2014). The administrators who spoke at length and with the most passion about the value of diversity are those who are most directly

responsible for building and maintaining it: admissions, finance and development. SH. AD.5 spoke about the multi-year planning in place to sustain socioeconomic diversity, which is a key responsibility of hers as the Director of Finance, and SH.AD.1 spoke about the importance of financial aid for recruiting a culturally diverse student body.

When it comes to racial/ethnic diversity, a particular challenge around the role and place of Asians in the community emerged from interviews with all of the administrators and teachers. Because of the increase of Asian families in the local area over the years, SH.AD.1 described “White flight” from nearby public schools to private schools out of concern that Asian students were making it more difficult for White students to succeed. He added that the fact that the Asian population at South Hills has also been increasing over the years has caused some parents similar concerns. And, he said he has gotten the “sense” that some of the White families at South Hills are not excited about being in a school with a large Asian population – a sense, he explained, that is heightened for him because his wife is Asian. “But more and more, we’re being seen as a school that’s very rigorous. And the presence of a significant Asian population, in many people’s eyes, seems to reinforce that academically rigorous image” (SH.AD.1 2014).

SH.AD.1 often discussed White and Asian students and families together in ways that indicated that they are viewed as similar, and he did not connect Asians’ experiences in the admissions process or in the life of the school with the experiences of Black and Latino students. SH.TC.1 and SH.TC.4 also talked about White and Asian students in this way, although SH.TC.4 also pointed to the diversity of nationalities and ethnicities within the Asian student group. In describing the degree to which families of color are fully included in the school community, SH.AD.4 began to discuss Korean parents who do not speak English well, then paused and asked, “I guess Asians are not kids of color are they...” (SH.AD.4 2014).

These attitudes reflect the kind of stereotyping that Lee (1994) described in her research on the concept of the “model minority” and its application to Asian Americans. Borrowing from Ogbu’s (1987) conceptualization of “voluntary” immigrants who perceive a causal relationship between achievement in school and social mobility, she argues that the variability in Asian Americans’ educational experiences and levels of success are often overlooked because of the stereotype that they are all high achieving students (Ogbu 1987, Lee 1994). In the case of South Hills, on the one hand participants indicate that Asians are not as “other” as some groups of color – presumably Blacks and Latinos – because they achieve at much higher levels. The underlying assumptions at work in this conceptualization are that Asians are all high achieving students, while that students of color are likely to be low achieving. On the other hand, Asian students are described as undesirable in school settings precisely because they are high achieving and out-perform their White counterparts. The underlying assumptions at work in this conceptualization are that White performance should be the aspirational goal of all other students, and that Asians who outperform them should be separated from Whites so as not to disrupt their dominance. SH.AD.4’s comment revealed the former set of assumption; SH.AD.1 explicitly described the latter set of assumptions, although he attributed those to White parents and distanced himself from that line of thinking. These assumptions provide some key insights into symbolic boundaries for diversity, and will be discussed later in this section as they relate to inclusion as well.

The South Hills parent participants expressed similar trust in the Head and in the school in general as the administrators and teachers. All parents expressed a great deal of satisfaction with the school in general, and while they acknowledged that, as SH.PT.1 said, no school is perfect, they have been very happy with the academic and co-curricular programs, and with the relationships that their children have with teachers and peers. When it came to questions about diversity, none of the parents interviewed had a sense that there are any institutional goals related to either racial/ethnic or socioeconomic diversity. Although all of them described the school as diverse, they did not describe their experience with any strategies that seemed designed to increase either racial/ethnic or socioeconomic diversity. The exception in this group was SH.AD.5, who is both a parent and an administrator, and thus works closely with the Head and other school leaders on strategic planning - including long-term planning to support diversity. She was clear that the school is focusing on increasing enrollment of Black and Latino students in particular, something that was not mentioned by the other parents. The other interviewed parents did describe their perception that the school was looking for the highest quality students of color to enroll, rather than just increasing their numbers with students who might struggle in the rigorous academic program. SH.PT.4, for example, knew about some students of color who were not able to handle the program and had to leave the school: "I mean, I know on the academic side, there certainly have been cases where kids have come in and they just simply can't keep up academically. And, you know, while that's troublesome for the school, I think it's very hard on the child. You know, I think it's hard to be at an academically rigorous school and be a C student. I mean there just are not a lot of C students at South Hills, period." In explaining the role that diversity plays in the school, however, SH.PT.5 said, "I just don't think we tout ourself (sic) as a diverse school. That's not one of our selling points. Balanced education, balanced student experience is one of our selling points" (SH.PT.5 2014).

These kinds of comments pointed to the importance for parents of status and quality as they manifest in atypical students. The expectation that students of color should be able to perform at comparable levels to White students was stated as non-controversial; after all, South Hills is a school of choice to which students must apply and could be rejected for not meeting standards. Parent participants did describe their desire for a rigorous academic program when they searched for a school, and these comments indicate an assumption that rigor can best be expected from a group of similarly high achieving students. Parent responses, however, indicated an assumption - sometimes based on empirical data - that Black and Latino students were the ones most at risk for earning the atypical C or having to leave the school for academic reasons; these kinds of challenges were not attributed to Asian students. Again, we see an indication of symbolic boundaries that impact diversity in these comments: students who are high quality can increase the status of the school and its members, while students of low quality undermine status because of their low achievement. The subtext is that those low quality students - usually Black and Latino - cannot and should not expect to "belong," and probably should not try since it would be too difficult for them.

All parents expressed support for the financial aid program at South Hills, and clearly understood that its purpose is to create a more socioeconomically diverse population. And, all parents interviewed had a solid understanding of how the program works - the application process, requirements to demonstrate need, etc. - although, similar

to the comments made by teachers, four of the six prefaced their comments by claiming not to know much in the way of details of how decisions are made or which families participate. None expressed mistrust in the administration or its handling of the program, however. In fact, two of the parents interviewed participated in the financial aid for part of their time at the school because of unexpected financial hardships that their families experienced, and both described the process positively. SH.PT.2, for example, was not only encouraged by another parent to talk with the school about financial aid, she also described the fact that “[t]he school sent out a letter, actually, to families saying, ‘We’re aware the entire nation is involved in a financial crisis. Please call us. Let us know. Talk to us about how this is impacting you, and if this is a problem.’ And they sent that letter out to everybody in the school. And I don’t know what happened for other people. But for us, it meant we had comfort about that” (SH.PT.2 2014).

While none of these parents was looking for a diverse school community when they considered South Hills, and while all of them seem to appreciate the racial/ethnic and socioeconomic diversity that they have experienced since they joined the school, this group of parents did not share comments that indicate that their or their children’s experiences were significantly impacted by that diversity. Instead, they described diversity as one of many positive elements of the school that contribute to their positive experience. While my interview questions probed parents’ perceptions of their children’s friend groups and the extent to which those relationships impacted their perceptions of the value of diversity in their overall experience, only one parent mentioned the specific cultural diversity of her children’s friends and her perception that their experience was better as a result. While none of these parents brought up the concept of colorblindness or claimed not to notice the diversity in the school, its mere presence did not seem to have an impact on their overall perceptions of the school.

While all of these parents feel positively about South Hills in most ways, one parent - SH.PT.2 - shared very critical comments about the attitudes towards diversity she perceived amongst the school’s leadership and the parent community as a whole. In fact, she mentioned twice during the interview that she chose to participate in this study because she wanted to talk about the school’s shortcomings in this area. Her perspective is unique amongst this group because she works in local public schools, and while she was clear that she appreciates the excellent experience her children have had at the school, her background has helped her to see that the school “just doesn’t get it” when it comes to outreach and messaging. She stated clearly that she does not know all the details of the admissions process and the school’s outreach to different communities, but nonetheless, she is skeptical that the school is tailoring its outreach and its messaging to appeal to the underrepresented groups in the school. For example, she said that she does not see that the school reaches out to Black families through their local churches, nor does she know of any instances when a Korean translator may have been available to those prospective families at events. She said she has not heard or seen evidence that the school understands the different value systems in these communities, or leverages any such understanding to target their messaging in ways that may be appealing. Overall, she said that she believes that this poorly designed outreach has helped to maintain low levels of enrollment for Black and Latino students. Furthermore, she noted that while Asian enrollment remains high, those families simply are not as well included in the admissions process or in the life of the school - and the school is implicitly sending the message during the admissions

process that this is what those families can expect if they matriculate. She claimed that the school has a reputation for being heavily White and Asian and for not being interested in Black and Latino students from public schools, so any outreach to the latter groups would run the risk of coming across as “patronizing” and perpetuating that negative perception in these communities.

Her perception is that ultimately, the school does not take these deficiencies and the stagnancy they perpetuate seriously because, overall, parents and employees are happy with the current state of the school and the ways that diversity functions. This speaks to a deeper issue of comfort with homogeneity within the community that is evidenced by what she perceives to be complacency at best, and apathy at worst. A lack of understanding of public schools and their students – or outright dismissal of them – contributes to these attitudes as well:

“So if you're not going to get that the kids that are sitting in the public school classrooms – if that's just going to be your diversity quota, so to speak, but you're not really going to engage at some level that really inspires people to want to be a part of your community, again – I just – I don't know. I just think that most people at South Hills just assume that somebody else is going to take care of it. And they're happy enough with what else is going on at their kid's school...Most of the families – there is a homogeneousness within this school that is comforting and reassuring to people. And I think this is the harder, bigger kind of nut to crack” (SH.PT.2 2014).

While the Head and other administrators seemed to believe that they are making the case for the importance of diversity in the school, the comments from this outlier parent speak to a different and perhaps parallel reality. As frustrated and “sad” as she said she is about what she perceives as the school’s complacent attitude towards diversity, she said she cares enough about the school that she said she would be willing to help them improve in these areas if she were asked. In essence, this parent was calling for the kind of reculturing for equity that would require members of the community to examine their deeply held beliefs about diversity in order to bring about significant change in policy and practice. She held little hope that this would ever happen, however, because the overwhelming majority of families and employees seemed so satisfied with the school and their experience.

Her comments underscore another boundary that seems to operate at the school as well, one that limits members of the dominant majority from upsetting the comfort of school culture. This outlier parent perceived that her critical comments about diversity are not welcome because she has not been asked, so in effect she has been silenced. She certainly could choose to act differently and push her comments more forcefully into the communal dialogue, but that would come with a risk to her reputation and possibly her children’s. So while atypical students themselves pose at least a theoretical threat to the established school culture because of the differences they embody, so do typical parents – and possibly employees – who could bring visibility to underlying issues. Assimilation, or perhaps amalgamation, seems to be an unspoken expectation for all members of the community – not just the atypical students. In that sense, this outlier parent who is part of the in-group because of her cultural and socioeconomic status could, she seems to believe,

relegate herself to the out-group by speaking up about the experiences of people in the out-group.

Symbolic Boundaries to Inclusion at South Hills School

The teachers and administrators at South Hills pointed to many of the same challenges to inclusive community as the executives described, including the integration of students of color and students on financial aid, the underlying assumption that race/ethnicity and socioeconomic status are inextricably linked, and a concern that financial aid remain as viable and sustainable for the long-term as possible. Even in identifying these challenges – as well as some possible strategies to help address them – all but one of the employee participants expressed the belief that, ultimately, the student body is very well integrated and that all students seem to experience South Hills as a positive and inclusive environment. One teacher – SH.TC.3 – shared a different set of observations that pointed to lower levels of integration than the community at large seemed to believe existed, and also described the presence of implicit expectations for conformity and some micro-aggressions. She questioned the depth of the school’s commitment to diversity as a result.

The SH Head of School was the only one of the group who also pointed to the need for more faculty of color as well. He and SH.AD.4 both pointed to the need for the school to build enough critical mass of different racial/ethnic groups so that students would not feel isolated. And, while “enough” critical mass is, of course, a subjective measure, the Head described the importance of families of color, for example, being “... satisfied that in most classrooms you're not going to be the one African American that everyone turns and stares at during the slavery discussions.”

While SH.AD.1 and SH.TC.2 explicitly stated a desire to see more Black and Latino students at the school, they and the other administrators and teachers expressed more direct support for increasing the school’s socioeconomic diversity through a more robust financial aid budget than for increasing racial/ethnic diversity. So, while all of the teachers and administrators – including the outlier, SH.TC.3 – did not observe a great deal of student self-segregation by race/ethnicity, most felt that socioeconomic differences were visible on campus and contributed to at least some divisions amongst students. More specifically, SH.TC.1, SH.TC.3, SH.TC.4, and SH.AD.5 described the visibility of wealth on campus. There existed a range of opinions amongst these participants, however, about the extent to which that visible wealth had a positive, neutral, or negative impact on the student culture and inclusion. For example, while SH.AD.2 acknowledged the presence of very wealthy students in the school, she also said that she does not observe their presence as contributing to an elite atmosphere. However, she said that she has noticed that this is changing, and that a more elite culture has crept in over the years as more wealthy families joined the school. SH.AD.5 also claimed that the wealthy students “do not set the tone” in the school culture, and SH.AD.4 noted that since students do not talk about socioeconomic status there don’t seem to be issues related to it within the community. SH.TC.1, however, did describe some conversations between students about socioeconomics when some students assumed the others were wealthy, and that this created discomfort amongst the students and the faculty who observed the exchange.

These comments reflect some interesting variations in participants’ perspectives, which reveal some assumptions that likely undergird them. On the one hand there seems

to be a belief that class can, in fact, remain largely invisible in their school culture, and that wealthy students are willing and capable of downplaying their economic privilege. SH.AD.4 also indicated that as long as wealth disparity is not discussed it will not present a challenge to inclusion; such disparity likely would need to be invisible as well if this were to be true. SH.TC.1's comments about the uncomfortable student conversation about class seems to support that line of thinking; his other comments about student life indicated that it is normal for students not to get into such uncomfortable conversations and thus preserve the culture. On the other hand, some participants acknowledged the visibility of socioeconomic difference but hesitated to attach much negative power to that visibility. Whether they acknowledged the visibility of wealth or not, all seemed united in hoping, or perhaps wishing, that it not play a role in the culture since they seemed to assume that role would be a detrimental one.

Nonetheless, all of the participants observed that student friend groups are as socioeconomically heterogeneous as they can be given the percentages of students who participate in financial aid – at least as far as they can tell. Once again, with the exception of the SH Head, SH.AD.1 and SH.AD.5, none of the other participants know exactly who is on financial aid. However, all of them admitted to having a sense of who might participate that they attributed to race, or family demonstrations of class like cars, homes, or hometowns, or clothing. SH.TC.1, for example, discussed his increasing sensitivity to students whom he noticed seemed unable to afford some of the “extras” that they needed for school, such as expensive graphing calculators. He also described looking for ways to demonstrate his willingness to be helpful to students who might not be able to afford them without assuming he knew who those students would be or embarrassing them; he described this as a difficult balance to strike. Again, assumptions certainly seemed to influence these participants' view of their students' socioeconomic status, and yet all of them described working hard not to make assumptions about their students. Furthermore, while knowing which students actually participate in financial aid was clearly an uncomfortable possibility for these participants, the assumptions they made actually compelled at least some of them to try to offer support to those students. Ironically, however, in a school culture that discourages any talk about class, the students who need specific support – like the graphing calculators – are less likely to get it because pathways to support are not clear to them or their teachers and administrators.

Friend groups are largely perceived to be racially/ethnically heterogeneous as well, according to most of these participants, and no one expressed any dissatisfaction with the fact that students of color did not usually “clump” together on campus. The underlying assumption seems to be that self-segregation is inherently problematic – at least for minority groups. SH.AD.4 attached some value to this preference for heterogeneity, and stated that “...because we're a small school, there's no division between different ethnic groups because they can't do that. When you have three or four black kids in a class, they can't be that group together because there's just not enough of them, which really, I think, works really well” (SH.AD.4 2014). However, it is more obvious when Asian students – the largest non-White group on campus – “clump” together, and SH.TC.1 noted that “...probably Asians would probably have [the] tendency to sit with [each other] because there's just so many, but I don't think it's an exclusive or an excluding group” (SH.TC.1 2014). The fact that this teacher characterized self-segregation by Asian students as non-threatening is likely further evidence of the model minority stereotype at play. And, the somewhat

contradictory nature of his comment – that Asians who separate themselves and not excluding others or being excluded by others – presents an effort to soften and excuse what otherwise would not be acceptable behavior for in-group members in this culture. The other teachers and administrators did not make note of the impact of the presence of Asian students in the community or their level of integration; when describing students of color, however, they almost always spoke specifically about Black and Latino students.

Most of the South Hills teachers and administrators, then, expressed confidence that the student culture is well integrated both racially/ethnically and socioeconomically based on the ways they observe students from different cultural and class background mix while on campus. The comments from these participants indicate an underlying expectation that such differences will not be, as Chubb described, “exacerbated” at South Hills. In terms of community conversation or focus on diversity as a means of improving inclusion, there were different opinions amongst this group about whether or not any kind of racial/ethnic affinity groups existed on campus that might serve that purpose. Some recalled a multicultural club that had existed years ago but was now defunct, while others believed that club still was active. Two others pointed to a hip hop club as an affinity club because, as SH.TC. 4 described, it emphasized “Black culture.” Beyond those examples, however, none of these participants described any concerted efforts or targeted programs designed to encourage conversation amongst students or between students and adults about racial/ethnic or socioeconomic diversity. The Head and SH.AD.3 described a diversity study that the faculty and staff worked on together a few years back, but there was no indication from the other participants that it involved students or that it produced any results that impact life at the school currently. And while SH.AD.2 acknowledged that there are some colleagues who would like the school to be more “invested” in diversity, she also pointed out that the priority has been to increase enrollment of students of color rather than any programming. None of the teachers or administrators in this group seemed to count themselves amongst those who would like to see more “investment” in diversity, mainly because none identified a need for more work to improve inclusion.

SH.TC.3, an Asian American teacher, is the one employee who did express personal disappointment in the lack of conversation around topics and issues related to diversity, and shared a very different perspective on the extent to which students of color and students who participate in financial aid are integrated into the community. As she described the difference between the South Hills culture and that of the charter school, where she taught previously, for example, “...there is a lot lower level of apparent racial tension, like racial slurs and grouping along racial lines, which is very common in lots of schools. It’s more minimized because I think there’s a high value in assimilation and to some degree, conformity.” While she certainly has observed racially/ethnically heterogeneous friend groups on campus, she also has observed that students of color provide for support for one another in ways that seem invisible to adults and students in the dominant culture:

“I think that I see students of color supporting each other or I feel like when it gets down to the smaller level, the really close and supportive friendships that student develop I feel like students of color are likely – I don’t have any data right now, but I feel like I see those as close friendships and I see those students reaching out to each other and recognizing hey, we’re not the majority. They’re recognizing that they are

I guess a minority in that situation and having to – I don't know what they bond over, whether it's having to explain their differences to others... Yes, they also are pretty integrated in their class and they have friendships outside of that, but I think that there's something to be said about that support network for them" (SH.TC.3 2014).

This teacher also said she has observed micro-aggressions amongst students, and connected these incidents to the larger discomfort with and avoidance of conversation around diversity. "I don't feel like a healthy richness about diversity of the school. I do feel that it is more conforming or conformist and it's pushed." In this atmosphere, she described, adults and students alike are not prone to discuss or otherwise share their differences with the larger community because they perceive that those conversations are not always welcome. "There's students that do have different backgrounds that are not as open about them or as willing to make that difference that known or apparent. I guess I feel I maybe succumbed to this conformity as well as one of the few faculty members who isn't White" (SH.TC.3 2014).

Her comments, then, indicate that the perception of the South Hills culture as a positive and supportive one, and the perpetuation of that perception by those in the dominant culture, has had a chilling effect on those who might present a different point of view. Her perception that there exists a don't-ask-don't-tell attitude towards possible issues connected to racial/ethnic and socioeconomic diversity indicates the possibility that there may be some "papering over" of differences at South Hills as described by Chubb, and a "quieting down" of talk about diversity as described by McManus. This perception aligns closely with the outlier parent described in the previous section as well.

The majority of the South Hills parents who participated in this study shared mostly positive perspectives on inclusion they observe in the school, and many of their comments about integration and the visibility of differences align closely with those shared by teachers and administrators.

There were not many comments shared by parents about the importance of or need for critical mass of underrepresented groups, although SH.PT.1 and SH.PT.5 both indicated that the school certainly is not as diverse as it could or should be – especially in terms of Black and Latino students. SH.PT.5 pointed to the low number of Black students as a contributing factor to a lack of understanding and inclusion amongst dominant culture students. She gave an example of a critical incident in which a group of White boys who gave a Black student a watermelon for his birthday and made racial remarks, and who were disciplined quickly and severely (although she was not sure of the details of the consequences). She was horrified, she said, as both a current parent at the time as well as an employee, "...and mad as hell at those kids, and mad at their parents...it's a struggle for me to watch how we grow in diversity with regards to African-Americans. You know, it's hard" (SH.PT.5 2014).

SH.PT.1, SH.PT.3, and SH.PT.5 noted that the students seem to mix easily across racial/ethnic lines. SH.PT.1 also pointed out that racial/ethnic differences are visible to a large degree to the students themselves: "I think they could see some of the cultural differences in terms of there's a core of Asian kids whose parents push them very hard...all that kind of stereotypical and tiger mom kind of stuff...in terms of their friend groups and stuff, I mean I don't see any divisions along racial lines, but...it's basically a White and Asian

school.” But still, he also pointed to the relative invisibility of those differences as well: “They don’t really see racial differences...they’re in that generation that just doesn’t even see what the big deal is about that for the most part” (SH.PT.1 2014). This parent both claimed that students are largely colorblind except when it comes to Asian students, whose culture becomes more pronounced when their parents push them academically in visible ways. Even so, this parent did not interpret that recognition as negative, even as he ascribed positive value to colorblindness in general.

SH.PT.3 also minimized the challenges around racial/ethnic differences, and instead pointed to socioeconomic differences as the more visible to the students and thus more challenging. “It’s not so much race. It’s socioeconomics. In this part of town ...that divide is huge and it really comes into play between the public and the private schools, definitely” (SH.PT.3 2014). SH.PT.6 said that she had become more aware in recent years about the socioeconomic diversity on campus – enough that she notices the differences to some extent and somewhat connects them to racial/ethnic differences as well. Her explanation for this increased awareness was vague however: “Maybe I’m making assumptions that there are more people that I see that look – not that it looks like they’re on financial aid but just sort of a little bit more awareness on my part. Maybe I was just less aware in the past” (SH.PT.6 2014).

There was at least some indication from one parent that the visibility of wealth in particular does have some impact on student friend groups, and that students from different areas and socioeconomic groups do not always spend significant time together outside of school. SH.PT.3 described her children’s friend groups as socioeconomically heterogeneous, for the most part, but also acknowledged that this “... might be...where the lack of mixing happens...I mean, you have the uber rich there, and then you just have the medium, but to someone who does not have much, even the medium seems uber rich too” (SH.PT.3 2014). She said she was unsure about the extent to which the visibility of wealth in the community impacts these parents’ (or their children’s) comfort level in the community, however. SH.PT.4, on the other hand, said she has noticed the same low levels of participation by families of color whom she also believes participate in financial aid, and wondered aloud about the degree to which they feel truly included and welcome at the school. “[I]t’s much easier for the kids to sort of socially assimilate than probably for the parents who just don’t have the same exposure, if that makes sense” (SH.PT.4 2014).

SH.PT.2, the outlier in this group, was much more critical of the school’s outreach to families of color and families of lower socioeconomic status during the admissions process than she was about student integration at school. In fact, she said that she still appreciates the strengths of the South Hills community and culture, and said that she values the experiences her children have had there. “I have great loyalty and affinity for it. Yet fundamentally, I feel like they just don’t get this part of it. And not only don’t get it, but...it’s kind of like it’s not on their radar for what the issues are around the pain within this community” (SH.PT.2 2014).

Summary

This examination of the symbolic and social boundaries that exist in the community at South Hills demonstrates some of the ways that full inclusion of atypical students is limited. Colorblindness holds significant value for some; it is used of evidence of true and healthy integration amongst the students and thus contributes to the overall positive

school culture. However, there is evidence that community members not only see race, they also use race to make judgments about students' worthiness of community membership. Self-segregation based on race seems to be evidence for some of unhealthy divisions amongst the students, and some expressed relief that most minority groups are so small in number that they cannot really "clump" in ways that might disrupt the culture. Exceptions seem to exist for Asian students in terms of both colorblindness and self-segregation, since recognizing their cultural differences and seeing them group by those differences are not interpreted as a threat to the culture.

Socioeconomic status occupies a somewhat contradictory position in participants' perceptions of inclusion, since most claim that such differences are mostly invisible but then also are able to name the markers of those differences that they note on a daily basis. Teasing out those differences, however, or learning to disaggregate cultural and class differences amongst the students, is difficult in a culture that places significant value on silence and/or willful ignorance when it comes to family wealth.

The assumptions about culture and class are the foundation for these attitudes, and give us some clues about the power that these assumptions have to both construct and maintain the school's culture. The overwhelming majority of participants spoke positively about the strength of the relationships between community members that ultimately create the very fabric of the culture. Divergent or disruptive views about the experiences of atypical students are not shared because the implicit message that permeates the culture is that such views will not be accepted – and by extension, neither will those community members. Thus, while many of the comments here point to an unspoken but clear assumption that atypical students should play down their differences and assimilate with the dominant culture in order to be accepted, that same assumption applies to members of the dominant culture whose perspectives exist outside the boundaries of acceptable thinking and behavior.

Findings, Part 3: Four Corners School

Four Corners School serves 480 students in grades 9-12. The school describes their student population as comprised of 46% who identify as White, and states on its website that 53% of the students come from “diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds.” Internally, the school reports that population is comprised of 26% Asian; 9.6% Middle Eastern; 9.2% Latino; 5.1% Indian; 1.8% African American; and 1.4% Multiracial (Four Corners School 2014).

15% of the students at Four Corners participate in the financial aid program, and the average grant covers about 86% of the cost of tuition. This puts Four Corners significantly lower than the medians for both CAIS and NAIS for participation, but much higher than CAIS and NAIS for the average percentage of tuition covered by the grants. There is no mention of equity, diversity, or inclusion in the Four Corners’ mission statement.

I interviewed a total of 9 people from Four Corners, including administrators, faculty, and parents. Only one interviewee had more than one role at the school: the Director of Development, who was also a parent of an alum and a 12th grader. The following chart provides details for each interviewee:

Interviewee	Role 1	Role 2	Student 1	Student 2	Student 3
FC.AD.1	Development	Parent	Grad	12th	None
FC.AD.2	Asst. Head	None	None	None	None
FC.AD.3	Head	None	None	None	None
FC.PT.1	Parent	None	Grad	9th	9th
FC.PT.2	Parent	None	11 th	None	None
FC.PT.3	Parent	None	11 th	None	None
FC.TC.1	Teacher	None	None	None	None
FC.TC.2	Teacher	None	None	None	None
FC.TC.3	Teacher	None	None	None	None

The school is located in the town of Macedon, a wealthy town that is located in the greater Bay Cities area. While the median household income in California was about \$57,000 in 2011, the median household income in Macedon was \$202,000. The median house or condominium value in California that same year was \$357,000, compared to a median of \$1,932,545. Macedon’s population is majority White (75%), followed by Asian (18%), Latinos (4%), and Multiracial (3%). African Americans make up just .2% of the population. Four Corners certainly attracts students from other nearby towns as well, some of which have quite different demographic profiles than Macedon. There are some students who come from Sharptown, for example, which is about 10 miles away. Sharptown has a median household income of about \$51,000 and a median house or condominium value of \$340,000 – both below the state average. As I will describe below, the stark socioeconomic differences between students who live relatively close to one another play a dual role in the school culture at Four Corners – at once visible and acknowledged as a strength, and at the same time hidden behind positive student relationships on campus.

Attitudes Towards Diversity at Four Corners School

The Four Corners Head noted that the school seemed to have a commitment to diversity when he first applied for a position, but he also acknowledged that he was early

enough in his own understanding of how such a commitment might actually manifest in the life of the school that he did not probe more deeply during his interview process. He described the fact that the school made any statement about diversity at all given the lack of racial/ethnic and socioeconomic diversity in the immediate area – which certainly was reflected in the local public schools – as a net positive for him. Rather, he said he was most attracted to the school’s commitment to service learning, particularly the fact that it was integrated into the academic program. During his time at the school, the Head also indicated that he has not experienced many – if any – parents who prioritized diversity when considering the school either. That is not necessarily problematic for him, however, since he pointed out that “...our philosophy has been don’t lead with your chin and then educate them later. In other words, get [them] in your door so you can get [them] into the program”(FC.AD.3 2014). The Head’s comments about their approach to diversity with prospective families, then, reflected the patience and caution called for by Chubb and Batiste in particular.

Similar to South Hills, the Four Corners administrators said that they focused mostly on the high quality of the academic programs and the sense of positive school culture when they were searching for positions. This group also talked about the uniqueness of these cultures considering their locations and surrounding schools. All three administrators at Four Corners did discuss the importance of diversity in their ultimate choice to join those schools. It is important to reiterate that one of these administrators is also a parent of students who have attended the school, so she was a member of the parent community before she joined the staff. For FA.AD.1, for example, whose children are biracial (African American and White), she said she appreciated that they attended the school and found it to be a safe and inclusive place; this helped inspire her to join the staff and utilize her skills in the field of development to help further the school’s commitment to diversity.

“...[W]e felt that there was a more authentic community here than in our community. So what I mean by that is because you can pick and choose the class it seemed like there was more diversity than in our community, which is in the Bay Cities, [and] is a very planned community...They don’t have mixed neighborhoods...we’re stratified by socioeconomics. So we lived in an area that was very middle class, White, with a few Asians smattered in there”(FC.AD.1 2014).

Similar to South Hills, these administrators also guessed that prospective parents were mostly interested in the academic programs, the generally positive reputation of the school, and the positive school culture when searching for a school, and also said they believed that parents who joined the school actually came to value diversity later once they and their children joined the community and built relationships with a diverse group of students and families. As FC.AD.1 described:

“Oh, I think they're very much aware. And it's because every – it's seen, felt and heard. And it's emphasized and reiterated and communicated the importance of that, to who we are, but to every student's experience at Four Corners. And I think for parents, they – it may not be the reason they choose to send their child to Four Corners, but it is definitely a piece that they have responded [to] as [having added] to their child's experience” (FC.AD.1 2014).

Teachers at Four Corners pointed to the positive school culture as a major factor in their choice to join the school. While two teachers noted their alignment with the school's mission, only one of those teachers also described the importance of the relatively diverse community to her when she made her decision. FC.TC.2 discussed the fact that she had been used to living in more racially/ethnically and socioeconomically diverse communities when she resided in New York and San Francisco, and was less comfortable in her current hometown of Citrine in the Bay Cities area because of its homogeneity. This experience certainly helped shape her view of Four Corners when she first applied. "One of the things that really appealed to me about Four Corners was the fact that of all places I had been, all the neighborhoods and schools and everything, we have a relatively diverse community. ...I was working with a wonderful faculty and student body that I felt was just a better mix of people than I had found otherwise" (FC.TC.2 2014). She did not differentiate between racial/ethnic and socioeconomic diversity in this set of comments, however, which could point to a tendency on her part to collapse them.

Two of the three teachers from Four Corners speculated that prospective parents were seeking more personalized attention for their children than they could get at their local, high-performing public schools. Both of these teachers also said they thought that parents resonate to the school's emphasis on balance and well-roundedness, which stands in contrast to the academic and social bootcamp atmospheres that permeate so many public and private schools in the area. No teachers mentioned diversity as a factor that would be appealing to parents when they choose a school.

Four Corners parents themselves pointed to the positive school culture as a major factor in their decisions most often, along with the strength of the school's academic program. Once again, no one gave the schools' success in college placement any mention amongst the reasons that helped them decide to have their children attend.

As with the participants from South Hills, we see here a strong emphasis on the academic program and the positive school culture. The key difference at Four Corners is the extent to which the administrators and one teacher at least mentioned diversity as a factor in their choice of school, even if it was not the final deciding factor. The culture, in the end, tipped the scales for all of these participants. What is less clear as a result of the increased variability in the responses is the extent to which visible differences in culture and class played against behavioral and attitudinal similarities for these Four Corner participants. At South Hills we could consider strong culture to be characterized by high levels of similarity even across racial/ethnic and socioeconomic difference as perceived by the participants. At Four Corners, however, some participants acknowledged difference in ways that South Hills participants did not, and yet still acknowledged a community that seemed united behind their mission.

The Head was the only interviewee for this study who addressed his own personal evolution in thinking about and understanding of diversity within the larger context of diversity in the school. When he first interviewed at the school, for example, and heard from the Head about the school's commitment to diversity, the description short and straightforward. Since he has been at Four Corners, he said he has taken advantage of a significant amount of professional development around diversity, and he has resonated particularly to the concept of White privilege and how it operates to reproduce inequity. This is not a discovery that White parents in his school have made, however, and since they

have not demonstrated willingness to have their assumptions challenged on this issue, the Head sees this as part of the challenge to engaging in deeper work around diversity. And while he said that he finds that colleagues and parents express positive feelings and support for having a diverse community, he also feels that parents in particular do not really understand the challenges and complexities that come along with having one. When asked, for example, how supportive parents are of racial/ethnic diversity on campus, he responded that he thinks “95% are supportive, but...20% really know what that means.” The reason he gave for the disconnect is that parents primarily see Four Corners as a college prep school, and the other details of the program and culture – even mission-critical aspects like the service learning program or diversity – are “nice” but not essential parts of the experience.

“When you go to Four Corners School, you end up going to someplace [college] great... this is how they see it... ‘Oh, and by the way, they have this great service program and great diversity initiatives, and all that. Great. Sounds good. Let’s go.’ But in the back of their mind, though, they’re thinking college the whole time...Parent education is one of our big dilemmas” (FC.AD.3 2014).

He expressed skepticism about parents’ interest in that kind of education, however. In describing a spoken-word poem about White privilege performed by a student of color at an assembly, he said:

“...[M]ost [parents] would’ve cringed when they heard the spoken word [poem] about white privilege, right? They just can’t wrap their mind around it because they haven’t even been educated on this to a deep degree. And I’m not talking about my board. I’m talking about the [other] people who support the school” (FC.AD.3 2014).

The Head’s comments indicate, in fact, that diversity might not even rise to the level of “important,” as described by Chubb, for a significant portion of the parent body. It is important to point out that racial/ethnically, the Four Corners student population is approximately 46% White students, and that Asian and Middle Eastern students together make up about 36% of the population. The Head noted that some colleagues question the degree to which those non-White groups really “count” as people of color since the overwhelming majority seem to be wealthy – evidence that some collapse racial/ethnic and socioeconomic diversity, which will be discussed further in the next section on limits to inclusive community. Nonetheless, his contention that only about 20% of the families at the school really understand the complexities means that many of those who do not understand are, in fact, non-White. The overlap between race/ethnicity and lower socioeconomic status seems to apply mostly to the Latino and Black populations, but less with other populations of color. The Head, however, was clear that, as a “White, Christian male,” he had a great deal to learn about these complexities as well when he began his tenure at Four Corners. “But if you’re White and you’ve never had that, you don’t get it” (FC.AD.3 2014). And according to him, many White parents in the community do not “get it” either.

The school does put significant financial resources against socioeconomic diversity, however, and currently budgets \$1.6 million for financial aid. Additionally, the Head said

that he engages in targeted fundraising for restricted gifts to financial aid in order to serve more students, and uses an arsenal of evidence to demonstrate the very practical value of socioeconomic diversity in the school in his solicitations. This targeted fundraising also has produced about \$300,000 more funding for financial aid, and that is spread across multiple students. The major fundraising event sometimes supports financial aid as well. Still, the average percentage of tuition that is covered by a grant at Four Corners is 86% - much higher than the state and national averages - and about 15% of the student body participates in financial aid - much lower than the state and national averages. While it is clear that there are some parents in the community who are compelled enough by the concept of socioeconomic diversity that they support financial aid. Even such visible support is not necessarily evident of a deep commitment to diversity on the part of the parents, according to the Head.

The other Four Corners administrators, on the other hand, described somewhat higher levels of support for racial/ethnic and socioeconomic diversity amongst colleagues and parents. FC.AD.1 and FC.AD.2 spoke about the clarity with which diversity is articulated as a core value - not only during the admissions process for new families, but in the everyday life of the school as well. Both administrators also pointed to the direct fundraising for financial aid that takes place at the annual gala as further evidence that the entire community is clear about the institutional commitment to socioeconomic diversity. FC.AD.1 also linked that effort with the school's commitment to racial/ethnic diversity, specifically as a lever to pull to increase the percentage of Black and Latino students in the school. These administrators' comments about the public and consistent nature of the articulation of value and the targeted fundraising for financial aid, then, seem to demonstrate their perception that the institutional commitment to both racial/ethnic and socioeconomic diversity are very high, and that they see such diversity as a need-to-have given the mission of the school and the work being done to support it.

While all of the Four Corners teachers expressed a desire for more students and faculty of color in the school, their comments tended to indicate that diversity is certainly important to them and their experience in the school, but they did not indicate an urgency to promote diversity the way administrators' comments did. To be sure, the teachers do not bear the same responsibility for articulating the value of diversity for a broader audience; that is the job of school leaders. However, all three teachers were unsure of any institutional goals related to diversity, and none expressed dismay about their lack of understanding. FC.TC.3, for example, said that "...it's very vague. I don't have any clear sense of clear goals" (FC.TC.3 2014). FC.TC.2 and FC.TC.3 indicated that the diversity in the student body provides added value in the school community in general and in their own experience in the school, but they did not articulate more specifically why they felt this was important in terms of practical skill acquisition, other academic reasons, or social justice concerns. In fact, the language they use to describe the value of diversity was fairly similar, and also echoed the comments of the administrators. While all of the employees seem to be well versed in this institutional commitment, the teachers showed less evidence of reflection on that value than the administrators did. It is possible that this difference has to do with the very different sets of responsibilities that teachers and administrators have. It also might point to a disconnect between the communication of institutional values from the top and the extent to which those values are deeply embraced by others.

The Head said he is aware, however, that the regular financial aid budget does not guarantee access to all of the school's opportunities for participating students, and certainly would like to have more financial resources to put towards other ancillary costs like school trips. While this supplemental aid budget is \$1 million, it still isn't enough to allow financial aid students to "have the full capacity to be an equal part in the campus life." This tension is an indication, in his view, that the school is still coming to terms with what it will mean to demonstrate a deep commitment to diversity, and while they are in the midst of some strategic planning to make progress, they are still years away from realizing some of these important goals.

The Head has observed that many faculty members are clearly in support of current diversity efforts and would like to see the school take more action. He also said that he believes that there is skepticism amongst some faculty about the school's willingness to push the envelope more for students of color and students on financial aid. "[T]he people who are involved with diversity are saying, "Well, they talk a good game, but they don't do anything." He said he believes that the shortage of Black and Latino students on campus is certainly visible, especially to those who are interested in racial/ethnic diversity, and the fact that those numbers do not seem to be increasing likely speaks to the perceived inaction that he ascribes to at least some members of the faculty. In short, the FC Head knows that they would prefer to see him, in fact, lead with his chin. This perspective on faculty attitudes was not echoed by the other administrators in their interviews, and nor was it expressed – at least not strongly - by the teachers themselves in their conversations. Again, this is a disconnect that was not demonstrated as clearly at South Hills School, where there seemed to be significant alignment between all of the parties in their responses except for the two outliers. At Four Corners, it is the Head who provides the alternate perspective on faculty and parent buy-in that is markedly less optimistic than his colleagues' or parents' perceptions.

All of the teachers and administrators said that they believe the parent community is generally supportive of diversity, even if unwilling to be challenged in their thinking around it. Still, the three administrators claimed to know that there is a relatively small and quiet faction in the parent community that does not support socioeconomic diversity or the allocation of tuition dollars to the financial aid program. FC.AD.1 described some parents in the community who have immigrated to the US from communist countries who have expressed their lack of support to her, for example, and talked about a conversation with "[o]ne lady [who] told me, 'If you can't afford a Mercedes, take the bus, I'm not paying for your car'" (FC.AD.1 2014).

The tensions the Head described between his vision for diversity and equity at Four Corners, the relatively low priority of diversity for the parent community, and the frustrations of some colleagues who would like to see more emphasis, seem to be at least somewhat of a reflection on the community in which the school is located. For example, he expressed concern that Four Corners might be characterized by locals as a "hippie school" if they chose to highlight diversity more than they do currently, which he said he believes would have an adverse affect on their ability to maintain strong enrollment. The current emphasis on outcomes like college placement seems to work well in terms of attracting new families, and in terms of maintaining current families' satisfaction as well. Given the fact that there is strategic planning underway that includes diversity measures, and that such plans necessarily would be phased in over a 5-10 year period, the Head is working to

at least set the stage for a shift. Up to this point, however, he has chosen to avoid difficult conversations around culture and class, thereby also avoiding the alienation of what he seems to believe is a significant portion of his parent body.

For their part, the Four Corners parent participants seem to fall into the category of the “95% who are supportive” of racial/ethnic and socioeconomic diversity, and all of them seemed to have developed a sense of the importance of that diversity after they arrived at the school. FC.PT.3 and FC.PT.4 both pointed to the importance of socioeconomic diversity during their time at the school, and FC.PT.4 particularly emphasized the practical value of her children’s proximity to students from different socioeconomic backgrounds: “You want your kids exposed to that, and to people that don’t have money but are still smart. There’s no reason they shouldn’t be there because they can’t afford tuition.” The same parent also described the practical value of racial/ethnic diversity for her children, noting “I think it’s important. I think it’s really important, because...it makes it more real-life, instead of being in this bubble of just a bunch of White kids or whatever” (FC.PT.4 2014). However, in speaking about both racial/ethnic and socioeconomic diversity, this same parent also commented about the disadvantage some students face because of the financial aid program: “I think that’s important for my kid who’s a middle-class White kid where we get the shorter end of the stick. But it’s very important for any school to have, that is obvious, even if it’s not benefiting us.” In fact, while FC.PT.1 and FC.PT.3 see some value in having multiple races and ethnicities represented in classrooms, they did not actually ascribe specific academic value to such presence. These comments indicate that these parents actually do see some benefits for the children that are gained because of the diversity of the student body. Their students’ proximity to other students who come from different backgrounds was characterized as preparation for life in a diverse world, which is a relatively direct benefit. The financial aid program makes that proximity possible, although it is not considered to be a direct benefit until itself.

None of the Four Corners parents had any knowledge of the school’s goals with respect to racial/ethnic and socioeconomic diversity. FC.PT.4 said she had not heard anyone at the school “promote” diversity, and felt instead that “it’s just there” (FC.PT.4 2014). These parents did not express a strong desire to see an increase in students of color. FC.PT.4 stated that she felt the school had achieved a satisfactory level of racial/ethnic diversity, and noted that just by looking at her children’s friend groups, “I think they have every ethnicity pretty much covered” (FC.PT.4 2014). The parents also did not express a strong desire to see more students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds who would need financial aid to attend. FC.PT.3, for example, allowed that it might be “nice” to have more of those students at the school, but also felt that their presence really would not be visible because students do not care about those differences. The indication here, then, is that the parents feel that the school has reached its completed its quest for cultural and class diversity, and that there is not anything else that needs to be done around diversity as a result. While they do not seem to be “papering over” diversity completely – the levels of diversity are actually described as worthy of celebration – the achievements in this area now make it possible for everyone to just “quiet down” about it. The perceived lack of visibility of socioeconomic differences further supports the notion that conversation is unwarranted; the students are getting along fine, so there is no need for anything that might seem unnecessary and that would disrupt the comfort of the community.

Similar to the Four Corners teachers, these parents all claimed not to know much, if anything, about the way the financial aid program works at the school, but all were able to describe the general process accurately. FC.PT.3 said that she sees value in the socioeconomic diversity that flows from the financial aid program because it contributes “a great deal to the diversity. It’s nice to have kids from all incomes....We do have the middle income and the lower income represented, and I think it makes things more casual and easier atmosphere” (FC.PT.3 2014). This same parent also knew “that they’re helping kids if they’re on financial aid and if they didn’t keep up their grades, they are not invited back” (FC.PT.3 2013). This perception that funds are distributed across multiple socioeconomic levels is not completely accurate, but it was certainly shared by all participating Four Corners parents. There is also an embedded assumption here that not all lower class students can expect to belong at Four Corners. Those who can’t handle the academic program can expect help, but they cannot expect to remain at the school if they cannot maintain the high levels of achievement that are expected of them.

These parents, then, certainly demonstrated positive attitudes towards racial/ethnic and socioeconomic diversity, and are supportive of the school’s efforts to have a diverse community. These attitudes seem to be an accurate reflection of the administrators’ and teachers’ perceptions of parental attitudes at the school as well. None of these parents indicated any disagreement with school policies regarding the allocation of tuition dollars to the financial aid budget, although none of them has chosen to support financial aid directly with their donations to the school either. With the exception of FC.AD.1, all of them indicated that neither they nor their children “see” color or socioeconomic status, and all of them expressed great satisfaction with this. In fact, they all placed value on being in a school that certainly has a diverse population but that does not call a great deal of attention to it. The Head’s description, then, of widespread parent support for diversity that is nonetheless lacking a deeper understanding of its implications seems to apply well to these participating parents. Given these parents’ attitudes, the Head may encounter another attitude he said he has observed amongst parents when some of these topics have arisen in the past: “I didn’t sign up for that” (FC.AD.3 2014).

Symbolic Boundaries for Inclusion at Four Corners School

As we saw with South Hills School, the faculty and administrators of Four Corners School held similar perspectives about the degree to which the school is building an inclusive community for students of color and for students who participate in financial aid. The participants generally saw the student body as well integrated, and many applauded the school’s efforts to continue to attract and retain a racially/ethnically and socioeconomically diverse group. In fact, the socioeconomic differences amongst students were highlighted by most of these participants more often than racial/ethnic differences, and their comments indicated that the visibility of socioeconomic differences seems to come up more in conversations on campus. While all of these participants overwhelmingly spoke positively about the school’s efforts in the area of inclusion, the Head again shared the outlier perspective that the school has not done enough to educate the community about diversity issues and topics in ways that would better support inclusion. His comments pointed to the “papering over” of differences at Four Corners, which serves a dual purpose of maintaining high morale amongst the dominant culture constituencies

while simultaneously encouraging assimilation of minority groups at least some of the time.

All of the faculty and administrators said that they observe a great deal of mixing between students on campus, and that friend groups generally appear to be racially/ethnically and socioeconomically heterogeneous. There was some sense amongst the participants, however, that “pockets” exist within the student body as well, as described by FC.TC.1; FC.AD.1 also noted that some students do “clump” together based on geography and, de facto, race/ethnicity and socioeconomics. Similarly, FC.TC.2 described the student body as being more integrated racially/ethnically than socioeconomically, and noted that many people in the school community make assumptions about the socioeconomic status of students based on the towns in which they live. While FC.AD.2 said that she sees a great deal of mixing at school, she also guessed that this mixing does not take place off campus as much because students are scattered all over the area – an area that is socioeconomically stratified, to say the least. The fact that some students ride the school buses and come from further away, for example, is often an indicator of participation in financial aid; those students are also more likely to be students of color, which goes further to help members of the school community collapse race/ethnicity and socioeconomics. Still, she said that in her experience these assumptions are not always accurate. “I think there’s some issue around the bus and the students that are bused in and I think ...their peers know, ‘Oh you take the bus and you live in Sharptown, so therefore you’re probably on financial aid’” (FC.AD.2 2014).

Teachers and administrators said they sometimes learn from students about their own participation in financial aid, since it is common for students and adults to develop close and trusting relationships. Often, however, faculty and staff can deduce students’ socioeconomic status through their observation of students’ access to various aspects of school life, as described by FC.TC.2, FC.TC.3 and FC.AD.2. The visibility of socioeconomic differences is enhanced, for example, by the supplemental financial aid that student participants receive for things like choir uniforms and lunches, and FC.TC.2 noted that some of her colleagues become uncomfortable when they notice that some students receive that kind of support because it is a clear indication that they participate in financial aid. And, she described the fact that these differences are most obvious in conversations between students that reveal the limited access to resources that a minority of students have. Still, like the faculty and staff at South Hills, the Four Corners participants were clear that they do not know – officially, at least – who participates in financial aid, even though they have a general and accurate understanding of how the program works.

Even though these participants described socioeconomic differences as visible and somewhat divisive, most did not describe any strategies being implemented to address these challenges amongst the students. However, FC.AD.2 and FC.TC.1 both spoke positively about the fact that the school holds parent gatherings on campus now instead of private homes, which is designed to make all parents feel as comfortable as possible on the neutral ground of the campus and thus (hopefully) boost participation and inclusion. This policy changed relatively recently – within the last few years – and seemed to have been developed in response to lower parent participation amongst families who participate in financial aid.

The Head agreed that socioeconomic status is often quite visible, and noted that faculty and staff would probably be “accurate about 70% of the time” if they guessed who

participates in financial aid. He also accurately speculated that they would “probably make the assumption based off of stereotypes. Who’s coming on the bus in the morning? Who doesn’t have a laptop in class? And they make assumptions, but the ones that they probably don’t guess are the white, middle-income kids” (FC.AD.3 2014) With regards to the issue of the bus and its assumed connection to financial aid, he noted that he has talked with another administrator about ways to increase ridership amongst full-pay families by highlighting the convenience of it, but to no avail. While he also sees that some students’ obvious lack of resources and/or their use of supplemental financial aid certainly call attention to socioeconomic differences, he did not identify any particular strategies that have been implemented to deal with this set of challenges. He did, however, discuss the fact that he leverages data on the benefits of diversity to convince potential donors to support financial aid, including supplemental aid.

Most of the participants did not state directly that students group themselves by race/ethnicity, although since they often collapse race/ethnicity and socioeconomics, they indirectly acknowledged that such groupings do occur. As FC.TC.1 described, while she does see “a Spanish girl and a White girl” mix together, especially if they both ride the bus, she also acknowledged that ultimately students choose their friends based on “the comfort zone.” Most participants described interactions between racial/ethnic groups to be very positive, although FC.TC.2 noted that she has observed some stereotyping and possibly some micro-aggressions amongst students. According to her, this open attitude is not necessarily reflected in the faculty when it comes to sexual orientation:

“[W]e’ve had sometimes things come up in faculty and staff meetings, not often, but every once in awhile around sexual orientation. That becomes awkward, because I feel like well that’s part of diversity and yet...I don’t think that we can talk openly and honestly about how that part of our development can go forward” (FC.TC.2 2014).

She did not share any such concerns regarding open discussion about race/ethnicity or socioeconomic status, however

The Head was more direct than other participants about the role that race/ethnicity plays in the student culture, and said specifically that while most students mix a great deal, Blacks and Latinos often do not. “[T]he Hispanic population tends to hang out with the Hispanic population at lunch. The African-American population, because we have so few African-Americans, they’ll still mix, but I think when they have a choice and it works out, they’d rather mix with the African-American population” (FC.AD.3 2014) He explained that since Latino students tend to stick together more than other groups, and that they also happen to be the group that needs the highest levels of financial support to attend Four Corners, encourages many in the community to collapse race/ethnicity and socioeconomics.

According to the Head, there were some efforts – which he described as “aggressive” - to kickstart discussions about diversity in previous years that were not received well by parents. He said that many parents were vocal about their unhappiness with these kinds of activities, and the school leadership at the time decided to pull back from such an emphasis – an approach that persists, in many ways, to the present day. But he also admitted that “...we also have this kind of knowledge that if you come out too strong, the community’s not

ready to have these conversations” (FC.AD.3 2014) He was not clear about what kinds of markers would indicate that the community might be ready for these conversations, but the fact that he has been developing a diversity strand within the larger strategic plan indicates that he is ready to begin to focus the community’s attention on these issues more than in the past. By the time students reach their senior year, he said, they are likely to embrace more challenging discussions around racial/ethnic and socioeconomic diversity. Still, he described while those older students were “unfazed” by the spoken word poem about White privilege, younger students and their parents certainly balked. “So that’s our big challenge. You’re taking a group of people that think they know, but they don’t really know what it means to be a really diverse community that really talks about these issues and is not afraid to challenge assumptions” (FC.AD.3 2014).

The Head identified a desire to increase the racial/ethnic diversity of the faculty as a strategic goal, one that was also identified by FC.TC.2 and FC.TC.3. However, none was specific about the impact these colleagues might make on the overall inclusiveness of the school community, or the broader efforts to engage the community in deeper discussions about diversity. The comments from the teachers who participated in this study indicated that they see the increased presence of faculty of color, and the perspectives that they might bring to such conversations, as a way to challenge colleagues’ assumptions, along with other benefits. Their possible role in helping to challenge students’ and parents’ assumptions is much less clear.

The parent participants from Four Corners, in fact, shared quite similar perspectives on the inclusiveness of the school community; across the board, they said that they had observed students from different racial/ethnic and socioeconomic mixing together well both at school and off campus. As we saw in the previous section, all of these parents expressed general satisfaction with the levels of racial/ethnic diversity at the school and place value on it, and their positive comments about the perceived thoroughness of the integration of students from different backgrounds seemed to be a manifestation of that value. In fact, FC.PT.1 and FC.PT.3 both stated explicitly that their children are colorblind, and that they see that as evidence of a strong and positive school culture. FC.PT.3 and FC.PT.4, on the other hand, were both direct in describing Four Corners as a visibly racially/ethnically diverse community, which they have found to be a positive aspect of the school; they said that they have not observed any integration issues for students of color.

All four participants also expressed support for the financial aid program at the school and the socioeconomic diversity it provides, but they were not as clear about the degree to which students who participate on financial aid are fully integrated in the life of the school. FC.PT.3 spoke to the relative invisibility of socioeconomic differences amongst the students, “I don’t think they care about – especially fourteen, fifteen, sixteen – about socioeconomics.” FC.AD.1, however, noted that the area in which Four Corners is located tends to be a socioeconomically stratified area, and she said that “...it’s really after hours that you don’t see the mixing.” FC.PT.1 described the relative visibility of socioeconomic difference in terms of the incomplete information he has about certain families and assumptions that flow from this information – assumptions that point to the possibility that parents in the community might collapse racial/ethnic and socioeconomic diversity:

“There is an assumption that if you’re going to this school, you can somehow afford, although I can tell you, there are some people; there’s...a Mexican kid on Sebastian’s

football team, I don't know how this family's paying for this school. I know what they do for a living. I know how much money they make. At least I presume how much money they make. So either they have a family fortune somewhere or they're on some form of a tuition plan that's very cool that I'm not aware of" (FC.PT.1 2014).

This is the same parent who described his struggle with sending his children to a school that is populated by so many wealthy families, since he and his wife would prefer a more diverse community than exists at Four Corners. He did describe his perception that socioeconomic differences do "separate people" in the community, which he said that he and his wife acknowledge and accept because of the overall quality of their children's experiences. Still, he does not believe that families who participate in financial aid are less or poorly integrated into the school community. "...I can tell you the people that I know that are on it, they don't come across as poor or needy or feeling like they're less than anyone else" (FC.PT.1 2014). That claim, then, was based on observation rather than direct conversations with any of those families.

None of the Four Corners parents described any critical incidents connected to diversity, nor did any of these parents describe any discomfort of any kind with the school's approaches to racial/ethnic or socioeconomic diversity and their impact on life at the school. Rather, all of them indicated that culture is about as good as they can imagine any school could be – diverse, integrated, supportive, and generally high-functioning. These parents relayed more personal stories about their children's mixed friend groups than the parents at South Hills, and often remarked on how enriching these friendships have been for their children. So, while these parents often simultaneously described racial/ethnic and socioeconomic diversity as relatively invisible within the school community, they seem to perceive the presence of both as a badge of honor for the school.

As with the participants from South Hills, the Four Corners participants hedged and qualified their responses about inclusion as it related to socioeconomic status. With the exception of the Head and another administrator, no one for sure who participates and no one who is comfortable enough with the idea of knowing. However, most admitted that they assume who participates based on the same markers identified by the South Hills participants and are likely just as accurate in those assumptions. Such assumptions also point to deeply held beliefs about the connection between culture and class, and geography and class. So while most identify the lack of self-segregation as evidence of inclusion, the Head's comments about visible self-segregation along racial and socioeconomic lines point to a willful disregard for this marker and the discomfort it seems to cause.

Summary

While there are some parents in the community that likely would be satisfied with an intentionally homogenous and assimilated school community, all of these participants' representation of what they say is the majority of Four Corners constituents who appreciate the diversity in the school. There is some evidence here that even parents who did not consider diversity important during the search process have come to see the direct benefits for their children once they joined the school. There is also some evidence that they can recognize less-direct benefits, and that they attach meaning to diversity as a result. Still, there does not seem to be much appetite at all for reculturing work, mainly because diversity has been "accomplished" and requires no other work. While there were

descriptions of some faculty members who want to push equity conversations further and challenge deeply held assumptions in all constituencies along the lines of educating for critical consciousness, the only participant who indicated a desire for parent and colleague education around equity topics was the Head – albeit not right away. And yet, he acknowledged that he had chosen not to rush into such work because of his sensitivity to the capacity of parents to engage in such challenging activities. Again, the majority of the participants here seem to demonstrate liberal multicultural attitudes that allow them to acknowledge differences or look past them at will.

Colorblindness holds value for many members of the Four Corners community as well, and socioeconomic status is also purported to be relatively invisible – both signs to members that the community is well integrated. However, as with the participants from South Hills, most admitted to making assumptions about socioeconomic status based on observations of race or class markers; in one case a parent actually claimed to know a family's income. The administrators and teachers from Four Corners, however, indicated that there is a critical mass of faculty for whom race and class are visible, who talk about race and class openly, and who want to see the community engage in more education for the entire community that could lead to critical consciousness. The Head, as the clear outlier in this group of participants, expressed an interest in such education but also described the need to approach it carefully lest the community reject such efforts out of hand.

This raises interesting questions about the relative size and fluidity of in-groups and out-groups at the school. It seems clear both from the participants' responses about their own experiences and their descriptions of the school culture that a traditional dominant majority exists that places limits on recognition of race and class, as well as conversation about both. The presence of an "enlightened" Head, to use Batiste's terminology, and at least some colleagues who are thinking beyond the existing culture, indicates at least a possibility that some members of the dominant culture might experience their own moments of exclusion when they contest the status quo and accepted modes of thinking and behavior. Such moments of exclusion would be very different than those experienced by members of the out-group who are cultural or socioeconomic minorities, of course, since those groups are likely to be assigned "them" implicitly precisely because of their minority status. However, since the perception of the Four Corners participants is that the minority are well integrated and that everyone seems to get along well, anyone who challenges those perceptions certainly risks trading their "us" status for "them" status. This tension was clear to the two outliers from South Hills, and it seems clear to the Head at Four Corners. And in both cases, it has caused these outliers to remain quiet so as not to disturb their comfortable communities.

Findings, Part 4: West Academy

West Academy serves 502 students in grades 7-12. The school reports that the student population is comprised of 71% who identify as White, but does not publish a breakdown by racial/ethnic group of the 29% of that come from their “diverse” group within the student body. Internally the school reports that 8% of the students are Asian, while Latino, Middle Eastern, and Multiracial students each make up 3% of the population. There are only two African American students in the school, which is about 0.004%. 32% of the students at West Academy participate in the financial aid program, and the average grant covers about 48% of the cost of tuition (West Academy 2014). This puts West Academy higher than the medians for both CAIS and NAIS for participation, and close to CAIS and NAIS for the average percentage of tuition covered by the grants.

West Academy has a mission statement along with culture and values statements, and like the other two participating schools there is no mention in any of those statements of equity, diversity or inclusion. As we will see below, however, interviewees – especially the Head – referred to the school’s stated commitment to socioeconomic diversity that actually is not mentioned directly in any of these statements.

I interviewed a total of 6 people from West Academy, including administrators and parents. Three interviewees had more than one role at the school, including two staff who also were parents, and one parent who is also a trustee. The following chart provides details for each interviewee:

Interviewee	Role 1	Role 2	Student 1	Student 2	Student 3
WA.AD.1	Admissions	None	None	None	None
WA.AD.2	Diversity	None	None	None	None
WA.AD.3	Asst. Head	Parent	None	None	None
WA.AD.4	Head	None	None	None	None
WA.PT.1	Parent	Communications	9th	12th	None
WA.PT.2	Parent	Trustee	Grad	12th	None

The school is located in Saybrook, a middle class suburb located near some wealthier communities. While the median household income in California was about \$57,000 in 2011, the median household income in Saybrook was about \$78,000. The median house or condominium value in California that same year was \$357,000, compared to a median there of about \$606,000. Saybrook’s population is majority White (75%), followed by Latino (13%), Asian (7%), and Multiracial (3%). African Americans make up just 1.2% of the population. West Academy certainly attracts students from the wealthier towns in the area, which have quite different demographic profiles than Saybrook. There are some students who come from Shady Hill, for example, which is about 15 miles away and has a median household income of about \$181,000 and a median house or condominium value of \$871,000 – both well above the state averages. Shady Hill is also 89% White and about 6% Latino. As I will describe below, the student population at West Academy tends to better reflect the populations of towns other than Saybrook itself, both racially/ethnically and socioeconomically. The geographic diversity that exists within this environment and its connections to the school’s efforts to build a more inclusive community present a set of challenges that is not as clearly visible in the other two participating schools.

Attitudes Towards Diversity at West Academy

The West Academy Head cited his alignment with the school's mission, particularly in light of his own recent dissertation work on global education in independent schools, and the school's commitment to balance and wellness, as key reasons he was attracted to the school in the first place. And, since he would have the opportunity to work closely with the then-current Head of School to implement that mission as a member of the administrative team, "...what drew me to it, was the opportunity to take a mission statement that I loved and convert it into something that was actionable and to convert a concept into a program"(WA.AD.4 2014). Like his counterparts at the other schools, while the Head said he has observed that prospective parents do not prioritize diversity when they are considering the school for their children, he said that the school consciously does not emphasize or prioritize racial/ethnic diversity during the admissions process: "I think probably one of the reasons we haven't done racial benchmarks [for enrollment] is that I don't really know what we're capable of because of where we exist in the world, and what we have not been to do in terms of allocating resources in that area...It's fascinating to me that we haven't done a lot of conversation around it, and it makes me wonder if we should be doing it now"(WA.AD.4 2014).

This reluctance to engage in conversation about diversity – either during the admissions process or during school – is notable considering that the Head reiterated that West Academy has a stated commitment to socioeconomic diversity, but not to racial/ethnic diversity. Still, according to him and WA.AD.1, financial aid is even de-emphasized in Open House presentations. And, once again we see a Head who choosing intentionally not to speak about socioeconomic with colleagues, parents or students to guard against backlash. However, while the Heads of the other schools had past experiences with angry and unsupportive parents, the Head at West Academy reported that he had not experienced that there. Instead, he said he based his decision on past experiences in other schools.

The other administrators at West Academy also talked about the uniqueness of the school culture considering their locations and surrounding schools. WA.AD.3 described being attracted by the integrated curriculum as much as the foci on ethical formation, global thinking, and healthy balance, adding: "The school where I was, it's a great public school, but it's hardcore. Everybody takes AP everything and really sort of burns kids out. So I was interested in that piece as well"(WA.AD.3 2014). 2 of 3 administrators at West Academy discussed the importance of diversity in their ultimate choice to join those schools. One is also the parent of students who have attended the school. For WA.AD.1, she spent time as both a trustee and a parent before accepting the position as director of admissions, and specifically mentioned the school's commitment to socioeconomic diversity as an area she wanted to impact.

Like the administrators at the other two participating schools, the West Academy administrators also guessed that parents were mostly interested in the academic programs, the generally positive reputations of the school, and the positive school cultures. And, like the administrators at Four Corners, these administrators also shared that they believed parents actually came to value diversity later once they and their children joined the community and built relationships with a diverse group of students and families. They did not provide any supporting evidence for this claim, but instead described that they had

noticed parents' attitude evolve during their time at the school as their children's friend groups formed.

The exception amongst the administrators is WA.AD.2, who actually wanted to come to West Academy to lead efforts to support students of color. Her original attraction to the school was similar to other administrators in that she was interested in the college prep program and the "big global emphasis on global travel and service learning" (WA.AD.2 2014). While her position was intended primarily to be a counselor for all students, she brought experience supporting Latino students from her time in public schools that leaders at West Academy were quick to leverage when they hired her. As she stated, "...one of my passions has always been helping students of color get to higher education, basically. Because I myself am Latina and kind of unique in my family on the education I was able to get" (WA.AD.2 2014). She is the only participant in this study from any school whose position focuses on diversity work – in this case, specifically related to the support of Latino students and their families.

Like the parents at the other two schools, West Academy parents talked mostly about the academic program and the positive "vibe" they got from the school culture that compelled them to choose the school for their children. Once again, no one gave the schools' success in college placement any mention amongst the reasons that helped them decide to have their children attend. However, the only parent participant from the three participating who mentioned the impact of diversity on her family's choice of school was WA.PT.1; again, she is also an administrator at West Academy. She reported having reservations about sending her children to an independent middle or high school because of the lack of diversity – particularly socioeconomic diversity - at their independent elementary school. However, as she spoke with community members during the admissions process, it became clear to her that West Academy would at least be a more diverse school than her children's current school:

"...I wouldn't characterize West Academy as an exceptionally diverse community, it is an independent school and there's a large number of relatively well to-do families. There's not a huge amount of racial diversity either that we came to understand... that it has as much, if not more than some of the other independent schools in the area. So that kind of assuaged my concerns about keeping my kids in that type of environment, if that makes sense" (WA.AD.1 2014).

While all participants knew about the tuition assistance program, they claimed they did not usually know which students participated. The distribution of funds amongst financial aid participants was also mostly unknown to the most participants, although these practices were described somewhat differently by this Head compared to Heads of other independent schools. He described their distribution as more of a "triangle" approach: "...we had very few students who were paying very little – if that makes sense. We only had a small handful of students who were getting really large awards, and we had a lot of students who were getting somewhere between a quarter to three quarters of tuition paid for through tuition assistance, which is great. We actually really liked that. It was good for our community that we had this nice middle ground that fit our community and our neighborhood and all of that" (WA.AD.4 2014).

This approach, then, allows the school to serve a larger percentage of students through tuition assistance, which aligns well with the verbal commitment the Head and others have made to socioeconomic diversity. However, because there are so few low income students in the program, and many middle and upper middle class students who participate in tuition assistance, they are creating a narrower and less diverse group of financial aid students.

The Head also described the West Scholars program, which aims to serve students whose families need the most financial support. The school includes 50% of the cost of tuition for a given Scholar in its financial aid budget, then the West Academy Head and a few key trustees solicit donations to cover the other 50%. This allows the school to “pay” the same amount to have underrepresented students in the school; currently, all Scholars are Latino. The goal of this program is not just to provide financial and academic support to these students each year they attend West Academy, but also to ensure that these students will matriculate at an excellent college after graduation that will have offered them a substantial scholarship program so that they can graduate debt-free (or close to it). All students who participate in tuition assistance also have access to supplemental funds to help cover the cost of school activities not included in tuition. According to the West Academy Head, about 98% of the student body has been able to participate in school activities across the board, and that those who do not participate are usually not recipients of financial aid. The first Scholars graduated in the spring of 2014.

The Head was clear that none of these programs is explained to the faculty or parent communities in any systematic way. When I asked him how new faculty might learn about financial aid or the Scholars program, he said that it wasn't part of any orientation program but “probably should be.” He said he believes that parents generally are aware that there is a financial aid program since information is included in admissions collaterals and mentioned during the process, but there isn't any education beyond that for families who do not participate. As for the Scholars program, the Head described it as a purposefully “under the radar” program designed to preserve participating students' anonymity. The downside to this approach is that information about it “...leaks out in certain ways, and that's probably not a wonderful thing just because then it's leaking out in ways that you may not [be able] to control...my guess is, is that families have a sense that it exists, but they probably don't know” (WA.AD.4 2014). The Head and others do work hard to make sure that there is not much information shared with the community about tuition assistance, so they do exert a fair amount of control over those communications.

We see here a clear and intentional pattern of avoiding conversation around diversity topics, whether they relate to race/ethnicity or socioeconomics. While on the one hand this approach might help students who participate in financial aid programs maintain their anonymity, on the other hand there is little chance to build deep support for a program that administrators expressed concern that parents would not support if they knew and understood it. While some participants discussed the need to “protect” students' anonymity, yet was not clear from any comments just what – or who - the students were being protected from. The culture of silence at the school has been constructed very intentionally by administrators, seemingly because of their assumption of latent negative and/or unsupportive attitudes amongst the parents that is masked by uninformed and uncritical support. As of yet, however, the Head reported that any such complaints, or even questions, about these practices have been at a bare minimum. This stands in contrast to

other schools where he has worked, where he said he was used to a “vocal minority” of parents who questioned the practice of allocating part of their tuition to support other students’ education. In fact, any “buzz” he has heard has been positive and in support of the school’s commitment to socioeconomic diversity. He said he believes that same level of support for socioeconomic diversity exists amongst the faculty and staff as well, and also attributed that belief to the lack of questions and complaints from that group. Thus, he remains hesitant about unnecessarily creating controversy where little or none currently exists. “It’s something we’ve been trying to evaluate. Should we be more open about it? Should we be less open about it? Honestly, I can’t answer that question because I don’t really know. Because we’ve chosen, strategically – for better or for worse – to not talk about it openly with the community...” (WA.AD.4 2014).

The Head acknowledged that there is not much discussion of racial/ethnic diversity at West Academy either, and while he said that the school currently reflects the racial/ethnic composition of the local surrounding area, he said he would like it to be more culturally diverse. Up to this point, however, with the exception of the recruitment of students who might participate in the Scholars program, the admissions team has not focused their efforts in reaching out to underrepresented communities. One of the practical reasons he identified for the lack of progress is that the small admissions staff – currently comprised of two fully dedicated staff members – has not been able to engage in such outreach while still fulfilling the other requirements of enrollment management. The Head said that he wants to add more staff to the admissions team in the future so that they can begin to implement some new strategies that focus specifically on racial/ethnic diversity, and he is at least somewhat optimistic that they might have some success given the fact that Latinos to a large degree, and Blacks to a somewhat lesser degree, do live close enough to the school that it would be reasonable for them to attend. “If we want to go looking for racial diversity in the school, we know where to look. It’s north of the school” (WA.AD.4 2014). Regardless, he has chosen not to articulate any concrete goals for increasing racial/ethnic diversity with the community. “I’d hate to put goals on something that [isn’t] really actually attainable” (WA.AD.4 2014). Independent school enrollment is always a moving target, and many schools do not know what their enrollment will be until close to the time that school opens for the year after summer break. Still, by choosing not to use benchmarks to measure progress, the Head is effectively eliminating any possible opportunity for failure in recruiting for students of color. A school might set a goal for enrolling Latina students, for example, then would be able to measure their progress against that goal. The process of identifying the goals also would force the admissions team, the Head, and the Board to commit to certain practices in order to meet those goals, and the efficacy of those practices can be evaluated at the end of the cycle. In choosing to proceed without goals, administrators have freed themselves of expectations for recruiting and yielding underrepresented students.

The Head said that he spends some time sharing current enrollment statistics with faculty so that they are aware of the composition of the student body, and there is also some work being undertaken around inclusivity that I will address in more detail in the next section. The Head said that the parent community, however, does not hear much from him or others at the school about the ways in which racial/ethnic diversity operates at the school or makes manifest any philosophical principle related to diversity. While the choice not to discuss socioeconomic diversity has been a conscious one, the choice not to discuss

racial/ethnic diversity seems to have been a less conscious one. In responding to questions about this topic, for example, the Head reflected:

“...[I]t’s interesting having this conversation because I, on one hand I feel like perhaps we should be more open and articulate to our community what our goals are in these areas. On the other hand, it’s sort of nice having the community just sort of build itself organically and not have a sense of this is sort of being, try to be manufactured. I don’t pretend to know which is better, but I think we’ve certainly gone for the former rather than the latter, so that we haven’t done a lot of talking about those pieces with our parent body” (WA.AD.4 2014).

The other administrators at West Academy also said they embrace the school’s commitment to socioeconomic diversity, and their comments indicated that they place significant value on it as both an underlying philosophy articulated in the mission and in practice through the tuition assistance program. WA.AD.1 also commented that the school has been “open” with the faculty and parents about this commitment and about the tuition assistance program. WA.AD.3 also thinks that parents understand the tuition assistance program to some extent, but not in great detail. In essence, she said, “...what parents know about financial aid is that it exists.” They both allowed, however, that the same openness does not apply to racial/ethnic diversity because there has not been the same kind of institutional commitment to increasing it. Percentages are published in the yearbook, according to WA.AD.1, and are shared with the school community at the opening of each school year, but there is not much other communication about racial/ethnic diversity beyond that. And, as she pointed out, while the school is more racially/ethnically diverse than it may appear due to the relatively large number of Multiracial students, the percentage of students who do not identify as White at West Academy is lower than it might be if the school decided to prioritize growth in this area. Nonetheless, as WA.AD.3 described, “I don’t think parents perceive us as all that diverse. It’s just socioeconomically diverse at the end of the day. I just know relative to other independent schools we are, but certainly relative to their other choices around here, we’re not” (WA.AD.3 2014)

WA.AD.1 was clear that the school’s commitment to socioeconomic diversity will be sustained, and said she is working closely with the Head to develop strategies for increasing racial/ethnic diversity as well. She said that both of them feel that these attitudes towards diversity are shared by the majority of the parents at West Academy, although both remarked on some of the skepticism about socioeconomic diversity and tuition assistance that they have heard from some parents. According to both of these administrators, it is not uncommon for students who receive tuition assistance to share that fact with friends, and reactions to this kind of news have not always been positive. As WA.AD.1 described, “[t]here were families, full pay families, who were bothered to know that...some of their tuition dollars, go into assistance...there are many families receiving assistance who appear to live similar lifestyles to those who are...full pay. And so there’s some tension around that” (WA.AD.1 2014). Neither administrator described that attitude as prevalent or the norm, but both described having heard similar comments in their respective positions regularly, if not frequently.

West Academy’s approach to diversity conversations stands in contrast to the other two participating schools. At South Hills, there have been a few attempts to bring topics to

the forefront for consideration by all constituencies, but there hasn't been much interest on the part of most faculty, administrators and parents to do much more. At Four Corners, there is interest on the part of the Head and some faculty, but not much receptivity in the parent community. At West Academy the school leaders do not have a clear sense of what the attitudes will be because they have not ever engaged the community in such conversations. So while the Head at Four Corners has hesitated to do too much for equity because of his parent population and location, the Head at West Academy has consciously chosen not to highlight cultural or socioeconomic diversity out of similar concerns.

WA.AD.2 had a somewhat different take on the value of diversity at West Academy, describing it mostly as a nice-to-have characteristic rather than a non-negotiable core value. She said she believed that the school would take a hiatus from adding new students to the program when they kick off their capital campaign to construct new buildings. Still, she said, the fact that she has a position that includes work on diversity in general and the Scholars group in particular indicates some level of institutional interest. Nonetheless, because of the lack of communication within the community about diversity initiatives or her role in them is an indication to her that diversity is not as deeply valued as it might be. "I think we're still at the point of being concerned about diversity, but not committed to allocating full resources or an entire diversity director or anything like that yet. So we're kind of in that mid-level" (WA.AD.2 2014).

She agreed with the other administrators that parents in the community do support the tuition assistance program by and large, and said that the parents who do *not* advertise their own participation in the program are some of the most ardent supporters. They are also the reason why she believed the school was keeping the program "...very much under wraps. Because we have a lot more people on tuition assistance than they would like to let others know, I guess" (WA.AD.2 2014). The Scholars program itself is also not advertised within the school community, she said, and while faculty know that the program exists, she said she doubted that parents -outside of the donors who fund these students - are aware of the program at all.

The two parents who participated in this study, however, both were very aware of the Scholars program and the school's commitment to socioeconomic diversity. The fact that WA.PT.1 is a member of the staff (although not part of the school's leadership team), and that WA.PT.2 is also the chair of the board of trustees, give them visibility into the school's policies and practices that is certainly unusual within the parent community. And, their comments about the importance for the school to commit resources to the building of a more diverse community were some of the most direct and nuanced of from West Academy. WA.PT.1, for example sees the presence of a diverse student body as a direct benefit to all students, not just students of color or students who participate in tuition assistance. "I think it's important because...I think it's important for our children to be exposed to people from all kinds of different backgrounds and learn and appreciate them for everything that they do, not to perpetuate stereotypes or just a sense of the other, being unfamiliar with different groups of people. It reflects the broader community and it just generally raises the entire experience for everybody" (WA.PT.1 2014). WA.PT.2 was also clear that he thinks the school should be providing comprehensive support – financial and otherwise – to capable students through the Scholars program that would not only get them through their high school graduation, but through their college graduation as well. "...[W]e made the realization that okay, these kids get a free-ride at West Academy, but then

if they can't go to college what's the point? So they need to go to college and they need to finish college without debt. If they can do that then it's a victory"(WA.PT.2 2014). As a trustee, he also has led fundraising efforts – including personally soliciting donors – to support the Scholars program, and has been successful in gathering enough support from other parents in the community to support the current cohort of students. WA.PT.1 expressed a similar view on the importance of the Scholars program for the school, noting that she thinks "...it's important for a school community, if it has resources, to offer those opportunities to students who might not otherwise have a chance." While both of these parents describe the practical value of mixed friend groups for their children, they also grounded their comments in their own philosophical perspectives that attached inherent value to diversity.

Even so, WA.PT.1 was unsure how to characterize the institutional commitment to diversity at West Academy and the goals the school has for diversity. "...I guess the only answer that I can give is that it hasn't come up very much and I haven't talked about it very much." WA.PT.2 also observed that the school does not educate the parent community much about tuition assistance or the Scholars, and said that she did not think that parents or students would even know who participates in either because such information is "just not relevant." Still, both felt that by and large, the parent community is supportive of both racial/ethnic and socioeconomic diversity. WA. PT.2 remarked that "...the vast majority of our family population would like a greater diversity at the school and we've heard that over and over and over." She also acknowledged the challenges to increasing diversity from the local communities, noting that "...it's been difficult. We work very, very hard for diversity, but I mean...basically the school is in a sea of White...there's just no other way to say it." WA.PT.1, on the other hand, has not heard a steady stream of comments from other parents about the value they place on diversity for West Academy. "I don't know of very many parents who say yes, I want to dive in and get involved and make that happen...[but] I don't get the impression that there are parents who are against the idea."

Symbolic Boundaries to Inclusion at West Academy

The same markers of an inclusive community were described by West Academy participants as they were described by the other participants. Everyone agreed that student friend groups are heterogeneous, that students do not usually self-segregate by race/ethnicity or socioeconomic status, and that students get along very well together for the most part. WA.AD.1 and WA.AD.3 both acknowledge, however, that friend groups on campus may not look as racially/ethnically diverse as they are because so many students who identify as students of color – and specifically as Multiracial – who often are assumed to be White. This is the closest that any West Academy participant came to claiming colorblindness, and instead described a more nuanced challenge around the visibility of race/ethnicity on campus. WA.AD.1 described the fact that some prospective parents comment during their initial visit to the school that it looks like a "mostly White school," even though "a lot of the diversity that we do have is Multicultural, and it's not visible..." (WA.AD.1 2014). On the other hand, she described socioeconomic differences as often more visible within the community because so many students talk openly about the tuition assistance they receive, and because students' hometowns are usually clear indicators of their socioeconomic status. As WA.AD.3 described, the culture feels mostly inclusive except that "...kids would say there's the haves and the have nots..." WA.AD.1 described the fact

that the school strives to serve more families with smaller tuition assistance grants, which causes some tension. "...[W]e have a lot of high, upper middle class families, frankly, who are receiving assistance...There are many families receiving assistance who appear to live similar lifestyles to those who are paying full pay" (WA.AD.1 2014).

The Head also acknowledged that tensions exist around socioeconomic differences, and that the assumptions that geography is a clear indicator of socioeconomic status is a difficult one to break. "[E]ssentially if you live south of West Academy it's thought of that you have more money, and if you live north of West Academy is thought of that you have less money. I think the kids know that and sense that and feel that. In fact, I know that some of our Scholars have mentioned that, and not coincidentally, most of our Scholars live north of the school." Nonetheless, he said that he "would like to think that in general the community feels basically inclusive" (WA.AD.4 2014). However, since there has not been much broad conversation about either racial/ethnic or socioeconomic diversity, as the West Academy participants have described, the school has not engaged with its students of color or students on tuition assistance to learn more about their experiences in the school. The school has a Multicultural club that has not seemed to impact the level or frequency of discourse around diversity topics around campus, and no one at the administrative level has sought to initiate such conversations or other related activities, according to the Head.

As was described in the previous section, WA.AD.2 works closely with the Scholars and thus shared a different perspective on the relative level of inclusion of students of color and students on tuition assistance. She said that she appreciates the efforts being made to enroll students who will be the first in their families to attend college, the solid financial support that these students receive both for tuition and for other costs associated with attending West Academy, and the fact that the West Academy Head created the position that she now holds. She also said that it has been very clear to her that the administration does not want to call attention to the program at all, nor to her role in supporting the students in that program. "I'm definitely not a publicized part of the school, in my role...So I think they definitely see me as kind of - "It's good that we have you. But it's not like something we're going to be putting on the newsletter to publicize about our school" (WA.AD.2 2014). Unlike the Head, she acknowledged that she sees progress within the school on diversity initiatives like the Multicultural club, which she leads, and also is starting to see some interest among teachers for integrating diversity topics into the existing curriculum. At the same time, she acknowledged that the support she has received so far is a demonstration of a more moderate level of commitment than that for other priorities like buildings and the fundraising to support those projects.

For WA.AD.2, then, the general avoidance of conversation around diversity and "mid-level" prioritizing of diversity work in general seems to contribute to an atmosphere that does not make the Scholars feel wholly included or welcome. She described the experience of working on college applications with a Latina student, who is one of the few students who commutes from north of the school:

"She wrote her application about basically living in two worlds, living in two different worlds - one being our school world and one being her home world, and how she feels like she's kind of losing part of herself in each environment. Like as she grows academically, and she's more successful at school, she kind of disconnects more from her home environment and her community. But she doesn't fully fit in at

this school – in this environment either, because of her outside community. So that application was really telling for me, about, I think, how the other students may be feeling...that they are kind of “on” when they’re at school. Like they have this persona they need to fulfill, and they just have to fit in and seem really, really smart, and do all those things that everyone else is doing. But that might not really be fully them or who they are, that they’re holding back a big piece of themselves, in order to feel like they fit in more in the environment” (WA.AD.2 2014).

She said she has observed that White parents at West Academy seem to be “extremely unaware” of the experiences of students and parents of color in the school as well, based on “[j]ust the way they speak in their gatherings and stuff.” And, since diversity goals are not unarticulated and discourse around diversity happens very little, she has not been surprised that this is the case. She said she is often privy to comments that have led her to this conclusion because of the fact that her responsibilities to serve Scholars has not been explained or highlighted, and because she does not look Latina. “And I have kind of a unique perspective. Because my mom’s from Argentina, and my dad’s from Mexico, but I look very White. So I do speak Spanish, and I relate with the Hispanic culture. But I can also blend in to different environments and kind of overhear what people are saying, without them really thinking, ‘Oh, I should watch what I say” (WA.AD.2 2014). She said that some families of color – particularly Latino families – also have shared with her that they do not feel comfortable on campus or at school gatherings, both because of the language challenge and the cultural barriers that they have experienced:

“Well, there’s not much involvement from most of the parents of the students of color. And that’s a problem for me. Because the majority of the parents here are very involved. So I feel like they – especially the Scholars parents feel like, ‘Well, I’m just grateful that my kid is getting this paid for, for them. And we’ll just take what we can. And I’m not going to bother anybody...’ They don’t want to ruffle any feathers. Because the rug could get taken out from under them at any moment. Plus, the language barrier is there. And just the cultural expectations are just very different. We had a group of Spanish speaking parents who were actually introduced to each other at one of the orientations. And they were like, “Oh, it’s so good to meet people that speak my language and kind of can relate” (WA.AD.2 2014).

Besides feeling out of place as racial/ethnic minorities, WA.AD.2 also described the culture at West Academy as one where “...things are just assumed – that everybody gets room service when they travel, or that they fly first class. Just things like that are just said in normal conversation.” For students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, then, the effect of these kinds of attitudes can be a chilling one. “It’s so typical, that if you don’t fit into that mold, that it would – in my personal experience, you would feel like you should just be quiet and not say anything. Because obviously you can’t really relate to the life that these people have” (WA.AD.2 2014).

She noted that the school’s commitment to global education, which underpins much of the curricular program, does have some positive effect on students’ understanding of both racial/ethnic and socioeconomic diversity, but this understanding usually is less

focused on the diversity that exists locally and more on the diversity that exists around the world. “So I think they’re much less exposed to the diversity here, and especially in our community, in Mastiff. They were more scared to go to [the park] down in Mastiff than to go to China.” Nonetheless, the students who are involved in the Multicultural club have begun to try to bring the conversation about local diversity to a deeper level, albeit with mixed results. Some of those students designed and implemented a survey that was intended to illuminate the experiences of students of color on campus, but many of those students did not feel prepared to be pulled into the spotlight to discuss their experiences:

“But it was perceived as picking on people of color at the school. Because they were just asking them, “Do you feel this way? Oh, that doesn’t make sense.” You know? They were barraging them with questions of a political nature and language. So ...the ethnic minority students on campus kind of felt like that survey kind of put them on a blast of like – ‘I’d rather not be representative [of] these people that are ignorant and asking me all these questions now, because you guys did this survey.” And it drew more attention to it, basically. And they’re just trying to, like, keep their head down and get through the day. Now they have to be asked all these questions, and try to defend political views – that they’re not even sure what they believe yet. And just because they’re a minority, they’re seen as maybe representative of that” (WA.AD.2 2014).

While the Head and the other administrators expressed support and admiration for the Multicultural club and other emerging affinity clubs on campus like the women’s club, none of them mentioned this survey or the resulting discomfort amongst some of the students when describing elements of the school culture and programs. Neither did any of them mention in any detail the experiences of students or parents from racially/ethnically or socioeconomically underrepresented groups. The Head reflected that he had had “a small handful of conversations over the years” regarding the experiences of some families of color:

“[They] have been primarily with two families [that] would represent racial diversity in the school who feel as if their kids – don’t struggle, but would like to have a little bit stronger sense of their own background and groups of students who fit more along lines with them in those ways. But I don’t think those families have been calling for us to do anything different other than just trying to point out to us that this is a struggle for their kids at times and how can we support them better...There hasn’t been a lot around it, and I don’t really know why that is” (WA.AD.4 2014).

As for the evolution of the school’s inclusion of diversity topics in the curricular and co-curricular programs, he also noted that there has not been a significant interest from the faculty or students in increasing it.

Both parent participants described the school community as fairly well integrated as well, again, based on their experiences that their children’s friend groups are both racially/ethnically and socioeconomically diverse and seem to be very accepting of one another. WA.PT.1 said that she does not observe self-segregation by race/ethnicity or

socioeconomic status on campus during classes or free times, and said that she has observed that many students have a tendency to stay on campus for activities together instead of leaving school right away to go home. Additionally, while she did not make specific mention of the extent to which she believes that race/ethnicity are visible to students or carry importance for them, she did point to several experiences that demonstrate the relatively low visibility and importance of socioeconomic status to students and the school culture as a whole – by design. “I don’t feel at all that there’s a culture of haves or have-nots here at all and I find it very appealing....I think the majority of our students would have no idea necessarily who those Scholars are or would have thought about it in that context” (WA.PT.1 2014). Given the fact that the Scholars are all Latino and make up a small percentage of the school population, and given the fact that at least internally, members of the school community are familiar with the commitment to socioeconomic diversity, it is difficult to believe that students would not have any idea who is on tuition assistance. While it’s true that the Scholars program is not publicized, it is the case that most participants have indicated that socioeconomic status is at least somewhat visible.

WA.PT.2, however, acknowledged the connection between geography, race/ethnicity, and socioeconomic status and the challenges that poses for building an inclusive community. In particular, he spoke at length about the Scholars program, and the cultural, social, financial, and emotional hurdles that those students have to overcome just to attend the school, not to mention fit into the culture and participate fully: “So it is very important to us, but it’s just geographically it’s difficult. You know, the large pools of the Hispanic families don’t live anywhere near Saybrook” (WA.PT.2 2014). He also identified the costs associated with tuition assistance - and the Scholars program in particular – as a major challenge for the school. He was clear, however, that one of his key responsibilities as a trustee and as a parent in the school is to make sure that these programs remain robustly funded so that the school can continue to be as racially/ethnically and socioeconomically diverse as possible.

While WA.PT.2 did not describe any understanding of work being done in the curricular or co-curricular programs on diversity, WA.PT.1 had at least some understanding of the various affinity groups that had formed, including the Multicultural club. She did not describe, however, any specifics about the activities or programs that are being spearheaded by those groups, and did not mention anything about the Multicultural club’s survey or ensuing controversy. She did describe the fact that diversity in general does not seem to be a topic for discussion amongst the other parents in the school, and that most seem unaware of any programs in place – particularly the Scholars program – that are intended to impact the racial/ethnic and socioeconomic diversity in the school. In fact, both WA.PT.1 and WA.PT.2 were clear that there was no intention on the part of the institution to advertise the Scholars program to the larger community; both attributed this to the need to protect students’ and families’ confidentiality rather than a concern over a lack of support from other families. Neither shared any thoughts about the place of other students on tuition assistance, nor did they describe any tensions between those students and full-pay students, as the administrators had.

Summary

All of the participants from West Academy, then, clearly seemed to understand and support the verbal institutional commitment to socioeconomic diversity. While racial/ethnic diversity has not been prioritized as much, these participants all expressed a desire to see increases in unrepresented minorities in the school. The two parents were the most articulate about the inherent value – both philosophical and practical – of having a diverse school community, but none of these actors said that they considered or chose the school for its diversity.

The conscious and strategic choice not to discuss diversity goals or programs, including the Scholars program, was described directly by the West Academy Head. The other participants from West Academy also seemed conscious of this quiet approach, and all participants indicated that such an approach served to draw little attention from the families in the community about the cost – financial or otherwise – of having a diverse community. As we saw in the section on inclusive community - particularly in the comments from WA.AD.2, the outlier in this group – this approach also might be having a chilling effect on some members of the school community because of the implicit messages that are being sent about the lack of value for both racial/ethnic and socioeconomic diversity, and about the experiences of community members who represent those kinds of diversity. The silence, however, does serve to highlight the very positive aspects of the school's culture, one where all students seem to get along well and where they are comfortable.

The common threads that the three participating schools share, then, are those described here. They demonstrate a verbal commitment to diversity, but claim that their diversity is largely invisible and thus does not warrant deeper work in areas like cultural competence or critical consciousness. They seem to assume that no news is good news from all constituents, and often do not share much information or solicit much feedback from different constituents about their experiences with diversity in the school. Avoiding conversations with typical independent school families seems safer than encouraging conversations that might create confusion and resentment. And, avoiding conversations with atypical families seems safer than hearing about their exclusion and discomfort.

The cultural norms that have been constructed by members of the dominant group at each of these schools are powerful enough to maintain silences, as well as feelings of comfort and safety amongst community members. Atypical students and families can experience these feelings as much as members of the dominant group so long as they put aside any contrary thoughts or feelings. The brand of multiculturalism in these schools tends more towards amalgamation than pluralism, since the implicit messages sent encourage those with different experiences and perspectives to withhold them lest they lose status, even as out-group members. Members of the dominant group risk losing at least some of their in-group status if they challenge the conventional wisdom as well.

Summary of Findings

School Choice and the Primacy of School Culture

Based on what we saw in the literature on school choice, it came as no surprise that administrators, faculty, and parents in these California independent schools did not prioritize racial/ethnic and socioeconomic diversity when they searched for a school. In

fact, their focus on finding a “good school” that would provide a challenging academic program aligned closely with what has been demonstrated in much of the literature. The executives also saw that academics would be the most significant draw for parents to any given independent school. It was surprising, however, that none of the participants mentioned college placement per se as a reason they settled on their current school. Since acceptance and matriculation at excellent colleges has long been a selling point of most independent schools, and is an outcome that parents clearly have been willing to pay high tuitions to get for their children, I fully expected college placement to be at least one of the factors that would be named explicitly by participants. I suspect that participants, especially parents, who talked about the importance of the strong reputation of their respective schools were using that language as a proxy for college placement, or at least assumed that a school with a good academic program and a strong reputation must also place their students in excellent colleges. Still, it is remarkable that no participants pointed to the power of college acceptances and matriculations to influence their choice of school.

Perhaps the most important learning I derived from the analysis of the data is the primacy of a positive school culture in participants’ ultimate choice of school. The literature on school choice does identify safety as a primary concern amongst parents who search for a school, and it certainly is possible that the participants in this study used terms like “comfortable,” “warm,” and “nice” as proxies for safety, especially emotional safety. Since physical safety was of no concern whatsoever for any of these participants – and is rarely a concern in any independent school – it is not surprising that the term itself was not used by any participants. However, participants also pointed to somewhat indefinable feelings about the school cultures, indicating that there existed just a good “vibe” that made them and, in the case of parents, their children want to join. Since all participants definitely had other options for employment or for schools for their children, and since most indicated that the academic programs at other schools were very comparable to the schools they chose, it was usually the positive school culture that swayed them in the end. The executives did not discuss the importance of culture for school choice, and in fact, mostly assumed that academic program would likely reign supreme. Culture played an important role for these participants not only during their search process, but also in their experiences at their schools once they joined those communities. The lengths that actors might go to preserve these cultures, then, considering the high value that they place on them, actually pose challenges for schools when it comes to diversity and inclusion.

Recasting competitiveness and self-interest to include diversity

The literature on the history of independent schools shows that the homogeneity of student bodies was held up as an important factor that contributed to the competitive edge offered by independent schools. High-class White students from “good families” mixed together with similar peers, and those connections brought opportunity and developed cultural capital. There was an underlying assumption that this homogeneity also made for a more academically rigorous program since only top students could access the program and thrive in it. These students or their families certainly saw no direct benefit to themselves in increasing racial/ethnic or socioeconomic diversity; thus, there wasn’t much support for early efforts to do so, and change was slow to come. Thanks to the leadership of a few visionary Heads of School and Boards of Trustees, change certainly did come to most independent schools; enrollment data shows that most seem to have moved away

from being purposefully elite to being more racially/ethnically and socioeconomically diverse.

The executives' perspectives, in fact, were that independent schools now are more likely to be explicit about their commitment to diversity in order to be responsive to current parent and employee expectations. None of the executives pointed to a moral imperative that might motivate schools or parents to increase diversity, but the executives said they believe parents now see value in a diverse school community is because it holds a different type of practical value for their children. Now independent schools tout the idea that students who are part of more diverse student bodies are exposed to people of different backgrounds, different experiences, and different ways of thinking. In an increasingly multicultural and globalized world, the skills students develop in diverse environments prepare them for success much more effectively than a homogeneous one. So while providing access to an independent school education for underserved and/or underrepresented students may compel a few parents to support diversity in a given school, the preparation for college and life that these atypical students bring is a tangible and direct benefit for everyone. In casting diversity as valuable in this way, schools now are helping to move the needle for parents who might have considered diversity as just something that is nice to have to something that might actually be necessary to have - not as much as academics, of course, but certainly valuable.

This concept of diversity as competitive edge does not seem to have caught on to the degree that it was embedded in the executives' comments, particularly those of John Chubb. A few of the parents mentioned the long term benefits of being in a school community that better reflects the "real world," but no one explicitly connected them to academics. In fact, as we saw in the analysis on school choice, parents still seemed most interested in the competitive edge that the academic program provides; this most clearly serves their self-interest. Some see diversity as valuable when it is personal for them, specifically when relationships between students of different backgrounds positively impact their children's overall experience, but not all mentioned that. Parents and employees alike pointed to those student relationships as markers of how positive their school cultures were as well - communities can be both nice and diverse at the same time. And, the fact that their schools are more diverse - and are intentionally built to be more diverse - than their local surrounding areas is a point of pride for most participants as well. While administrators were a bit more explicit about the practical skills attained in a diverse school community, and while the Heads of School even used that concept in their fundraising work, schools have not caught up yet with the executives' perspective on this.

Redefining Homogeneity as Amalgamation

A key concept that emerged from this data was an expectation from most participants that a certain level of homogeneity was still expected within their communities that served as the glue that holds the school culture together. That homogeneity is no longer assumed or expected to be racial/ethnic or socioeconomic in nature, as the literature demonstrates clearly was the case in the earlier days of independent schools. Rather, the participants indicated an expectation of homogeneity of academic capability and attitude, both of which are factors that contribute to the positive school culture - and the value that actors' attached to it. As well, the symbolic boundaries that exist to sort school communities into in-groups and out-groups and thus silence divergent and

disruptive voices also contribute to that positive school culture. While schools often tout their percentages of students of color and students on financial aid, they also explicitly and implicitly demonstrate the extent to which all of students in their schools are similar. Differences become less visible as students participate in shared traits and behaviors that are demanded by the in-group.

The executives emphasized the need for schools – especially Heads – to articulate the ways in which their commitment to diversity connects to their missions, and also to emphasize the aspects of program and culture that distinguish them from other schools. In doing so, schools stand the best chance of “finding their people,” as it were, in order to build a school community of like-minded families whose students will embrace the school’s program and culture and thrive in the school. Embedded in this goal is the assumption that the more racially/ethnically socioeconomically diverse those like-minded people are, the better. However, keeping the focus on academics both during admissions processes and in the daily life of the school – especially according to Chubb – should remain the most important focus; after all, that is primarily what families are buying in the end.

Indeed, the participants’ descriptions of their school cultures was remarkably similar – even the outliers from each school clearly were describing the same places that the other actors were. Students at these schools were described as high performing in the academic program, highly engaged in activities, and very nice to each other. These are reasons these actors expressed such high levels of satisfaction with their respective schools, and some discussed the need to preserve these aspects of the student body by weeding out those who don’t measure up – at least academically. Again, in contrast to the executives’ perspectives, the positive relationships between students that are largely visible to adults in these schools contributed just as much to their positive perception of the schools as the high levels of academic achievement. Considering how much the actors valued the positive cultures at their respective schools, homogeneity of attitude and behavior is expected – explicitly and implicitly – of students as well. Obviously, then, this value set has major implications for schools’ ability to build inclusive community, since the very strengths associated with communities of mostly like-minded employees and families leaves little room, if any, for divergent opinions or disruptive conversations.

Reculturing for Equity and Inclusion

The concept of reculturing is a useful lens for an analysis of the ways in which independent schools try to build inclusive communities, since regardless of the age of the school, they usually have to overcome old habits and expectations established over the history of independent schools. As we saw in the literature on the history of independent schools, the earliest attempts to increase diversity did not yield critical masses of students of color or students who participated in financial aid at most schools. The few of these students who did attend independent schools were largely left to fend for themselves academically and socially, and precious few attempts were made to integrate them into the school community and culture. While those earliest students certainly were welcome at their schools, they were never “wholly understood,” mainly because those in the dominant culture usually chose not engage meaningfully with these students in ways that might have helped develop authentic understanding. The underlying assumption on the part of many was that these non-traditional students were enjoying the benefit of an elite education and should be grateful – a classic attitude of noblesse oblige and entitlement. This kind of

attitude is often assumed to persist in independent schools today – especially by those without personal experience of independent schools – and represents a challenge for schools that sincerely wish to both look and function differently. The degree to which schools are successful in making significant changes is the pertinent question here.

Schein’s conception of the three levels of culture that organizations have to impact to create deep change - artifacts, values, and assumptions – provides a particularly useful framework for considering the degree to which schools are building more inclusive communities in response to their more diverse populations. In terms of racial/ethnic and socioeconomic diversity, the “artifacts” have already changed at most schools: the percentages of students of color and students on financial aid are higher than ever, and this is a point of pride for individual schools and the field of independent schools more broadly. As discussed above, the degree to which actors value diversity is evolving now as well. I certainly assumed it had increased, since those with the most power impact levels of diversity in schools – school leaders, faculty, and wealthy parents – have supported the increase in racial/ethnic and socioeconomic diversity verbally and financially.

It is possible that this increase in support for diversity is merely a shift in what parents perceive to be the most practically beneficial for their students rather than diversity per se, since the desire to be part of a school community that carries an excellent reputation for producing stellar outcomes for students has always been most attractive to actors across the history of independent schools. Most of the participants in this study did not attach value to diversity for any kind of larger moral or social reasons, but had an inkling that it prepares their students for the “real world” and that it contributed to an interesting and nice school community because of the student relationships that develop. Assumptions have evolved somewhat as well; it is uncommon now, for example, for anyone in independent school circles to express the belief that culture or class defines academic ability, and the participants in this study also did not express that belief - at least not explicitly. On some level, then, reculturing is at least in process in independent schools.

However, since Schein is clear that work to challenge and shift values and assumptions has to be done consistently and explicitly in order to affect change, this is where the rub becomes evident, and the fault lines within for schools – even and perhaps especially with strong cultures – become visible. While the executives indicated that schools need to keep focused on building inclusive communities for the benefit of both traditional and non-traditional students, they also indicated that there is a broader trend of avoiding direct conversation about inclusion that might otherwise push communities to identify and reexamine their values or assumptions. Chubb in particular encouraged caution in digging too deeply too often into diversity issues lest the wealthiest families – whose support is critical for schools’ enrollment and financial sustainability- become alienated. Finding the “right” balance of focus on inclusion and other parts of school cultures, as well as finding the “right” pace for introducing and working on these topics, can be frustratingly elusive. Furthermore, the optics of inclusion are important considerations and carry implicit messages to the community about expectations of integration. “Clumping” by race/ethnicity or socioeconomic status, according to the executives, should be avoided since that smacks of separatism, while mixed student groups are evidence of integration. So while the executives saw that independent schools have to make time to work at reculturing in order to improve inclusion, they indicated that schools should do this just enough so that those in the dominant culture do not feel too uncomfortable too

often. This might still “work” for reculturing as conceived by Schein, although considering the fact that families only spend 4-6 years in a secondary independent school, the length of time it may take to achieve deep change might mean that such change will not be visible for many years.

If reculturing must be done explicitly and consistently, then it is fair to say that these examples show that reculturing is not happening much in California independent schools – usually by design. Most actors described their communities as well integrated as evidenced by mixed friend groups on campus. However, there was a thread that ran through the comments that socioeconomic is perhaps more challenging to school cultures than some realize. It is not always clear that students who spend time together at school also spend time together outside of school, and the connection between geography and socioeconomic status contributes to challenges for maintaining student relationships outside of school activities. Furthermore, the visibility of wealth – or lack thereof - existed in these “down-to-earth” and “laid-back” schools, and students’ and employees’ implicit knowledge of socioeconomic status tended to create discomfort without actually compelling the community to engage in discussion about it. Since parents in particular expressed pride in being in schools where everyone is “colorblind,” where difference exists but doesn’t need to be examined critically, there actually did not seem to be much openness on their part. The outliers, however, pointed to expectations of conformity for atypical students, and the chilling effects that these expectations have on these students and their families. Since there was not much talk about or work on diversity topics that might make people uncomfortable or even upset, the value of a nice and comfortable community has been reinforced, along with the implicit expectation that rocking this particular boat is not welcome. Changing the “artifacts” of independent school cultures certainly did not happen without a great deal of strategic and targeted work to increase diversity; most schools in California have had success in making those changes. However, without strategic and targeted work to affect deeply held values and assumptions – which requires conversation, at the very least – reculturing for increased and improved inclusion for non-traditional students in California independent schools is happening more slowly than, perhaps, it could.

Chapter 5: Analysis of Findings, Implications for Practice, and Questions for Further Inquiry

In this chapter, I expand my analysis of the ways in which the new patterns in attitudes towards diversity and inclusion that have emerged from this research are manifest in independent schools in California. While these patterns point to a degree of progress on diversity and inclusion across the field compared to earlier decades, I also will describe the limits of these revised notions of equity as suggested by the literature, and will situate these notions against the general backdrop of education writ large in the US. Finally, I will discuss the implications and limits of this research for future work on diversity and inclusion in independent schools, and suggest some avenues for further research that might contribute to the field.

Diversity as Utility

Independent schools in California face a particular set of challenges when it comes to building their school communities: how to maintain robust enrollment of enough full-pay students to balance their budgets, while also appealing to and enrolling an increasingly racially/ethnically and socioeconomically diverse general population of students. In order to maintain full enrollments and remain solvent, independent schools must demonstrate clear added value for the price of tuition – the average of which is close to \$30,000 yearly – in order to compete successfully with tuition-free public and charter schools, and also must articulate their educational philosophies and practices in such a way that they distinguish themselves from one another. The number of families that can afford to pay the high cost of tuition has been shrinking over the last decade, and independent schools have responded by increasing their financial aid budgets and by spreading those dollars amongst larger numbers of families by giving smaller awards. Obviously, this trend has served to increase socioeconomic diversity in independent schools. It has helped to increase racial/ethnic diversity as well, since often families of color – Black and Latino families in particular – need more financial support than White and Asian families who attend independent schools in California. Most of these schools have touted their successes in increasing racial/ethnic and socioeconomic diversity – on their websites, in their college profiles, and to some degree, in their outreach to prospective employees and parents – including the traditional independent school parents who are White and full-pay.

The struggle to articulate value to markedly different constituent groups has been present in independent schools at least since the 1960's, when some schools embraced the social justice tenants of the civil rights movement and tried to recruit more students of color, the majority of whom required financial aid to attend (Zweigenhaft and Domhoff 1991, Powell 1996). It was not easy to convince such students to attend independent schools; even the most welcoming language and generous financial aid packages did not change the fact that such schools might as well have been foreign countries for non-traditional students. Nor was it easy to convince traditional families that such change was necessary or even important, or directly beneficial to their children – ideas that flew in the face of established expectations and assumptions about the purpose and function of independent schools. While some progressive schools espoused values of democracy and justice, the majority of independent schools did not. And with a few notable exceptions, independent schools did not resonate to the calls to action for racial and economic justice

that proved more compelling for those in public schools and other areas of society. Building a critical mass of students of color was an elusive goal for most schools as a result, and diversity initiatives did not gain traction for decades to come.

What we see now in independent schools in California is a similar challenge of articulating the value of diversity to prospective parents and employees, but in a very different set of social and economic circumstances. There is some expectation amongst those constituencies that independent schools should not be populated only by the wealthy and/or the White. However, this expectation is soft; diversity in and of itself is not always acknowledged as valuable, except in terms of students' relationships that contribute to their overall experience. The explicit and implicit messages that prospective parents and employees are sending schools during their search processes are being heard loudly and clearly: they place the highest values on the quality of the academic program and a positive school culture. Since the admissions and hiring processes are not the right time for school leaders to use their bully pulpits to influence or change attitudes, they must instead craft communications that emphasize academics and culture in order to attract the families and the teaching staff they attempt to recruit.

This is not to say, however, that diversity is completely missing from these processes. On the contrary, most schools are up front about the diversity that exists within their communities – both in their written and verbal communications. What is similar between the earliest messaging around diversity and the current trends is that equity and justice are usually missing from schools' articulation of the value of diversity. What is emerging amongst independent schools now is a propensity to redefine familiar themes of competitiveness and homogeneity of culture – sometimes explicitly, sometimes implicitly – *to demonstrate the value of their increasingly diverse communities*. Proximity to students from different backgrounds helps to develop the kind of interpersonal skills that increases cultural competence – skills that are necessary for success in the 21st century marketplace. And, while schools seem to perceive that the visibility of at least racial/ethnic diversity on their campuses is evidence of their commitment to the ideal, they also have to be clear that such differences do not hinder their ability to construct a tight culture of students and families who share the same value of what they consider educational and academic excellence. The just-right combination of the practical value of the “real-world” skills, and the reassurance of a positive and comfortable community, is the goal. Of course, schools' locations and surrounding communities make a difference in how much latitude they have in making such arguments; messages that resonate with parents in Berkeley are likely to be different than the ones that resonate in Atherton, for example. Regardless of location or other factors, however, the need to appeal to wealthy enough parents requires independent schools to consider just how much emphasis on diversity is “enough” – both before and after families join the community. Just as independent schools were limited in their ability to build support for diversity amongst parents in particular in the 1960's, they also are limited now – perhaps not in convincing parents that diversity is a nice aspect of their communities, but certainly in convincing them that it carries importance because it provides direct and concrete benefits.

Amalgamation as the Foundation of a Comfortable School Culture

It is difficult to overstate the extent to which independent school parents and employees place value on positive school cultures; most, in fact, see it as the key

differentiator between independent schools with similarly strong academic programs. Preserving these cultures, then, is vital for maintaining parent and employee satisfaction, which in turn supports positive school reputations, enrollment, and fundraising.

As discussed above, even independent schools that speak the most directly about their commitment to diversity also emphasize the common characteristics that their students share. Independent schools still hold onto those expectations even as their communities have become more multicultural. In fact, the assumption that the mere presence of students of color and students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds necessarily results in the lowering of either academic or character standards is on the wane. However, those assumptions have not been eliminated, they simply manifest in somewhat different ways. In areas with high concentration of Asians, for example, concerns are expressed that such students might “blow the curve” for everyone else – particularly White students. Others raise concerns about students who come to independent schools from public schools in underserved areas – who are often students of color as well – since their lack of preparation might require additional support that will then slow down the rest of the students. Another tension related to socioeconomic differences exists for some families who see independent school as a privilege for those who can access it, and who simply do not want any of their tuition dollars to support students who cannot afford the full cost of the program. These parental concerns often are expressed quietly - sometimes even anonymously - for fear of backlash, but there certainly is awareness amongst employees and parents that these concerns exist within their communities. The presence of such attitudes in school communities that are so reliant on perpetuating strong and positive cultures, then, means that schools tend to tread very carefully when it comes to any initiatives meant to improve inclusion and access for non-traditional students. Ironically, what is perceived as one of the greatest strengths and defining characteristics of independent schools – a nice, comfortable, and close-knit community - is the same one that places the most significant limitations for improving inclusion.

And yet, schools that perceive their communities to be warm and caring environments also perceive them to be so for all constituents. The clearest evidence for employees and parents that school communities are well integrated is the degree to which student friend groups seem to be racially/ethnically and socioeconomically heterogeneous. While the first students of color who attended independent schools on scholarship could expect to be “wholly welcome even if never wholly understood” (Lloyd 1987), non-traditional students in independent schools today are usually *assumed* to be both welcomed and understood. This assumption flows from the visibility of heterogeneous friend groups; the lack of complaints from non-traditional students and their families about their experiences at schools; and the comfortable vibe that characterizes school communities where students, mostly, seem to get along well. Work that is done on diversity topics is usually not ongoing and seems to have little impact in bringing divergent thinking and challenging viewpoints to the forefront within school communities. Atypical students who join independent school communities learn quickly that, in order to be successful in independent schools, it is best for them to conform to the explicit and implicit expectations for behavior within their school cultures.

This is not to say that independent schools are out-and-out hostile environments for non-traditional students. The fact that the critical mass of students of color and students

on financial aid may have increased significantly has a positive impact on these students' experiences. Schools may be sincere in their desire to create safe and caring communities that serve all their students well, and often put human and financial resources against support for non-traditional students. And, most members of the independent school communities express support for racial/ethnic and socioeconomic diversity, both verbally and financially. Considering the environments in which the earliest non-traditional students found themselves, independent schools have made significant changes to their policies and practices that create more inviting conditions than before and cultures that are, in many ways, comfortable and caring.

Still, independent schools will remain limited in their ability to build more inclusive communities as long as they resist conversations about the diversity of experience amongst students from different backgrounds. It is easy for most stakeholders to look at their positive cultures and assume that everything is as it seems. The connections between the high value placed on positive school cultures, the expectation for conformity and amalgamation, and the resistance to probing more deeply into atypical students' experiences is strong enough to preserve school communities that, in the end, limit full inclusion for their atypical students. The visibility of difference in independent school student bodies is comforting to most constituencies, and is the easiest and most obvious way to demonstrate progress in dismantling the independent school stereotype. The presence of non-traditional students, and the belief that they fit in often seamlessly with the prevailing culture, also is assumed to be a reflection of the increased value placed on diversity within independent schools. As long as these students' experiences and perspectives are ignored, however, independent school cultures have not changed significantly enough. The literature on independent schools and the literature on leadership for equity demonstrate the power that Heads of School have to promote deep cultural change that would benefit atypical students, but also shows that these leaders regularly leave those opportunities on the table and thus perpetuate familiar patterns. Administrators and faculty have some power to influence culture as well, although it is softer than that of Heads. Typical parents, on the other hand, can wield a great deal of power and influence within their school communities because of their status and financial resources. As we saw from the findings, these actors often act in ways that preserve their own power, limit the power of atypical students, and support the stratification – albeit largely invisible to these actors – of their cultures. The literature on educational equity often explores notions of inclusion that lie outside of the comfort zone of these actors; their perspectives indicate that they often are unaware of the need to change their school cultures to increase inclusion (Oakes 1997, Hatt-Echeverria 2005). In the case of these participating schools, there has been some change to their cultures over time to increase diversity, and most participants described satisfaction with what they see as well-integrated and inclusive student cultures. However, those in positions of power tend to avoid difficult conversations about race and class so as not to cause discomfort within the student community and alienation within the parent community; inequities, then, are maintained because the symbolic boundaries that operate within the schools' cultures prevent recognition of them and action against them.

The presence, however, of people in positions of power in independent schools who see the inequities that are hidden to the majority of school community members provides some possibilities for deeper reculturing. Heads of School often have played important

roles in reculturing their schools in the past (Heskel and Dyer 2008), and their access to all constituencies within their school communities means that they could have major impact with regards to inclusion. The tension, however, between pulling levers for reculturing and maintaining good relationships with full-pay parents is a real one for Heads to manage, since they bear the most responsibility for the financial health and sustainability of their schools. Teachers and other administrators are more likely than Heads to observe student culture at a closer and deeper level, since they spend much more time in direct contact with students in classrooms and in activities, and thus have more opportunities to witness micro-aggressions and other interactions that would point to inequity and exclusion. Parents have the opportunity to view student relationships outside of the school as well, and could contrast the mixing that takes place on campus with the relative homogeneity that might exist in student groups off campus. The majority of the actors who participated in this study, however, did not share such observations for the most part, and it is not surprising that they were not advocating for cultural change. Considering how entrenched independent school cultures seem to remain, the task of building a critical mass of powerful stakeholders who can hold school communities accountable for the inequities that they perpetuate - however unintentionally - does not seem to be a priority. As long as the number of informed stakeholders remains small, it seems unlikely that we will see evidence of significant reculturing in most schools in the near future. The market forces that act upon schools externally, and the priorities and perspectives of the actors within those school communities, serve to limit the possibilities for reculturing for equity and inclusion. Whether explicit or subtle, the findings in this study certainly point to their power in maintaining the cultures that currently exist.

Contrasting the Independent and Public School Diversity and Equity Landscapes

While independent schools certainly face pressures related to academic performance, college admissions, and financial sustainability, they are largely insulated from many of the pressures that public and charter schools face to meet standardized performance standards and comply with regulations for educational equity. Indeed, teachers, administrators and parents find the freedom from standardized curricula and multiple layers of regulations to be a significant benefit of joining independent schools in the first place. And, while public schools are held accountable for their performance as measured by standardized test scores, the data for which can be disaggregated to show results by racial/ethnic or socioeconomic group, independent schools are held accountable by the parents in their communities who often judge their school's reputation by academics (and college placement) and strength of culture.

Unlike the traditional model of local schools that serve a particular geographic area, independent schools are schools of choice that can construct student bodies intentionally. Whether they draw students from public or private schools, independent schools almost always engage in some level of creaming: choosing students who possess desired characteristics like academic ability, athletic talent, or families who can provide financial support. While this practice has been shown by some researchers to increase segregation in charter schools (Lacireno-Paquet, Holyoke et al. 2002), as Chubb and Batiste claimed, it has actually enabled independent schools to increase their diversity racial/ethnic and socioeconomic diversity while still maintaining their internal admissions standards.

The sorting of students during admissions processes, and the relative homogeneity of attitudes towards education and positive school culture that is engineered as a result - even in relatively racially/ethnically and socioeconomically diverse independent schools - enables these schools to view equity through a particular lens. As we saw in the findings, equity often is understood as the presence of atypical students who perform and behave very similarly to typical students. In this conception, typical students benefit from proximity to atypical students more, which is held up as a value by both faculty and parents. While there is some sense in these schools that atypical students benefit from proximity to typical students as well, this benefit was not discussed explicitly. Actors do not emphasize leveraging diversity to promote democracy or social change - either in the schools themselves or in greater society - and place more emphasis on the competitive edge offered by a diverse school community. Atypical students - who are, by nature, members of the outgroup - already have been given the privilege of enrollment by the ingroup, which then does not feel compelled to assess or understand outgroup experiences of inequity through their own lens. It is not common practice among independent schools to disaggregate GPA, SAT, or AP data to demonstrate achievement by racial/ethnic or socioeconomic group, or even to differentiate college acceptance and matriculation data by those markers - although some schools have begun to do these kinds of analyses to uncover inequity. While schools do provide targeted academic support for any struggling student, of course, it is rare that any forms of support are designed specifically to meet the needs of non-traditional students. In short, independent schools usually claim to serve all of their students equally well, but for atypical students, the findings here show that it likely that this approach means they will not necessarily be served equitably.

Independent schools do need to be accredited by an outside agency, and those in California that are members of CAIS engage in a joint WASC-CAIS process. This process involves the development of a lengthy self-study document that is meant to encourage analysis of and reflection on all aspects of the school, and it culminates in a report from a visiting committee of other independent school educators that assesses the school's self-assessment, as it were, and makes a recommendation to CAIS for term of accreditation. When it comes to the role that equity plays in an independent school, then, the school itself has a great deal of power to define its own terms and standards, which it then measures itself against. The process certainly assumes that schools are capable of viewing themselves through a critical lens, and that members of a visiting committee are capable of critical analysis of the materials presented as well. Given the blind spots independent schools have around diversity and inclusion that have been described in this study, however, it seems difficult for the accreditation process to reveal - whether in the self-study or during the visitation - faultlines that might exist in the community for non-traditional students. These issues often were invisible to most of the actors in this study - with the exception, of course, of the outliers, whose ability to identify shortcomings in schools' efforts to build inclusive communities. Such invisibility makes it less likely for them to be identified by the majority of actors, which makes the possibility of reculturing as a result of an accreditation process remote at best. Again, one of the best hopes for the emergence of equity issues during the process is through the participation of powerful stakeholders who observe and understand those issues, and who are willing to give voice to them. The findings here show that very few of these stakeholders are willing to do so.

Limits of the Study, Implications for Practice, and Suggestions for Further Research

This study was limited, first and foremost, by the lack of research that is done in independent schools. This not only posed challenges for constructing a literature review that would offer specific context for this field; it also made it difficult to convince independent schools to participate since they are largely unfamiliar with such research. In fact, it took over a year to secure the participation of enough schools to run the study since so many declined the opportunity. The executives were quick to agree to take part in the study, which is not surprising considering that all of them have engaged in their own research over the course of their careers and spend time analyzing and sharing research as a key responsibility of their jobs. The Heads of the three participating schools were extremely supportive in helping to recruit colleagues and parents, but even their influence was limited. Thus, I ended up with a relatively small number of participants from the three schools when I certainly would have preferred a more robust number.

With that said, however, there were many benefits to the data I collected that make this study relevant and, hopefully, useful to practitioners in the field. The three schools represented a good cross-section of California secondary independent schools – similar student population sizes, but clear differences in terms of the racial/ethnic and socioeconomic makeup of those populations. The participants in all three schools showed some remarkable similarities in their perspectives and attitudes, but also demonstrated enough differences that nuances were detectable as well. And, as a practitioner myself, with experience working in a number of independent schools and knowing many other schools through various experiences such as participating on accreditation visiting committees, I certainly could recognize the tensions and challenges that the participants described as ones that affect most, if not all, independent schools in the realm of diversity and inclusion. The implications for independent schools that emerge from this study, then, are grounded in rich data that has been rigorously analyzed.

Addressing the challenge of allocating the “right” amount of time and other resources to work on diversity and inclusion in independent schools is, perhaps, the most foundational. This challenge manifests in recruiting and admissions; financial aid budgeting and fundraising; professional development; and development of curricular and co-curricular programs. While the roadmaps to effect change in these areas might differ from school to school, what seems clear is that only intentional and strategic planning and implementation will actually make a difference in these areas. No independent school ever became more diverse or inclusive organically. The kind of reculturing necessary for deep change takes courageous leadership to both envision and carry out, and requires strong commitment and partnership from Heads of School and Boards of Trustees to make an impact. So, whatever that “right” amount of time and resources spent on this work, it is likely more than what schools currently are allocating.

The good relationships that usually develop between students from different backgrounds at independent schools do contribute to positive school culture. While it is clear that culture matters to employees and parents, there is also some evidence in this study that suggests that these student relationships matter as well. Schools likely can do more to remind their communities of the power of those relationships in the context of the school – which helps parents in particular feel good about the “purchase” they’ve already made – and leverage the value of those relationships to build support for initiatives to build more inclusive communities.

Independent schools also can do much more data gathering and analysis to get a clearer picture of student experiences at schools. Whether that involves disaggregating available achievement data or engaging in surveys that probe the depths of student experience, there is a great deal that can be learned – and acted upon – when it comes to inclusion in particular. The Assessment of Inclusivity and Multiculturalism (AIM) survey that is produced by NAIS is one resource, and survey consultants who can help construct customized surveys abound as well. However schools choose to gather data, what seems most important is that non-traditional students and their families are asked directly to comment on their experiences within their independent schools. What we see from this study is that non-traditional students are very likely having at least somewhat different experiences than their more traditional peers, but that those experiences remain hidden from most members of school communities because their articulation of them has not explicitly been encouraged. While traditional students and families are likely to express concerns when they have them without being invited to do so, non-traditional students and families often do not. Schools cannot afford to assume that no news is good news in this realm; they must proceed proactively and in culturally sensitive ways to understand different perspectives and then act upon this information.

This study indicates that independent schools sincerely want to provide their non-traditional students not only with full access to excellent academic educations, but also to excellent overall experiences in their communities. And, it also indicates that there is room for bolder action to build inclusion, as well as enough support from all constituencies to help make that happen.

Further research in this field could help independent schools develop and refine these practices more as well. Of course, a study that involved more schools and participants might reveal even more nuances in attitudes and assumptions. If a study were to compare independent schools in different states or regions of the country, it might help to clarify the degree to which attitudes and assumptions are regional or more broadly shared. While this study focused specifically on secondary schools, research on diversity and inclusion in K-8 and K-12 schools would provide a fuller picture of the challenges that exist. But of course, the studies that I hope will be implemented in the near future will be those that also explore the perspectives of non-traditional students and their families. This study intentionally focused on traditional actors as the arbiters of change within school communities, and the degree to which they are willing to use their power to reculture or simply to perpetuate the inequitable structures that have made independent schools less diverse and inclusive than they might be. The researchers that give voice to non-traditional students and parents would be a crucial next step in better understanding the issues surrounding diversity and inclusion, and would be particularly helpful to schools in developing culturally relevant strategies to address these challenges.

Final Thoughts

Most – if not all – independent schools in California share the same challenges faced by the schools that participated in this study. If schools do not articulate the value of diversity as effectively as possible, or not put enough time and other resources against reculturing, it is not because we are not sincere in our efforts to be diverse and inclusive. The fact that we are tuition based schools where families can vote with their feet and their wallets presents real challenges, and there is no question that Heads and Boards in

particular have to pay close attention to the ways in which we continue to work towards more inclusion. At the same time, it is clear to me that atypical students in our communities do not always have full access to the benefits of being part of our schools. Our intentions – as teachers and school leaders – are good; our impact on these students, unfortunately, is less so.

In fact, this research has brought the challenges around diversity and inclusion at my own school into clearer relief. I have been explicit with my community about our mission-critical priority of forging a school culture where it is safe enough to be uncomfortable, and where we can face our challenges with honesty and a shared commitment to leverage our relationships for growth. I am explicit about that commitment with prospective families and with the current faculty, staff, students and parents. And as I was working on data analysis for this dissertation, I had yet another conversation with a group of students – this time Latinos who all participate in our Moderated Tuition program – who described feeling misunderstood, dismissed, disrespected, and unsupported by dominant culture students and faculty. We have a reputation as a very kind, diverse, and inclusive school community. We are one of the schools that “gets it.” But at the end of the day, I know it is hard to do this well – whether the work is being done at South Hills, at Four Corners, at West Academy, or any other school. But the work is hardest to do well when we remain silent about these challenges; change will only come as the result of explicit conversation and strategically focused work that can weaken the symbolic and social boundaries that continue to prevent atypical students from ingroup status.

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Appendix I: Interview Protocol Tables Administrators, Faculty, and Parents

Concept	Operationalization	Interview Prompts
<i>Clarity and primacy of school diversity goals</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Understanding of short and long term goals ❖ Clarity and frequency of communication ❖ Support for initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ What do you understand the school's goals for racial/ethnic diversity at the school? ❖ ...for socioeconomic diversity? ❖ In the next 5 years, how do you hope to see the school change/grow? Will it be more or less diverse than it is now?
<i>Degree of value placed on diversity within school culture</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Primacy relative to other factors during admissions/hiring process ❖ Verbal support for racial/ethnic and socioeconomic diversity ❖ Participation in financial support for financial aid 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ What did you know about the school before you applied? ❖ What other schools did you consider? What attracted you to those schools? ❖ Of the schools you considered, which was your top choice for your child? Why did you choose [school name] in the end? ❖ Do you think the school is diverse enough? ❖ How have you chosen to allocate the funds from your donations?
<i>Degree of inclusivity within school culture</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Heterogeneity of friend groups ❖ Time spent with friends off campus ❖ Visibility of racial/ethnic differences ❖ Visibility of socioeconomic differences ❖ Value compared to other factors (academics, athletics, etc.) ❖ Diversity education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Tell me about the friend groups you observe. Who is friends with whom? Why? ❖ To what degree do you see students from different backgrounds hanging out together? ❖ To what degree do you think students know who is on financial aid? How would they know? What about you? ❖ In what ways do you think students from your school are prepared for college? Or not? ❖ Does your school have any affinity clubs? Engage in any workshops around diversity?
<i>Support for financial aid program</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Understand the program ❖ Verbal support ❖ Financial support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ How do you understand that the program works? ❖ How effective do you think it is? ❖ Have you ever donated specifically to financial aid? Why/not?

Appendix II: Interview Protocol Tables

Executives

Concept	Operationalization	Interview Prompts
<i>Clarity and primacy of school diversity goals</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Understanding of short and long term goals ❖ Clarity and frequency of communication ❖ Constituent support for initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ How are schools articulating their diversity goals? How is this changing, if at all? ❖ To what degree are schools emphasizing diversity compared to other aspects of their programs?
<i>Degree of value placed on diversity within school culture</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Primacy relative to other factors during admissions/hiring process ❖ Verbal support for racial/ethnic and socioeconomic diversity ❖ Participation in financial support for financial aid 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ What are the most important reasons why parents and employees choose independent schools? ❖ How much do these groups value diversity compared to factors like academics and athletics? How is this changing, if at all? ❖ To what degree do these groups place different value on racial/ethnic and socioeconomic diversity? ❖ What do you see as significant challenges for building support and value of diversity within schools?
<i>Degree of inclusivity within school culture</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Heterogeneity of friend groups ❖ Time spent with friends off campus ❖ Visibility of racial/ethnic differences ❖ Visibility of socioeconomic differences ❖ Value compared to other factors (academics, athletics, etc.) ❖ Diversity education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ How well do you think schools encourage friendships between students across differences? ❖ To what degree do you think students from non-traditional backgrounds feel comfortable and welcome at independent schools? ❖ To what degree do you see schools teaching students directly about multiculturalism and class? ❖ What do you see as significant challenges for fully including all students in the life of the school?
<i>Support for financial aid program</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Understand the program ❖ Verbal support ❖ Financial support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ How effective do you think most financial aid programs are? ❖ How much support do you think exists amongst parents for financial aid program? How do you see this evolving? ❖ What do you see as significant challenges for financial aid and overall sustainability?