

ELITE GIRLS' 21ST CENTURY SCHOOLING IN SCOTLAND: HABITUS CLIVÉ IN A SHIFTING LANDSCAPE

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ELITE GIRLS' 21ST CENTURY SCHOOLING IN SCOTLAND: HABITUS CLIVÉ IN A SHIFTING LANDSCAPE

ABSTRACT: Our paper analyses data from four Heads of elite fee-charging girls' schools in Scotland, focusing on how two social landscape changes - changing pupil demographics and pressures on schools' charitable status – may have reshaped the schools' institutional habitus. Following Bourdieu, we examine this question through the concept of habitus clivé. Shifting national-scale demographics and institutional pressures to fill expensive pupil places has generated a more diverse student population both in terms of academic ability and cultural background. Maintaining charitable status has, in turn, involved opening their space to non-school others, and developing interactions with the broader community. Insights are offered on how, despite these significant changes, schools' current habitus commitments continue to align with their founding principles, while also adapting to these new contextual realities, as they seek to ensure their girl pupil subjects can succeed in the 21st century.

Keywords: elite fee-charging girls' schools, habitus, institutional habitus, habitus clivé

1. INTRODUCTION

This paper contributes to the broader debate about how elite school institutions manage to remain alert and responsive to changing education market conditions, locally and globally, by explicitly exploring how elite girls' schools in Scotland are navigating a shifting demographic, political and future employment landscape. To facilitate such an examination we draw on Bourdieu's work, specifically his concept of habitus clivé.

Research to date has found that institutional endeavours by elite schools to (re)produce and consolidate the privilege of their students occur in a range of ways. They maintain a strong curricular focus on academic knowledge and what are considered 'rigorous' subjects, such as science, technology, and maths in addition to classical languages, music and arts options (van Zanten, 2018). They recruit particular constituencies to form the student body, with valuable social, cultural, economic, symbolic, and intellectual capital, enabling a particular student subject to be formed through carefully developed pedagogical approaches (Howard and

Gaztámbide-Fernandez, 2010; Horne *et al.*, 2011). They use physical space-time in particular ways, utilising their buildings and history, often creating a physically, socio-economically and culturally segregated environment (Horne *et al.*, 2011; Brooks and Waters, 2015). Keenly mindful of globalising circumstances, they engage in practices relating to ‘cosmopolitanism’ and transnational mobility (Kenway *et al.*, 2017; Maxwell *et al.*, 2018). Characteristically, they sustain their historic emphasis on sports and building trust and confidence through such forms of physical capital (Horne *et al.*, 2011). And typically, they imbue their students with a sense of ‘assured optimism’ in their potentiality to succeed in education and life beyond school (Forbes and Lingard, 2015; Maxwell and Aggleton, 2014a).

In 2018, there were seventy-four independent schools in Scotland (Leith and Sim, 2020). By 2019 the number of fee-charging single sex secondary schools in Scotland had declined to eight - from thirteen in 2009 (Denholm, 2019); only one boys-only school now remains (Edward, 2018). Sector mergers and closures have been financially and educationally driven. For example, the Scottish Parliament, reconvened in 1999, introduced legislation generating profound national system change including the inception of *(A) Curriculum for Excellence* (Scottish Executive Education Department, 2004 *et. seq.*) and national programmes including *Getting it Right for Every Child* (GIRFEC) (Scottish Executive, 2005 *et. seq.*). The national school inspection regime carried out by Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Schools (HMIE) pertains equally to the fee-charging sector, as do Quality Improvement and Professional Engagement (QUIPE) inspections by Education Scotland. Edward (2018, p. 64) notes such ‘growing requirements of national programmes’ have wrought striking changed directions across the field of private schooling, generating ‘closures of small proprietor-owned schools, which found it difficult to meet the challenge of providing an increasingly diverse curriculum across a broad spectrum of academic ability, together with rising costs and the increasing burden of regulation’ In 2018, the Director of the Scottish Council of Independent Schools reviewed and documented the scale and pace of change impacting and reshaping the sector. That summary, recognising some recent fast-paced sweeping changes tackled by private sector institutions merits quotation at length, albeit presented by a sector director (Edward, 2018, p. 56: square brackets show authors’ clarifications throughout):

‘The change that Scottish school age education has undergone in the last decade, while not unprecedented, is all-encompassing. In part, this is the natural result of the devolution of parliamentary power to Scotland in 1999, but it is also an indication of the pace of change in education worldwide. While autonomous in their teaching, learning and governance, independent schools have felt the impact of all of these developments. ... like the review and design of the new National Qualifications by the Scottish Qualifications Authority... [Independent sector] schools have also had to deal with additional developments specific to them, including the creation of the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) and its specific testing of public benefit in independent schools; recent General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) requirements for the registration of teachers qualified outside Scotland; or the introduction of a points-based ‘tiered’ immigration system which affects both boarding school pupils (Tier 4) and teachers and other staff from outside the European Union ... (as of 2017).’

Even prior to the Scottish Parliament being reconvened in 1999, large-scale institutional-level change had threatened private sector schools’ viability. By 1997,

local education authority and central government grant aid to private schools had ended as had the successor policy of ‘grant aid’, the Assisted Places Scheme of pupil bursaries, introduced in 1981 (Paterson, 2003), prompting a permanent splitting of the fee-paying grant aided schools category into either the state or ‘independent’ sector. (‘Independent’ the ‘official term, the one used by the Scottish Education Department’, Hight, 1969, p. 10). While current levels of change impacting the sector are not unprecedented, we wish here to examine whether and how the sector can continue to show resilience in light of significant recent challenges to the sector’s viability.

This paper analyses headteacher data on how their schools have adapted in light of these new social landscape changes, specifically the demographic and charitable status pressures. We examine how the schools have redesigned their educational offer and how far this offer is seen as a continuity/extension or disruptive break with past practices. Bourdieusian theory frames the analysis, more specifically, the concepts of institutional habitus and habitus clivé. Bearing in mind, with Reay *et al.* (1998), that institutional habitus priorities link school organisational culture to ‘wider socio-economic cultures through processes in which schools and their catchments mutually shape and reshape each other’ (ibid. Para. 1.3), we examine how Scottish Parliament educational and social legislation may constitute a significant macro-, governance-level, socio-political, economic and cultural ‘engine of change’ (Leith and Sim, 2020, p. 9) who note distinctive Scottish legislation, increasingly divergent from England’s, is reshaping Scotland’s private school sector priorities. Using Bourdieu’s concept of habitus clivé (Bourdieu 1999, 2000) we examine the foci, scales, and momentum of change for these schools within the wider field of education, and consider whether such variances are engines for a degree of institutional-level contradiction that may constitute significant breaks with anterior institutional habitus commitments and engagements, or whether, as previous literature has argued, elite schools continue to adapt, to their advantage, in changing local and globalising contexts (Maxwell & Aggleton, 2016; Kenway et al., 2017).

2. 21ST CENTURY SCOTLAND: A CHANGING NATIONAL LANDSCAPE FOR ELITE SCHOOLS

2.1. *Migration Trends*

Since the Millennium, Scotland’s population has increased through inward migration, becoming ‘noticeably more diverse and the ethnic geography of the country is changing’ (Leith and Sim, 2020, p122), with a net population increase mid-2017 to 2018 of almost 21,000 (ibid., 106-107; National Records of Scotland, 2019).

Relevant to the number of new Scots potentially being educated in the private sector, a high proportion of these inward-migrants have the necessary income to cover school fees: ‘migrants who come to Scotland tend to be well educated and highly skilled, help raise productivity and contribute to government revenue’ (Scottish Government (SG), 2018, p. 16; SG, 2020a). Some of these newly arrived families to Scotland are part of a globally mobile group of professionals who move to take up higher level positions across a range of sectors (Maxwell and Yemini, 2019): finance (including international banking), business, law and public administration, education (including higher education), IT, oil-and-gas, and the National Health Service in Scotland (Forbes and Sime, 2016).

2.2. *A Changing Financial Landscape*

Recent figures show ‘4.1% of pupils in Scotland attend an independent school’, with a ‘Day/Boarding split of 9.5% boarding 90.5% day’, and ‘35% of boarding pupils’ arriving ‘from 70 different countries’ (Scottish Council of Independent Schools (SCIS), 2020a, unpaginated). Scotland’s relatively small numbers of wealthy land-owning aristocracy and upper middle class have historically educated their children in public schools in England (Highet, 1969). Meanwhile, the available resources of the middle and upper-middle class families traditionally educated in fee-charging schools in Scotland are increasingly adrift of the cost. At the top end of the Scottish independent schools’ fees scale, session 2019-20 fees for Fettes College, Edinburgh, were £29,925 (secondary day) and £36,495 (secondary boarding): around the middle of the fees scale, seven schools charged day fees of between £13,230 and £13,971 (Greig, 2020). For comparison, in 2018 the Scottish median income was £23,833 (Scottish Parliament, 2019). Full school costs have become less affordable for some of the schools’ traditional client groups, notably local middle class, middle earning professionals (legal, medical, academic, clerical, teaching, civil service, and others), as is also the case in England (Maxwell and Aggleton, 2016).

Scottish policy and legislation has also been tightened around the requirements on fee-charging schools to test their ‘charitable status’. Tests have been increasingly rigorously implemented since their introduction in November 2006. A review of non-domestic rates (taxes) (The Barclay Review: Barclay, 2017, p73) judged ‘unfair’ the *status quo* whereby independent schools’ charitable status allowed lower rates:

‘Independent (private) schools that are charities also benefit from reduced or zero rates bills, whereas council (state) schools do not qualify and generally will pay rates. This is unfair and that inequality should end by removing eligibility for charity relief from all independent schools. They will of course still retain charitable status and other benefits will continue to flow to them from that status.’

In December 2017 the then Scottish Government Finance Minister announced in the Scottish Parliament that he had accepted the findings of the Business Rates Relief review and that from September 1st 2020 mainstream independent schools would not be entitled to rates relief (SG, 2020b, p.5). This shifting financial landscape has potentially serious effects for fee-charging schools’ budgets. Nonetheless, the SCIS emphasises that its member institutions continue to educate children from a ‘healthy and diverse mix of backgrounds’ including the ‘tech loving future internet entrepreneur’ (SCIS, 2020b, unpaginated).

Having detailed some salient features of the current landscape affecting the market, we will explore how elite girls’ schools have responded to these changes.

3. SCOTTISH ELITE GIRLS’ SCHOOLS’ SELF-POSITIONINGS

Like the wider Scottish fee-charging sector, a number of girls-only schools were established in the ‘Anglo-Scottish’ public school tradition (Highet, 1969). Such schools perceived their educational mission to be the reproduction of the nation’s *academic* and *civic* elite – albeit in a typically understated Scottish way (McCrone, 2005; Forbes and Weiner, 2016). Paterson (2003, p.3) identifies the enduring national idea of a ‘peculiarly Scottish form of educational democracy’ premised on the historic role of schooling being about ‘general academic, and therefore liberal’ learning in schools, with a ‘respect for academic study’ (p.8). In this model the role of Scottish

elite girls' schools, like the broader education sector, has been to imbue ideas of social collectivism and 'bookish' individualism, cooperation rather than competition, and civic engagement rather than market forces and *laissez faire*-ism (Paterson, 2003; Forbes and Weiner, 2016).

4. THEORETICAL FRAME - INSTITUTIONAL HABITUS AND HABITUS CLIVÉ

Bourdieu used the concept of 'habitus' to explain the peculiarities of norms and values, practices, dispositions, and actions of particular cultural or social fractions. 'To each class of positions there corresponds a class of habitus (or tastes) produced by the social conditioning associated with the corresponding condition' (Bourdieu, 1998, p.7). Drawing on Bourdieu's theorisation, the concept of 'institutional habitus' emerged in the literature developed by, amongst others, McDonough (1996), Reay (1998) and Reay, David and Ball (2001). This extension of Bourdieu's concept was to distinguish between the primary-familial habitus and a habitus found within an institutional environment, such as a school. Reay *et al.* (2001) unambiguously characterised institutional habitus as a school effect. 'Institutional habituses, no less than individual habituses, have a history and have been established over time' (ibid., Para.1.3). Institutional habituses, Reay and colleagues argue, link school organisational culture to 'wider socio-economic cultures through processes in which schools and their catchments mutually shape and reshape each other' (ibid., Para.1.3; Reay, 1998). Thomas (2002, p.431) adds the observation that 'institutional habitus should be understood as more than the culture of the educational institution; it refers to relational issues and priorities, which are deeply embedded, and sub-consciously informing practice'.

We have adopted the concept of institutional habitus for our analysis as it helps us to focus on the particular social positions these school institutions occupy. We examine practices and relations the schools valorised, prioritised, included and excluded, particularly the (mis-)match of relations between the broader social landscape and school social space which may be discordant, misfire and so destabilise institutional habitus. We argue that individuals incorporate the particular social practices of their families but also the institutions that dominate their formative years. In previous contributions we have examined what occurs when familial and schooling institutional habitus are more or less aligned (Maxwell and Aggleton, 2014b; Forbes and Maxwell, 2019). However, here we deploy the concept of institutional habitus to explore how an anterior institutional habitus' set of collective practices, i.e. school organisational culture, may be remoulded over time through external-internal challenges, including those derived from wider socio-economic culture changes concerning pupil population demographics and a shifting charitable test and business rates (taxation) relief landscape.

There has been significant debate amongst Bourdieusian scholars on whether the concepts of family habitus and institutional habitus are coherent with Bourdieu's theory (Bourdieu, 1996; Reay, 1998; Reay *et al.*, 2001; Forbes and Maxwell, 2019). However, we have found both ideas to be theoretically and analytically valuable in our work. These concepts have facilitated our examination of how the four Heads of elite girls' schools in our study articulate the missions of their institutions, and why each school may or may not have 'chosen' to take up various 'distinct and distinctive practices' (Bourdieu, 1998, p.8). Our data suggest that the historic mission of these

renowned academically elite schools is currently being re-worked. Such an institutional reconfiguring we found is linked to, and driven by, the schools having to operate in and with an accelerated diverse societal environment, so having to respond to shifting dynamics surrounding social and cultural norms as well as possibilities of what and who is constitutive of successful ‘upper-middle class’ girlhoods.

Given the broader context and therefore changing education market for elite schools in which our study was set and our application of Bourdieusian theorisations, our initial data analyses posited the emergence of a ‘cleft habitus’ or *habitus clivé*.

Bourdieu (1999) speaks of habitus divergence, where a habitus’ unity fractures with itself or its field. At such junctures the habitus clings to certain previous orientations and dispositions through anterior commitments and imbrications, but also begins to adapt and be re-moulded. In this paper, we want specifically to understand which habitus particularities – visions and dispositions – are institutional positionings that fit, adhere, and stick over time (Forbes and Maxwell, 2019) despite the changing context, but also how new articulations of the institutional habitus are emerging. These small or larger changes will affect the everyday practices within the school, as well as the kind of subjects that the institution produces. Given the continued importance of elite educated individuals and groups across nations (Wakeling and Savage, 2015; Hartmann, 2018), it is critical to keep abreast of subtle yet potentially important changes in the kinds of dispositions being produced in elite institutions.

5. THE EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

5.1. *Research Questions*

Following Bourdieu, the paper questions how each school navigates potential institutional *habitus clivé*. Following analysis of interviews with female Heads running some of the most renowned elite girls’ schools in Scotland today, we seek to understand:

- how schools characterise the social landscape - demographic and charitable status changes - in relation to their potential clientele; and
- the effects on the way each school organises their educational offer, and the extent to which this educational offer is seen as a continuity, extension or break disruptive of the school’s previous habitus commitments.

5.2. *Sites and Participants*

This paper draws on our earlier work as part of the Scottish Independent Schools Project (SISP) (Forbes and Weiner, 2016). Ladykirk featured in this project, and this new study also includes two new school sites, The Snows and St Cecilia’s (all pseudonyms). We interviewed the two most recently retired Heads of Ladykirk (HT1, HT4), a Head who had been a senior teacher at Ladykirk prior to taking up a headship at The Snows (HT3), and St. Cecilia’s Head (HT2).

Methodologically, access to independent sector Heads can be difficult. Powerful institutional actors’ may attempt to ‘manage’ the empirical research in various ways, a circumstance encountered by other researchers and in our earlier SISP research (Forbes and Weiner, 2014). However, in this case, gaining access and interviewing four Heads, past and present, proved fairly straightforward, partly due to our work on the SISP. The data generated through the interviews contributed particular in-depth and extensive insider institutional knowledge from their particular (pro-sector and

pro-school) standpoints. Despite being constantly alert to the public-facing representational, marketing, and public relations role of these Heads of independent school businesses during their narrative generation, the in-depth nature of the discussions led the Heads to make broader, and more personal reflections as well.

The broader purpose of our interviews was to examine Heads' understandings of 'elite' girls' education today. We used a semi-structured interview method to identify how Heads articulated their visions for this, and reported working to create particular cultures and activities that supported its implementation. Linked to this, our purpose was to examine how Heads' views and positions on what constitutes an excellent 'elite' girls' education may have changed over time. We did not seek to verify Heads' accounts, or pursue alternative views, although these no doubt exist. Rather, we compared and contrasted the Heads' interview data with other literature on the sector and the individual schools, including the school's histories, prospectuses, school magazines and their website materials. Analysing this material highlighted significant institutional rebranding in their recruitment offers. For example, advertising images now accentuate diverse pupil demographics, and marketing materials now promote individualised support for learning provision.

To sustain confidentiality, only minimal information is given on each school. Annual pupil rolls range from around 200 to 800. The schools all educate pupils from nursery (age three) stage through to secondary sixth year (age eighteen). One is predominantly boarding, one has boarding facilities, and one can arrange local boarding. All are now non-denominational: one with a denominational foundation and tradition maintains religious services as an integral part of school life. None is academically selective and all include pupils with additional support needs. All three schools have recently increased the number of different nationalities attending, and educate some pupils from families whose girl children have attended over generations, while others are 'first in family' pupils. All report a wider social mix than previously. All offer bursaries.

6. DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

6.1. *Past and Future Links: Maintaining Academic Excellence, with a New Focus*

The Heads of our three schools (which represent just under half of such schools in Scotland today) continue to take for granted an academic school blueprint of individualised dedication to study and striving for excellence in examination attainment. Such commitments derive from an earlier liberal feminist position that women and men should be equal, which was to be achieved through education and an 'our [girl] pupils can do anything' discourse. Ladykirk and The Snows in particular explicitly set out to emulate the best selective academic boys' schools.

'There was a guiding principle that [Ladykirk] was set up to emulate the schooling of boys and give girls the same sort of educational chances. And those aims were explicit.' (HT4, Ladykirk).

Producing girls of independent mind and spirit has been a highly valued institutional habitus commitment from Ladykirk's inception. Its Head recounts that:

'An extraordinary group of women set Ladykirk up, really impressive women. ... I think the underlying principle that has stayed throughout is that they were educating girls to be women of independent mind. And, if anything, we

liked Ladykirk girls to be a bit bolshie [electing to be awkward, uncooperative, perverse] actually.’ (HT4, Ladykirk).

Summarising what, for her, characterises an elite girls’ school education, the first Ladykirk Head (HT1) advocates:

‘The best independent girls’ schools focus on young women and their distinctive learning styles and their distinctive character development. They recognise the ways in which the roles of women in the world are changing, and must continue to change to be more effective. They want their young women to believe that they can be leaders in their own way, if that is what they want. They can decide that they want to stay at home and be mothers, bring up their children in the best possible way, or they can work part-time. They can do whatever they want. But they have got to be enabled to make the necessary choices and to engage with the right partner for them.’ (HT1, Ladykirk).

Ladykirk’s long-established and continuing institutional habitus practices and relations work with and across all scales: at the micro scale working intensively to develop intra-personal (human) capital stocks of self-belief, positive character traits, and knowledge and learning practices for girls; and in parallel, ‘horizon-scanning’ to identify social landscape vicissitudes, always able to adapt the school’s formal and informal curriculum offer to meet larger scale socio-cultural role shifts that will affect its girls’ future lives and careers. The school is currently, for example, teaching Mandarin Chinese and other modern foreign languages, and strongly promoting maths and sciences (STEM) career trajectory subjects, thereby equipping girls for new life-work opportunities, including future science and technology careers and leadership and managerial roles in a ‘global community’.

Underlying these broader aims is the commitment to educating girls so they can be equal to their male peers. This is achieved through an ambitious and intensive academic education, but also through commitment to the promotion of subjects usually associated with traditional ‘academic boys schools’. Concerning the substantial numbers of her girls studying mathematics and three science subjects to Advanced Higher public examination level, the Snows Head (HT3) notes:

‘One of the biggest advantages is in the uptake of subjects which were traditionally thought to be male subjects in secondary school.’

Heads’ accounts of the three schools’ curriculum offer over time describe a fairly recent, remarkable shift. In alignment with government in Scotland championing a national STEM Education and Training Strategy privileging and consistently strongly promoting gender balance and equalities (SG, 2017 *et seq.*; SG, 2020c; One Scotland, 2019), STEM subject choices are being promoted and innovative pedagogies developed across all three schools. This relatively new bifurcation in the hitherto ‘general academic’ (Paterson, 2003, p.3) liberal arts and humanities orientated curricula constitutes an institutional habitus cleft in progress. Yet, despite the curricular shift towards STEM subjects, the importance of arts, humanities, and sports, i.e. a full ‘rounded’ curriculum offer, has not been lost. For The Snows’ Head this related to the opportunities that schools (those well-resourced schools like her own) ‘need to’ furnish to ensure successful careers and lives after school:

‘Well, I think they need to grow up knowing that they have all sorts of opportunities ahead of them and that the school – a school needs to equip

them to take on any role in society that they might want. And I think one of the advantages of girls' schools is that there is a tendency for them to do more.' (HT3, The Snows).

6.2. Social Landscape Impositions: Continuity and Clivé Effects for the Educational Offer

Introduced above, two major social landscape changes were potentially destabilising the schools' habitus' (habitus clivé): first, the requirement for these multi-million pound businesses to adjust to demographic shifts, so as to continue to operate at full capacity; and second, the need to adjust to new charitable status requirements.

Social Landscape Imposition One: Demographic Shifts

While schools remained committed to a durable institutional habitus characteristic of emulating highly academic boys' schools, including now a focus on STEM, they were having to maintain this in a context where they were required to broaden their social and cultural intake of pupils as their traditional catchment families became less able to afford a fee-paying education and due to the increase in inward migration of highly-resourced professional families.

Institutional demographic adaptation # one - recruiting a broader academic range and imagining new futures.

Today, all three schools include strongly academic girls, less academic girls and girls with specified additional support needs. The Heads represent their institutions as committed to, and successful in, cultivating the highest levels of academic attainment for some girls, but are also attuned to the need to offer other forms of successful capital accumulation for all. Thus, promotion of sports, music, drama, and co-curricular activities becomes even more important, and where every girl's full participation is non-negotiable. Unsurprisingly, these aesthetic subjects and activities constitute highly prized elements of symbolic capital and enduring habitus dispositions immutable in the schools' offer. For example, one Head robustly stated:

'If ...they just want five [top public examination passes]; and [are] not interested in any of the charity work or going to chapel or any of the music or sport ... we're not the right school for you.' (HT2, St. Cecilia's).

To sustain its relatively large pupil roll of around eight hundred, Ladykirk today is 'taking in a much wider range of ability' than in its recent past. Its Head remarked:

'We had children of below average ability, which meant that we had to put a lot of investment into support for learning. And we seemed to manage to do that without there being a stigma attached to it ... important because any school can turn out good quality academics at the end of it if that is what they are taking in at the beginning. But if you are actually taking in a much wider range of ability then it's the added value that counts.' (HT4, Ladykirk).

HT4 (Ladykirk) here articulates a habitus shift towards the introduction of greater academic diversity into the institutional fabric of the school, where intensive investments to fully meet pupils' additional support needs, such as expanding the

Learning Support Department, have simultaneously realised extended teaching support for the most able, and a focus on best practice pedagogy for all. Seemingly paradoxical, going against the school's durable highly academic habitus grain, enhanced support for all, including the most able, has not produced internal institutional incoherencies or division. Rather it has become a marker for distinction, as suggested by the HT in the quote above.

Alongside encouraging and supporting greater academic diversity, there is a need to ensure 'each student is given every opportunity and support to find her career path' (HT1, Ladykirk). This means that previous institutional habitus envisionings of desired university destinations for Ladykirk graduates has been challenged. Ladykirk was founded specifically to send girls to the local ancient university:

'Founded ... by people who believed that women ought to go to university, when the University ... was not prepared to take them.' (HT1, Ladykirk).

Recently, however, Ladykirk's institutional habitus vision for its girls' post-school academic futures has flexed, with a wider range of universities, including international institutions, being promoted.

Alongside an important broadening towards a new, arguably more 'fuzzy' reproduction strategy, the three schools now recruit a more varied cohort of students, who hold less certain high stocks of economic, social and cultural capitals and may leave school without acquiring the highest levels of scholastic capital. Shaping girls for careers in less established, relatively unbureaucratized and therefore more indeterminate care and community, cultural and sporting fields constitutes, we argue, a recuperative institutional strategy to make up for lack of formal qualifications. Underlining how The Snows today looks to non-credentialised and less highly credentialised fields, its Head reflected how this constitutes a substantive material institutional habitus divergence, contradicting past beliefs and assumptions:

'A number of Heads ago ... it wouldn't have been conceivable for somebody to say that they were going to be an actress. Whereas today ... we really don't have any preconceived ideas about what these girls are going to do ... we've got people ... choosing quite different paths. And I was just as pleased when one of our girls got onto the agricultural course that she really wanted ... it was a bigger achievement for all of us to get the agricultural college place ... I wish we saw more of it actually [girls going into agriculture].' (HT3, The Snows).

Similarly, the Ladykirk Head recognised how the myriad well-resourced choices and chances the school now offered recuperated a pupil's future prospects:

'She really wasn't very academic. But she had a beautiful singing voice ... And there were opportunities to perform. And there [in performances] girls were really encouraged to sing individually as well. Even if they didn't have great voices ... And she went off to do a course ... at a stage and dance school.' (HT4, Ladykirk).

Thus, rather than reinforcing extant institutional habitus careers 'choices', thereby ensuring habitus constancy but risking limited careers prospects for its broader intake of girls, institutional habitus structures have flexed in order to generate and valorise innovative dispositions on post-school ambitions (Bourdieu, 1990).

Institutional demographic adaptation # two: recruiting a broader socio-economic and cultural fraction and envisioning a different kind of 'elite-educated' girl.

As we have noted, highly-resourced migrant families are emerging as a key new client group for each school, and particularly for The Snows. Its Head (HT3) stated:

'We have families who are fairly itinerant around the world moving [in] as a result of the [locally based] industry.'

She recalls,

'In 2016 we saw ... an exodus ... due to the local [economic] downturn ... It was largely families being returned by their companies to their home country. ... There are parents whose contracts used to include school fees, but were told that they could keep their job but school fees and other things were removed from their contract.'

However, The Snows' local area had also attracted an ethnically diverse group of 'international talent' in the form of engineers, IT specialists, medical doctors and academics, who had started to choose her school wanting 'a very protected environment' for their daughters:

'For religious reasons ... a small number of conservative religious families who perhaps want ... a very protected environment' (HT3, The Snows).

With the need to ensure a full school roll, The Snows has embraced and adapted to the needs of this new pupil group of young women from conservative religious families. To create an institution able to recruit this particular group, The Snows broke with its previous position that school uniform rules applied to all, allowing girls of Muslim faith to wear a uniform hijab and make adaptations for what was to be worn during swimming lessons:

'Actually swimming's fine because girls can wear something that is almost like a wetsuit. And do quite happily.' (HT3, The Snows).

The Snows Head acknowledged that it is her school's particular location and the recent arrival of girls' from families where parents work in high-level technical, scientific and mathematical fields that are driving curriculum inflections towards maths and science, with:

'Very high uptake of all three sciences and maths at Higher and Advanced Higher. ... This city and its dominant ... industry plays a part in that. ... In the last couple of years we've developed this partnership with [local] University about promoting engineering courses to girls. So we've had three one-day conferences here, ... almost about three hundred girls have come ... And in the summer we are running a three-day residential conference for [fifty] girls from across the UK. ... The university staff doing the engineering ... We've done a similar thing with [local] University on Women in Business ... also 'Go for Science' days ... our girls who've trained as science ambassadors ... teach [local state primary school children] the experiments.' (HT3, The Snows).

Perhaps sounding like well-rehearsed marketing, the scope and momentum of these STEM-focused initiatives and events constitute new institutional markers. Within two years, the school rapidly repositioned itself locally and nationally as a leader of 'girls into STEM'. Concurrently though, the school's anterior 'arts and humanities' privileging habitus dispositions have not been lost: its Head spoke at length of a

parallel curriculum issue - recruiting a Latin teacher, classics a durable habitus taste for many girls. The pace and scale of The Snows' institutional habitus curriculum commitments evidence a considerable, potentially disruptive, degree of social space redirection - economic, symbolic, and cultural. However, by the Head's animated account, enacting the 'into STEM' initiatives has proven exciting and stimulating, a much desired goal for its girls being fulfilled. A sufficiently mutable institutional habitus has flexed but not experienced the kind of profound incoherencies and splits characteristic of habitus clivé.

Social and cultural breaks at St. Cecilia's are differently inflected. A historically (Christian) faith-based school, St. Cecilia's has flexed its recruitment practices, currently educating girls of fourteen different nationalities from a range of religious backgrounds. St. Cecilia's Head (HT2) highlighted a major school break from its previous mainly Scottish and British upper middle class demographic and associated 'protective' practices; the school today aims to ensure its students *'see themselves as global citizens ... see the world as much more of a place that's of easy access to them'*. To this end, she had consciously split from the institutionally long established, durable, notion of *'shut the gates and we'll all be fine and safe and secure in here'* through establishing a *'regular exchange'* with schools in two European countries and another planned with a US school. She had also

'Established a relationship with a school in India... a Hindu school ... completely different religion. When our girls go ... for the first time in October ... [our girls] will live in their school. ... go to all their lessons. And they'll visit different Indian religions, and business, and healthcare ... it'll be Diwali ... so they'll have all those Hindu experiences as well so it will be a completely different experience.' (HT2, St. Cecilia's).

Embracing 'the global' and 'cosmopolitanism', transcending the traditional potential socio-cultural separateness and 'tied-in' social space affinities and dispositions of a rurally-located, Christian tradition, girls' (mainly) boarding school, the Head has engineered a positive break from the past for all for St. Cecilia's 'international' girls and perhaps equally significantly, for the school's local intake. Its Head however, decisively, repeatedly and somewhat defensively, emphasised that its *'Christian inheritance'* and religious services remain *'fundamental'* to *'school daily life ethos and values'*. While the institutional cultural habitus of sole-religious affiliation has been broken off, the Head conveys a considerable degree of personal habitus incoherence – 'religious status anxiety', when attempting to reconcile current and anterior habitus religious affinities and practices. Yet, St Cecilia's anterior institutional habitus remains to some extent as religious practice and interest in others' religious and cultural practices become central, thus recuperating from a potentially destabilising institutional habitus clivé.

Social Landscape Imposition Two: Effects of Charitable Test Changes

Effect # one: 'the school as charitable body' – no longer an automatic status.

Noted previously, from 2020 fee-charging schools are subject to full business rates taxation, no longer receiving rates relief of up to 20%. Estimates suggest that losing business rates' relief will cost fee-charging schools £37million over the first five years of the new system (BBC, 2019).

Loss of rates relief apart, Heads recognised that continuing to meet both parts of the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) charitable test: that school purposes ‘consist only of ... charitable purposes’ and that the school provides ‘public benefit in Scotland or elsewhere’ (Scottish Parliament, 2005, Part 1, Ch. 2, Section 7.1) is valuable for their ‘symbolic capital’ in the form of their reputation and branding as charitable bodies (Bourdieu 1986). Yet, the work required to meet these tests takes up ‘a lot of energy’ (HT4, Ladykirk). Ending rates relief has been argued as potentially a tipping point for school closures, higher fee levels and reduced bursaries (Edward, 2018). Thus, the context is set for a potential institutional habitus clivé bifurcation. Schools will have to weigh the residual benefit of charitable body status and its accompanying symbolic capital – balancing conserving their anterior institutional habitus recognition, honour and prestige as a charitable body, against the work involved in continuing to buttress charity status. If not, OSCR charitable body registration could be abandoned, an abrupt and absolute habitus clivé for institutions whose sense of self and projected reputation has been and continues to be thoroughly imbricated in charitable status.

For the Heads a considerable *caveat* is that, should their school end its charitable status, OSCR will continue to hold precautionary powers over their school’s assets: in Scotland assets of a former charitable body may not be removed from charitable use. School assets at point of departure from the OSCR Register would be so protected, locked in with OSCR continuing to ensure their use for exclusively charitable purposes. Accepting, for now, that OSCR registration is an important institutional habitus affiliation worth retaining, the Heads in our study continue to negotiate OSCR’s second test: aiming to show their institution continues to be of public benefit.

Effect # two: defending ‘public benefit’ status.

Heads reported opening up their schools through increased community access and interaction, viewing this both as an OSCR approved ‘public benefit in Scotland’ and simultaneously contributing to the greater public good. Schools may leverage for OSCR ‘public benefit’ test purposes their multiple links with (sometimes less well financially endowed) schools in other countries, and Heads reported the voluntary work their girls do in other school localities. Listing specific examples of her school’s adjustments under OSCR requirements, HT2 (St. Cecilia’s) noted:

‘Local primary schools use our swimming pool. We ... take drama and music out to nursery schools. ... Our girls go out to the local care home... And they do community service there ... weekly. And then at Christmas we take the choir [to] sing. Local schools use our sports’ hall. ... We allow the [national youth group] weekend here. So they came and camped in the grounds. ... and slept in the sports’ hall.’

St. Cecilia’s anterior habitus was to draw comfort in having ‘shut gates’ and offering an exclusive space for a particular kind of elite girl subject. This has changed now with an increasingly diverse demographic intake, but also by allowing the flow of people in and out of the school grounds. While this distinct change of direction for St. Cecilia’s may be partially motivated by the need to appease the OSCR, the Head articulated it as a material pupil benefit, thereby minimising the degree of institutional habitus disequilibrium involved.

Greater open-ness to local and inter/national communities, a tried and tested form of institutional marketing, and now, no doubt, partly driven by OSCR ‘public benefit’ rules tightening, was equally evident in the other two schools: The Snaws teaching and playing fields ‘partnerships’ with local [state] primaries and hosting of engineering conferences for three hundred or so girls from different state schools; and Ladykirk ‘lending’ its Music and Chinese teachers to local primary schools, its girls spending a week at a school ‘where the children were very, very disabled’, and inviting local state school staff to termly teacher research seminars. Opening up spatially, institutions evidence public benefit and better equips their girls to pro-actively connect, navigate, and contribute across the broader social and cultural space in which they will in future live, learn and work. Besides, it might be viewed as the modern version of the making of ‘a good lady’ (Allan, 2009), serving those who are less fortunate and uploading the values of current society.

The educational provision in these elite schools appears to have become more multi-dimensional, driven by demographic change and charitable status requirements. Inflected by the diverse needs and aspirations of changed institutional demographics, we found flexings of social, economic and cultural boundaries of space in conjunction with a continued commitment to academic excellence and ambition. Continuing to work with their foundational liberal feminist principles gaining equality for their young women graduates with male peers is no longer the overriding single ideal for these schools. Rather their Heads’ ‘feel for the game’ in response to two particular social landscape impositions motivated each, differentiatedly, to disrupt and refashion institutional habitus structures of elite girls’ traditional schooling environments across the intersections of gender with class, economic wealth, culture, and ability.

7. IN CLOSING

This paper contributes to the under-researched field of how elite girls’ schools in Scotland are adapting in the current social landscape moment, taking on board important demographic and charitable status changes impacting their pupil demographic and business planning, and concurrently responsively redesigning what they understand to be successful habitus dispositions, knowledge and skills for 21st century girlhood.

A message from this analysis is of elite girls’ school Heads attempting to maintain institutional stability through their highly habitus-aligned ‘feel’ for the game, retaining a commitment to their school’s founding principles and institutional traditions of offering a full and rounded academic and sporting education for girls equal to that of boys and focused on gaining university entrance. Simultaneously, Heads are actively attempting to stay ahead of the game, breaking with and re-designing the purpose and structures of their schools to facilitate more flexible interactions with notions of girlhood and to embrace changing impositions emanating from a shifting political, economic and social landscape.

Applying a frame of habitus - institutional habitus and habitus clivé - the article has shown how schools, while retaining some elements, have productively rejected, revised or adapted certain of their former habitus structures. They have reviewed their former mission and reflexively reorganised – retaining, breaking with, and/or flexing and adjusting – their educational offer flowing from major social landscape changes pertaining to demographic and charitable status. Faced with challenging

impositions, institutions' use their extensive capital resources in multiple adaptive restabilising strategies, thereby, on the whole, avoiding irretrievable internal institutional splitting between irreconcilable identifications – habitus clivé.

8. DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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