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Social Class Identity Development and Elite Schools

Sarah Peck

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Social Class Identity Development and Elite Schools

**SARAH PECK completed the requirements
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Abstract

This project explores the ways in which students' identities are shaped and created at an elite school in a large metropolitan city in Chile, called Croft School. The project focuses on the ways in which privilege is reproduced at this elite institution and how the school inadvertently and purposefully teaches its students lessons about social class. In order to examine these lessons, interviews with students, alumni, teachers, and administrators as well as a site visit to Croft's campus were conducted. These methods were used to analyze the students' understandings of themselves and the ways that the school attempted to shape those understandings. The findings of this research reveal that the homogeneous community, one-dimensional community service program, and cultural scripts around issues of privilege influenced students' understandings of their own social class, privilege, and class identity. Unless Croft is willing to give up some of its elite status and some of its financial gains, and make significant changes to the demographics of the student body, the school will not be able to succeed in its goal to create well-rounded and responsible citizens of the world. Croft must accept that true change can only occur once the school creates a community that fosters thoughtful discourse around issues of privilege and justice.

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Introduction

When I was nine and began fourth grade at my private preparatory school in the suburbs of New York City, I started to notice the differences between my new school and my previous small, Catholic elementary school. However, as I spent more time at Rye Country Day School (RCDS), things like a sponsored choir trip to Croatia over our Spring Break became more and more normal to me and I spent less time thinking about my old uniforms or mandatory religion classes. I spent most of my education being told that I was there because I was the best of the best and that I was receiving an incredible education. Teachers spent their lunch breaks helping students with concepts we had failed to grasp in class, gave out their phone numbers in case we had questions about homework or essays, and attended athletic events on the weekend to show “Wildcat spirit.” Every day at school I was listened to, valued, and told I was important both implicitly and explicitly. My two older siblings attended RCDS before I started, so I knew the inner workings of campus culture and my parents knew how things got accomplished behind the scenes before I started there. When I was in eighth grade, my mother started working as a fifth-grade math teacher at RCDS. This afforded me a few new privileges, like being in the know about teacher gossip and hearing about snow days before my peers.

Though I felt comfortable at RCDS academically (at least for elementary and middle school), there were social pressures and cultural norms that were new to me and revealed me as different from my peers. Certain brands that I had never learned to differentiate were cherished and had the power to give you immediate popularity as a nine-year-old. My family had enough money to send us to private school, but once tuition was paid, it left us with little to spend on the things that most of my peers boasted. I learned that I was an

“RCDS Sibling,” that students applying who have siblings who are attending or previously attended the school have a higher chance of getting accepted because RCDS found that families with multiple children enrolled donated more money to the annual fund. The same rule applied for legacies, or children that had parents who were alumni.

As I got older and more cognizant of the privilege surrounding me (that I had unknowingly gained by going to RCDS and was mostly unaware that I shared now with my peers), I watched the white, preppy, rich students thrive and the students of color, who mostly took the Metro North from the Bronx, become isolated and isolate themselves from some aspects of the community. They bonded on the train rides, but were also fed up with being tokenized when issues of race or social class came up in classroom discussions. Because people assumed students of color were the only ones on financial aid, students tended to point to them when these conversations came up. They were expected to stay at school until all hours of the evening for athletic practices or theater rehearsals despite having a long commute, and grew frustrated by the pressure to get copious amounts of work done despite the other obligations they had at home. As we progressed to the time of the college search, a clear divide emerged among my classmates depending on if you had enough money to hire an SAT tutor or not. There was even a gap between those who could get a basic tutor, like me, and those who could hire someone for extensive tutoring that guaranteed you a certain score in the hopes of attending your choice of the Ivies. I observed the differences between students who could afford to fly to California to see if they liked the feeling of a campus 3,000 miles away from home and those who only toured schools with reputations for being generous with scholarship money. Though my class of 86 students had three college counselors to share among ourselves, some of the wealthiest

students also hired private counselors to work on college application essays and to prepare for interviews, thus securing their advantaging circumstances.

These students grew up with parents who went to elite colleges and universities and were well versed in the language of academia. They expected nothing less than excellence from their children, and expected RCDS to make sure this excellence was noticed by the colleges they hoped would accept their children. They made sure their children involved themselves in extracurriculars that are valued by elite institutions, so that they appeared to be “well-rounded.” These students had an easier time getting into college, just like they had an easier time learning how to read when they got to kindergarten because their parents had sung them the alphabet and read to them since before they were learning to walk. Parents who did not attend elite schools, or college at all, usually felt uncomfortable attending events for parents, could not offer much help with applications, and frequently did not know the insider language needed to navigate admissions tours or interviews.

Even within our privileged community, our student body covered a wide spectrum of class differences. Though the extremes of wealth and poverty were the most visibly obvious and impossible to ignore, many subdivisions of wealth and socioeconomic status existed amongst us. I fell somewhere in the middle of the spectrum as someone who received need-based financial aid some years, but not others. As a white student growing up in a home with two college-educated parents, I carried certain privileges before factoring in economic resources, or my economic capital. I had social capital, or the “aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition” (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 251). By attending Rye Country Day, I had my own

networks of resources to tap into. I was also gifted social capital from my parents in the forms of their alumni networks, their business colleagues, and their more well-off or well connected friends. I possess various types of cultural capital, or forms of knowledge or advantage that help me “move up” in society. I received embodied cultural capital, one of the main types of cultural capital, in the form of knowing how to act at cocktail parties, valuing reading because my parents demonstrated its importance by reading the newspaper each morning and reading to me before I was put to sleep, and knowing to bring a gift in order to be a “polite” guest when visiting a friend’s home for a weekend. I have institutionalized cultural capital, or recognition from a culturally valued institution, by attending RCDS and graduating with its diploma. Even without the privileges of extreme economic wealth, students like me were able to leave RCDS with forms of capital that help us move through the elite world more seamlessly.

I have seen privilege at work, and benefitted from it myself in many ways. Schools like mine serve to reproduce the social status of its attendees (Bowles & Gintis, 2002). Though elite institutions like Rye Country Day only educate a small percentage of the American population, graduates from these schools frequently become powerful in business and politics where their voices are readily heard by society and they are able to go on to shape large systems (Persell & Cookson, 1985; Kenway & Koh, 2013). Because schools reflect and reproduce the class divisions of society, they tend to serve those in power and help them maintain their privilege (Howard, 2008).

American schooling was originally designed for the most elite among society. Only those from wealthy, aristocratic backgrounds were considered as possible attendees for school. Remnants of this history are still evident today. Schooling structures are bridled

with elitism, and because schools were created to reinforce the values and ideals of those in power, those who come from backgrounds that do not mirror what they see in school are less likely to succeed in these environments. Students who do not come to school from homes where they are taught to behave in the ways their teachers will expect them to have a harder time transitioning to a classroom where they will be asked to sit quietly for long periods of time, must ask permission before doing certain things, and pay a certain respect to adults in general.

In order to examine the way that elite schools reproduce privilege and shape their students' class identity development, I worked on a project that stemmed from a larger examination of global citizenship education at elite schools (Howard). Howard is in the process of conducting a multi-sited global ethnography exploring the lessons students are taught about their place in the world, their relationships with others, and who they are at elite secondary schools in six countries: Australia, Denmark, Ghana, Jordan, Taiwan, and Chile. Specifically, main questions guiding the inquiry address the ways in which the schools define global citizenship, the lessons students learn about global citizenship, and how these lessons shape their identities, the increasing global connections and imaginations impacting students' self-understandings, and the roles that elite schools play in facilitating and mediating these influences. While my work utilized some of the same interview guides and methods, I will focus specifically on data collected from the selected school in Chile that examines the development of students' identity in relation to social class and their self-understandings of privilege. I will focus solely on the students' knowledge of social class, how they view themselves in terms of their socio-economic status, and what has shaped these understandings both at home and in school. In addition

to Howard's usual questions, I will pay closer attention to and include supplementary questions about privilege, identity development, and social class.

My own observations and experiences of elite reproduction in high school and college led to the questions I will focus on here. I will explore how students understand social class as well as where they place themselves on this spectrum. I will examine what influences students' identities and notions of larger realities of social class by looking at who and what shaped their worldviews. For this project, I will be focusing on an independent day school in Santiago, Chile called Croft School. Through interviews with students, teachers, and alumni, as well as a site visit to the campus, I will gain a better understanding of how students at this particular elite institution conceptualize social class, how they understand their privileged identities, and how these views and perceptions have been shaped.

Methods

Contexts and Participants

Chile, a country of almost 17 million, is known for its mountain ranges, plentiful copper reserves, and beautiful coastlines. Its history as a Spanish colony has shaped its current government and social order. In the 1970s, Chile was governed by General Augusto Pinochet, a repressive and violent leader who banned opposing political parties and changed the political and cultural scene of the country in ways that are still evident today (Thomas White International, 2016). His rule was ended by a national plebiscite, or vote, and was followed by a democratically elected president. Today, with a GDP of \$277 billion, Chile is consistently growing and becoming more economically stable. Despite developments in healthcare, life expectancy, and political stability, Chile has many social issues that remain from the time of Pinochet's dictatorship. There is an uneven distribution of extreme wealth and poverty, as well as a large divide between the "State and the people of the indigenous Mapuche community" that make up 5% of Chile's population (Thomas White International, 2016). This disparity between social groups in Chile is evident in societal institutions from hospitals to schools.

On the outskirts of its capital city is Croft School. Croft was first established in 1928 as a "Chilean institution broadly based on traditional British educational principles" and is grounded in the ideals of well-roundedness and service. The school is bilingual, and students begin to learn English when they enter their first year of Lower Prep at the age of five. The school does not admit new students after seventh grade unless parents pay a fee to reserve a place for them. Pupils, as the students are commonly referred to at Croft, are expected to embody the "Croft Spirit" and ascribe to the pillars of the school: fair play,

honesty, the spirit of service, tolerance, and the idea of an all-rounder. The school hopes to produce all-rounders, students who excel in academic, athletic, and artistic pursuits while maintaining their role as responsible and conscious citizens. Students at Croft have the chance to partake in different exchange programs with the UK and the rest of the world that are designed to “encourage the sharing of ideas, methodology and experience,” and to foster a better understanding of the realities of the world outside of Croft. The school focuses heavily on creating and cultivating community as well as a dedication to service work, both for themselves and for the common good. There is a strong emphasis on honesty and dialogue, as well as athletics and competition.

Students from Croft excel during their time there and in their academic and career pursuits after graduation. Many matriculate to the best universities in Chile and feel ready for the coursework and challenges of university. Croft’s Latin motto is *nunquam non paratus*, or “never unprepared.” They take this very seriously and prioritize preparation for the Prueba de Selección Universitaria (PSU), a college-entrance exam somewhat similar to the SAT, in the last two years of high school. Teachers at Croft come from various backgrounds; about half are native to Chile and went through Chilean public school systems, and the rest are transplants from Europe who went to British or American schools. With a faculty student ratio of 1:9, pupils at Croft have the ability to learn from their teachers’ diverse experiences. However, because Croft does not offer scholarships to students unable to pay tuition, there is a clear homogeneity present in terms of the socioeconomic background of students. This homogeneity pervades many aspects of students’ experiences at Croft.

To conduct this research, I analyzed interviews completed with five different students from Croft School. Through interviews with three males and two females, I was able to get a comprehensive understanding of how the school's mission impacted student life and what students learned at Croft. The students were between the ages of 15 and 18 years old. Professor Howard's ED324 class on Elite Schools in a Global Context conducted these interviews. His class broke up into groups, and ensured building the best relationship with each Croft student by keeping the interviewer from Colby consistent throughout the three interviews. Our contact person at Croft, a member of the Communications and Admissions staff who I got the chance to meet on our site visit, helped us identify the students with the help of a male English teacher, who Adam Howard and I interviewed when in Santiago. The only guidelines given were to attempt for gender diversity, non-American students, and to include "average" students from the school.

As a sophomore at Croft School, Kostas enjoys passing his time playing "pichangas," or small pick up soccer games, with friends when he is not studying or volunteering as a math tutor in local public schools. He and his friends take pride in attempting to distance themselves from the rest of Croft School by speaking out about their dislike for rugby and their discomfort in conforming to the school's values and teacher's beliefs in order to succeed. Despite his self-proclaimed divergence from the "Croft Spirit," Kostas plans on attending university in Chile after graduating in the hopes of becoming an engineer like both of his parents. Kostas has an older sister who recently graduated from Croft School, and is preparing to start taking classes at one of the nearby universities. He spends his summer and long breaks from school at his house on a lake in Southern Chile with his family, and loves skiing in the winter.

Magdalena, a seventeen-year-old senior at Croft, is spending her senior year shifting her focus from her competitive swimming career to preparing for the PSU in order to pursue a career in psychology or medicine at one of the best universities in Santiago. She hopes to follow in her parents' footsteps and attend the prestigious Catholic university in the city. Though she does not spend much time with her parents, who are separated, due to her busy swimming schedule and their long work days, she is hesitant to go to university in the United States because she worries about being separated from them. She is very close to her grandparents, and spends time at their house each day after school. Magdalena volunteers with BioConnect, a group of students interested in environmental justice issues, once a month to do things like beach cleanups and give talks on environmentally related topics to her peers. Her love of biology and her biology teacher at Croft has spurred her interest in becoming a doctor or psychologist after she finishes university. As someone who has attended Croft since pre-kinder at age four, Magdalena had a lot of insights into the often unspoken aspects of Croft.

As a senior at Croft School, Alejandro is spending his last year preparing for university, spending time with friends, and improving his rugby skills. Alejandro is the son of two parents in the business industry and a brother to seven siblings who all attended Croft School as well. Though he serves as class president, he often spoke poorly of the administration and teachers at Croft. He spends most of his time when he is not in school playing rugby or going to the gym to workout. On the weekends, he usually goes to parties or plays Fifa with his friends. Though he is in the top level of most of his classes, he says that he does not have to spend much time studying, and instead focuses on rugby and his family. He willingly spoke about his relationships with his teachers and his past

experiences being punished routinely for acting out in class or being viewed as treating his teachers with disrespect. Alejandro is set on attending a university in Chile and feels as though Croft School has enabled him to be successful despite his other critiques of the school's culture and discipline.

At seventeen years old, Micaela comes off as very thoughtful and self-aware. At school, Micaela spends a lot of her time working with the theater club and is happy to have new physical education electives available so that she can now swim for her school. She also dedicates a lot of her time to the Green Team, a club that focuses on making Croft more environmentally friendly. Socially, Micaela sees herself as challenging the idea that all wealthy students are uncaring about political issues that involve the poor. Micaela tries to be conscious of others' backgrounds and she sees her and her friends' interest in issues of class and gender as a step in the right direction. Micaela is very close to her family and is able to engage in conversations about these issues both at home and at school; she cites her mother as one of the reasons why she is more empathetic than some of her peers. Micaela hopes to study sociology at her parents' alma mater, one of the best universities in Chile, before going into a career that allows her to do good and improve the income inequality that currently creates deep social divisions in Chile.

I completed interviews with teachers and administrators from Croft. I interviewed one teacher currently at the school who is working directly with most of the students who we interviewed. While on campus for a tour of the school, one of the research assistants conducted an interview with an administrator in the Communications office who attended Croft before going to university. In addition to current students, faculty, and staff, we completed interviews with alumni. At the end of our final interview with current students,

we asked them for names of any recent graduates they thought would be willing to discuss their childhood, their time at Croft, and what they are doing now.

Cristobal, a recent graduate of Croft who is now studying at one of the top universities in Santiago, has changed both universities and career paths since leaving Croft. Though he loved his experience at Croft, he seems to have no shortage of critiques of the school. In high school he spent a lot of his time outside of school exploring different neighborhoods in Santiago and discussing Chilean politics with his friends who shared his interest in getting out of the “Croft bubble.” He is currently studying civil engineering and is in the process of choosing a concentration in that field. In his sophomore year he had the opportunity to spend a month in England for an exchange program. His time at Westminster motivated him to learn more about people and their differences. After graduating from university he hopes to spend some time living in a foreign country, but believes he will end up raising his family in Chile because of his ties and loyalty to the country.

Angelo, an English teacher raised in Santiago, is fairly new to Croft School. He started at the school in a program for teachers who are still working to get their proper teaching certifications. In addition to his teaching position at Croft, he is writing a thesis and taking graduate school courses to get the necessary degree to continue teaching English. He went to high school and college in the United States and spent several years in California before moving back to Santiago so that his wife could be closer to her family. Though he misses his time in the United States, he enjoys teaching the students at the Croft because they are such “good kids.” He was hesitant at first to speak ill of the school or its

drama, but opened up to us about some of his observations. Overall, despite feeling as if Croft values parents over teachers, he seems to really love his job and his students.

Bianca, a member of the administration working in Communications, attended Croft from pre-Kinder until she went to university. She studied journalism at a university and lived at home with her family while she completed her degree. Besides her semester abroad in Madrid and her exchange program to Tahiti through Croft, Bianca has stayed in her home city. She began working at Croft after she had an internship there for part of a university class. Bianca has limited interactions with students on a day-to-day basis, but works closely with teachers and staff, as well as the Senior School prefects who help her organize events. She was able to speak to the experience of the administration at Croft and the rarity of outsiders being able to explore the inner workings of Croft.

Data Collection

Each current Croft student participated in three in-depth, phenomenological interviews over Skype. The students that were available also participated in a more informal follow-up interview while I was in Santiago. The Skype interviews were structured around a set of questions previously developed and used for Howard's larger research project. The first interview provided context for participants' experiences by focusing on their broad life history. This interview aimed to get a brief overview of the student's daily life, the people who they surround themselves with, and a brief glimpse of the school's values. The second interview concentrated on details of the students' experiences in school and their understandings of social class and privilege. In this interview, the student was asked about the academic climate, who shaped their concepts of social class, and their plans for the future. The third interview encouraged students to

reflect on their experiences at Croft more deeply and explain their conceptualization of global citizenship. This final interview also gave them the opportunity to reflect on the interview process and speculate on their future education and career goals. Each interview lasted 60-90 minutes and was conducted over a three-week period. While completing my site visit in Santiago, I completed more informal interviews with some of the students that added to my understanding of their lives and beliefs when it came to social class and their educations. For these informal follow-ups, we focused on issues of class, privilege, and community service. This also allowed us to clarify anything that came up in the first three structured interviews.

Interviews with teachers and administrators explored information about their relationship with Croft and their feelings about the school, their understandings of global citizenship education and how they infuse that into their teaching, and the ways in which they interact with students beyond the classroom. These formal interviews also delved into their understandings of social class, achievement, and success. Each teacher or administrator was only asked to complete one interview that lasted about an hour.

The alumni chosen to discuss their time at Croft were asked to describe their personal background, their experiences in high school, how they felt about college or university in terms of preparedness, and their understandings of social class and how they have evolved over time and their education. The two interviews I was able to conduct were with male alumni that were suggested by one of the current students who we interviewed. I reached out to these alumni via email and scheduled Skype interviews for them before I went to Santiago. These interviews were both around 40 minutes. I followed up with one of

them in person for a more informal conversation while I was in Chile that allowed me to better understand his personality and his ideas about class privilege.

In addition to getting data from comprehensive interviews with different members of Croft's community, I spent a month in Santiago getting to know the city and the school's campus. While I was in Santiago, I not only met with students, alums, administrators, and teachers, but also closely observed the physical structure of the school and its broader context in terms of its placement in Santiago. By spending time on campus and in local cafes, restaurants, and sites of local and historical importance, I was able to read the interviews in a different way and understood the students and teachers in a new light (Epstein, Fahey, & Kenway, 2013). I took photos of the city, the school's grounds and its structures, and kept a daily journal about the day's activities. I wrote these notes each night and catalogued everything from the mode of transportation I took that day to observations about peoples' clothing or behavior. Understanding the social aesthetics of the school allowed me to picture the physical spaces that students discussed in their interviews, and by exploring different neighborhoods within Santiago I was able to get a fuller picture of students' experiences as well as place discussions in a broader context of the country as a whole. Chile's rich but tumultuous history with dictators and genocide in particular changed the way in which I understood the country after seeing it for myself.

Data Analysis

In order to analyze my interviews with different members of the Croft community, I completed inductive reviewing of the many transcripts I had gathered over my time conducting research. I first read through the transcripts to become familiar with each student, administrator, alumni, and teacher. During this initial read through, I identified

words or phrases that were connected to my research focus of social class, privilege, and identity development. Then, I came up with labels for these concepts by reviewing my literature review and thinking about the areas of focus for previous similar studies. I developed an initial list of about 40 different codes, that I would later collapse into eight, and finally three.

After I felt comfortable with the content and information in each interview, I reread each interview while doing line by line coding. I utilized the process of open coding when I labeled concepts, phrases, and words to develop categories and trends that expanded all, or most, of my research subjects. By assigning a word or phrase to different sections of various transcripts, I was able to create a list of recurrent themes that emerged from the data. This initial list included about 40 terms or repeating phrases. After I coded each of the individual transcripts in this way, I used this initial list of codes to then complete axial coding, meaning I looked for the categories or codes that appeared across all of my data sets (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2013). By doing this, I was able to collapse my list of 40 codes down to eight clusters of codes. I was able to narrow down my list by turning my attention to solely focus on the topics that were most important to my research questions. By looking for codes that touched upon privilege, social class, and identity development, I was able to exclude some of the initial terms that were patterns that emerged from the narratives, but that did not directly relate to my project. With Howard's help, I came up with three themes that represented all eight of my larger codes. By collaborating with an experienced researcher, I was able to talk through my codes and create connections between the eight labels. After I explained my understanding of my findings, Howard built relationships between the eight labels and selected three large themes that encompassed

all eight of my codes. What emerged from this was three themes that were able to tell the complete story in regards to lessons and notions of privilege, social class, and identity development as they related to experiences at Croft.

Literature Review

Identity Development

Adolescence is a time of major change for most, and these changes are apparent in many different aspects of teens' lives. During a time of growth and self-reflection, most adolescents begin to explore their identities in an effort to understand themselves more deeply and find their place among their peers. Identity describes the relationship between an individual and a certain social category (Frable, 1997, p. 139). As people goes through identity moratorium, or a time of "active engagement in the process so as to form an ego-identity," they survey possible identity categories and attempt to find one that fits with their understanding of themselves and how they fit into the world (Bilsker & Marcia, 1991, p. 77). Usually the choices thought to be available to a person in terms of possible identities are based on observations during childhood of the people around them and the identities they held (Aries & Seider, 2007). Often identities indicate the presence of group membership, or belonging to a group of people that identify in similar ways and share certain beliefs. The knowledge of a certain group membership and its corresponding emotional significance plays a big part in an individual's understanding of themselves (Aries & Seider, 2007, p. 137). Through identity, a social group can become part of one's understanding of one's self (Frable, 1997, p. 139).

Erik Erikson and James Marcia both studied identity and created frameworks for understanding how identity develops over the lifespan. Erikson created a comprehensive framework for ego identity formation. According to his research, ego identity is "about sameness and continuity over time and about how that constructed sameness and continuity situates a developing person in a complex and multivalent social world"

(McAdams & Zapata-Gietl, 2015, p. 82). A person's identity is not static; it is refined and altered throughout adolescence and adulthood (McAdams & Zapata-Gietl, 2015, 84). Bilsker and Marcia (1991) found two variables necessary for understanding an individual's identity status: exploration and commitment. Exploration involves "active questioning and engagement in choosing among meaningful alternatives; commitment refers to the presence or absence of decisions in the areas of ideology" (Flum, 1994, p. 435). He used these two variables to create four different identity statuses: identity foreclosed, diffused, moratorium, and achieved. When an identity is foreclosed, an individual is not currently exploring, but is committed without questioning their culturally defined values (Bilsker & Marcia, 1991, p. 77). Identity diffused indicates a person's refusal or inability to pick among the identity choices in a given category, so they are not committed or actively involved in exploring at that time (Bilsker & Marcia, 1991, p. 77). When an individual is in moratorium, they are actively seeking information and asking questions in hopes of forming an identity based on a deep understanding of one's self and broader context. For those in moratorium, there is exploration without psychological commitment. Those who reach achievement have found an identity that they feel secure in after exploring and committing, and this identity often becomes very important in how they think of themselves.

Part of the necessity for establishing an identity is grounding yourself in knowing that you are the same person no matter where you are. Sometimes inner conflicts arise when you begin to notice how different you are in different contexts depending on who is around. There is often a "jarring discontinuity between the social performances that seem to define [someone] in the presence of good friends and those that characterize his behavior with his parents" (McAdams & Zapata-Gietl, 2015, p. 84). This confusion can be

solved by exploring and solidifying your identity. Having an achieved identity allows a person to incorporate many aspects of their identity into one arrangement. This arrangement can provide the individual with the feeling that they are indeed the same person over time and in different social situations despite minor changes (McAdams & Zapata-Gietl, 2015, p. 82). Though different contexts require different attitudes and behaviors, it is important to know that one's core self is the same, and this can be achieved by better understanding one's identity.

Identity development begins to change shape and solidify when a child starts to develop their theory of mind. This usually occurs around the age of four or five years old, and allows them to begin exploring their values and understandings of the world. Theory of mind refers to understanding that "human beings have desires and beliefs in their minds and that these desires and beliefs *motivate* human behavior" (McAdams & Zapata-Gietl, 2015, p. 88). Theory of mind allows children to think about what they are doing in a given moment and grasp the idea that others have perspectives and thoughts that are different from their own. As children move through their early school years, they become more future and goal oriented as they learn to be better planners and begin ascribing to individually specific values (McAdams & Zapata-Gietl, 2015, p. 88). More time in school paired with the development of concrete operational thought provides children with a fuller and more logical understanding of the world around them, which equips them with a broader context within which they can place themselves (McAdams & Zapata-Gietl, 2015, p. 88). Once an individual has entered the developmental stage of emerging adulthood, they possess the cognitive abilities that allow for self-reflection and a deeper level of thinking. These new developments enable them to reflect on their experiences with new situations

or people who are unlike those they have previously encountered. This reflection can then lead them to include new categories or ideas into their own identities (Thomas & Azmitia, 2014, p. 198). Older adolescents are able to reflect on what is around them and unravel the complexities of their own identities when faced with new situations or environments that prompt them to question their past understandings.

These new experiences often prompt an individual to begin exploring their place in the world. Borrowing terminology from William Cross' Nigrescence Model on racial identity development allows one to understand the critical role that encounters, or experiences that bring an identity to the forefront, play in all identities (Thomas & Azmitia, 2014, p. 209). When someone is confronted with an encounter, they usually see their identity in a new light and are forced to problematize their worldview and what they thought they knew about themselves. Encounters are more likely to occur in heterogeneous environments where peers tend to have different backgrounds, beliefs, and perspectives from oneself. Before someone enters a space with people unlike themselves, they can easily remain in identity foreclosure or diffusion because they do not have a reason to question their culturally or familial defined values and aspirations (Bilsker & Marcia, 1991, p. 77).

Without reasons for exploration, individuals do not usually seek out opposing viewpoints or begin to ask questions that would allow them a more diverse picture of perspectives. Once placed in a context with others who are going through moratorium or those with different identities from their own, people tend to wonder about ways in which they are similar and different from their peers, leading to further identity exploration. Following this logic, people tend to go through exploration surrounding only one identity at

a time depending on which one is triggered by an encounter (Tatum, 1997). Because people only explore the identity that is currently being questioned, it is common for a teenager to be actively examining one aspect of their identity while another goes ignored (Tatum, 1997, p. 53). Oftentimes, the broader world and culture is what dictates the identities that people explore. The aspects of identity that are more salient to someone are often those that are scrutinized by others. According to Beverly Tatum (1997), “the parts of our identity that *do* capture our attention are those that other people notice, and that reflect back to us” (p. 21). This indicates that culture and context determine an individual’s understanding of his or her identity.

Identity is not one’s entire personality, but the aspects that are pertinent to the configuration of how one understands oneself over time. This configuration of traits makes up one’s identity, and needs to be both recognized and validated by one’s community (McAdams & Zapata-Gietl, 2015, p. 82). Because group membership is integral to identity and understanding how oneself fits in with those around them, society must recognize an identity in order for one to see it as a plausible way of maintaining “inner sameness and continuity” (Bilsker & Marcia, 1991, p. 75). Though identity development is dependent on the individual and their experiences, the “ultimate arbiter for determining the psychological and moral legitimacy of narrative identity is *culture*” (McAdams & Zapata-Gietl, 2015, p. 91). By taking on a specific identity, one can find a place within their larger world. An achieved identity gives an adolescent a “psychosocial niche in the broad and dynamic world of adulthood” and locates the adolescent within their broader social context (McAdams & Zapata-Gietl, 2015, p. 82). In this way, identities can become shared categories that provide support for those who fit within a given group.

Gaztambide-Fernández (2009) uses a framework he refers to as “identification” in conversations about identities and elite institutions. He defines identification as:

the process through which social entities (individuals or groups) identify and/or are identified with various categories and labels. This approach to processes of identification recognizes that institutions are powerful identifiers, and, furthermore, that institutions provide the necessary resources and the legitimation that enable certain identifications to have social and political consequences” (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2009, p. 12).

He believes that it is important to think about individual student’s identities and their development around different social categories in the context of their elite institutions and world. Gaztambide-Fernández explains that elite spaces change the way that students are able to negotiate their own identity because “students have much to gain by reproducing the boundaries that structure their identification” (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2009, p. 13).

When these groups are culturally significant, like class, sex, race, or sexual orientation, they are even more capable of shaping one’s self (Aries & Seider, 2007, p. 137). Because these social groups have meaning beyond the individual and extend to systems and how society is organized, they can work to privilege or oppress individuals in more meaningful ways than identities that are not culturally valued. Though “identity achievement involves choice, ...power and privilege are what dictates the choices that one has” (Aries & Seider, 2007, p. 138). Despite identities like gender, race, and sexual orientation being “fluid, multidimensional, personalized social constructions,” those in power determine which identities are privileged and which are oppressed, meaning that individuals do not have the power themselves to truly choose between all identities

(Frable, 1997, p. 139). These social constructions “reflect the individual’s current context and sociohistorical cohort,” but not necessarily the beliefs of all people within that society (Frable, 1997, p. 139). Often those who are less privileged are silenced in this regard, and this results in their opinions remaining unheard when creating cultural norms. The “culturally significant, ideologically powerful social category systems clash with personal and collective group member experiences” when the already advantaged make their experiences seem like the most common ones (Frable, 1997, p. 140).

How Social Class Shapes Identity Development

One important identity that is often overlooked in psychology and sociology in favor of researching identities that are more common in public discourse, like race or gender, is social class. Social class is most broadly understood as both a social and an economic category that can be used to differentiate individual members of a community (Seider, 2008, p. 46). Class “indexes differential access to economic, political, and social resources, including money, jobs, and education” (Stewart & Ostrove, 1993, p. 476). In this way, the impacts of social class spread far past things that can be bought, such as the type of house someone can afford. Because it permeates most, if not all, aspects of one’s life, “it has ramifications well beyond access to resources, and ‘influences’ practices or tastes, preferences, interpersonal styles, and habits” (Stewart & Ostrove, 1993, p. 476). Class is “lived and practiced and includes social and cultural understandings and identities that go beyond one’s relationship to the economy, or one’s job and income” (Freie, 2014, p. 124). Social class dictates the opportunities available to an individual at any given time. This means that it can determine the ways in which people experience the world (Aries &

Seider, 2007, p. 138). One's social class governs everything from movie preferences to healthcare access and legal aid.

In a world where social class determines so much of what is important, it is vital to look at the ways in which social class may “shape, constrain, and mediate the development and expression of knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, motives, traits, and symptoms” (Stewart & Ostrove, 1993, p. 476). Social class not only impacts the way one experiences the world, but is also an important domain of identity that must be explored and can shape one's understanding of oneself (Aries & Seider, 2007, p. 151). Often the effects of social class are ignored because they are written off as a result of someone's individual failures. People have a tendency to buy into the rhetoric of meritocracy, that society rewards ability and hard work and that the opportunities open to an individual within society are representative of what they deserve (Thomas & Azmitia, 2014, p. 196). They are therefore more likely to ascribe a lack of upward mobility to a lack of hard work (Seider, 2008, p. 46). The belief in “such democratic egalitarian ideals can lead people to conceptualize class as fluid and dependent on personal agency” (Thomas & Azmitia, 2014, p. 196). This belief that our society is egalitarian can hurt those who do not hold privileged class identities when they fail to move up in their class status due to the presence of systematic obstacles.

Cultural capital, a sociological concept first termed by Pierre Bourdieu as another way of understanding social class and its effects on people, refers to the forms of knowledge or advantage that give someone high status in society. Among the elite and those with privileged class identities, “there is a shared cultural capital, or shared cultural background, knowledge base, disposition and skills which are passed from one generation to the next” (Freie, 2014, p. 133). This cultural capital aids in social class reproduction.

Social class reproduction is the idea that it is very difficult to move significantly up the social class ladder, and that most people end up in the same social class as the one they were born into. Despite common, popular rhetoric about success, fairness, and equality, many people find it difficult to succeed in terms of class when the odds are stacked against them.

Often, people are identity foreclosed or diffused when it comes to social class because of fairly ubiquitous social norms that discourage conversation about socioeconomic status. Because children are urged against asking questions or making observations about money, they rarely explore that identity. The “awareness of social class occur[s] primarily during social comparison encounters with peers” (Thomas & Azmitia, 2014, p. 195). In order to understand and commit to an identity around social class, most people must first experience an encounter that forces them to think about their own class. The fact that many people live in homogeneous communities “contributes to the perception that our experiences are normative and, therefore, social class differences do not exist” (Thomas & Azmitia, 2014, p. 209). Because many people believe that class differences do not exist, many remain foreclosed around class identity and remain uninterested in exploring how their class impacts their daily life and understanding of their own world. Oftentimes, “an encounter experience pushes [someone] out of a familiar worldview,” and allows class to then become a salient aspect of their identity (Thomas & Azmitia, 2014, p. 209). When one is in the preencounter phase where “their class identity is not yet salient or remains invisible,” class is not “a dimension of peer comparisons or experiences of prejudice and discrimination” (Thomas & Azmitia, 2014, p. 209). However, once class is a prominent part of someone’s life, they tend to see the world through a different lens. This

newfound recognition of one's socioeconomic position can become a way of absorbing the world around them (Stewart & Ostrove, 1993, p. 476). When adolescents begin questioning those around them about class, they begin to understand how deeply class permeates into their daily lives.

As children move through their time in school, those who enter contexts with peers who come from different social class backgrounds are more likely to experience encounters that prompt exploration of their social class identity. Usually one's understanding of class identity "becomes salient when the individual moves from one context to another" (Frale, 1997, p. 154). Changing contexts often allows an individual to observe the differences between people and begin to grasp the idea that equality is nonexistent when it comes to social class. Social comparison theories point out the importance of comparison in order to make sense of ourselves and our place in society (Thomas & Azmitia, 2014, p. 196). Social identity theory describes the process of comparing oneself to one's peers that "alerts us to the categories inherent in social groups" (Thomas & Azmitia, 2014, p. 196). If someone realizes that they are, in fact, in one of the oppressed categories instead of a privileged one, most people then "engage in psychological work and use identity management strategies to reinforce a positive identity and protect [their] self-esteem" (Thomas & Azmitia, 2014, p. 196). For example, many students from low-income homes are forced to "negotiate their marginal status at elite academic institutions" when they realize that they are in the minority in that space (Frale, 1997, p. 154).

In spaces where the majority of students come from wealthy backgrounds and are privileged with corresponding cultural capital, students from lower-income backgrounds tend to "find an ideology that 'later can serve as rationalizations for what has come about'"

in terms of their social class (Aries & Seider, 2007, p. 153). Lower class students often minimize the disadvantages they face due to their socioeconomic background and rationalize their place on the class ladder through the system justification theory (Aries & Seider, 2007, p. 153). The system justification theory “posits that we legitimize and justify the existing social order even when it does not benefit us” (Thomas & Azmitia, 2014, p. 209). Despite being oppressed by the current order, people from lower socioeconomic statuses often justify their own oppression because they too believe in the myth of merit rhetoric that labels their failure as an indication that they are not trying hard enough. These justifications for social systems and hierarchies in place often make it “easy to believe everything is as it should be” and allow people to ignore the ugly truth of inequality (Tatum, 1997, p. 24). Those in the top of the socioeconomic elite must convince everyone, including themselves, of “the legitimacy of their class interests in order to preserve their power” (Gaztambide-Fernández & Howard, 2013, p. 1). Because even those who are at the bottom of the scale defend the presence of the social order, it is easy to ignore the systematic oppression created by such structures. Oftentimes, “lower income students... use the self-protective strategy of positioning themselves in the middle of the social structure and, therefore, as privileged in relation to the poor” (Aries & Seider, 2007, p. 154). This is another common way that people who are mistreated by the system protect themselves from the injuries of their class identity.

Because social class is ambiguous and can change if someone manages to get a new job or otherwise break the barrier of their social class, people tend not to identify strongly with their class identity. Most people who truly believe that their hard work will pay off do not accept the stability of their membership in the class they were born in and therefore do

not think of class as a central aspect of who they are in the way that they do with identities like gender or race. Usually, “once someone claims a domain of identity, the mechanism of centrality gauges its relative importance to other domains of identity” (Thomas & Azmitia, 2014, p. 197). Even if someone acknowledges or identifies with a category, it might not be central to how one understands themselves, and therefore does not impact the way they live their day-to-day lives. This means they may not act as if their social class matters despite maybe being identity achieved.

Unlike gender and race identities that are often evident to strangers from observation alone, class is usually an invisible identity. This creates “opportunities for individuals to pass as another class” (Thomas & Azmitia, 2014, p. 196). Because class is mostly not visible except for wardrobe and patterns of speech, it is easy for people to pass as middle-class when they are not. The discourse of normality surrounding the middle-class is similar to the discourse of normality around whiteness as an invisible norm (Freie, 2014, p. 135). In the same way that the normalization of whiteness conceals racial biases, the discourse of normality around class hides a group’s economic disadvantages or advantages (Freie, 2014, p. 136). When students choose to protect themselves by identifying themselves as middle-class, they are utilizing the “rhetoric of a taken-for-granted middle-class norm” that is “settled firmly in a meritocratic ethos” and obscures both the privilege of the middle-class students as well as of those from working-class backgrounds who hope to gain privilege by claiming a middle-class identity (Freie, 2014, p. 136). By asserting oneself as middle-class, a person is taking part of the “phenomenon [of] ‘pushing class aside’” (Seider, 2008, p. 46). This refusal to identify with a lower class is a

result of the power structures in place that value some classes over others and give power to those that fit in with the rhetoric surrounding the idea of a meritocracy.

The Elite's Identity

Following from the idea that identity is context dependent comes a breadth of research on the way that identity development changes depending on the context of an adolescent's setting and peer group. For a long time, research on social class focused on the impacts of lower-class identities. However, there is a shift occurring now toward examining those with privileged identities who benefit from the current working systems. Privilege looks different depending on the identity, but can be defined "as 'systematically conferred advantages individuals enjoy by virtue of their membership in dominant groups with access to resources and institutional power that are beyond the common advantages of marginalised citizens'" (Pease, 2010, p. 8). Usually privilege, despite common beliefs about being related to earned advantages, is given to someone because of their background and the social categories with which they are associated (Howard, 2008). The privileges granted to those in positions of power often help them maintain their power over those with fewer structural advantages, and usually go unacknowledged by those who benefit from them (Howard, 2008; Pease, 2010).

Like the ways in which social class can become a part of who someone is and how they identify themselves, privilege can become embodied (Howard, Polimeno, & Wheeler, 2014). Howard and colleagues (2014) examine ways in which privilege can be viewed as identity in elite educational contexts. For students at elite institutions, privilege can become "a lens through which individuals with advantages understand themselves, others, and the world around them. Their values, perspectives, assumptions, and actions are

shaped, created, re-created, and maintained through this lens of privilege” (Howard, Polimeno, & Wheeler, 2014, p. 7). Even though privilege is often unrecognized by those who have it, it shapes the way that elites view the world, how they understand themselves, and how they understand those around them (Pease, 2010). Often, understanding privilege and the development of identities around issues of socioeconomic status are processes that happen subconsciously. Most people are unaware of their privilege and social class until they are forced to acknowledge them when those with different backgrounds enter their spaces.

Some of this stems from the fact that we believe the current social order is natural and inevitable. The common “social divisions between the privileged and the oppressed are further reproduced through what is constituted as natural” (Pease, 2010, p. 14). The belief that the current inequalities around social class are due to natural circumstances results in many people accepting the realities of inequality as unavoidable fact (Pease, 2010). Because we do not question the status quo, it goes unchecked and privilege remains ignored. This is especially true in elite contexts where the dominant groups in society make up the majority of students. This allows the minority experience of those from lower income backgrounds to be disregarded. Instead of acknowledging the social construction of identity categories like class, gender, and race, many people believe that these categories are inherent to humankind and reflect biological differences between people (Pease, 2010).

As one of many societal institutions, schools play an important role in shaping communities, families, and students. In addition to their formal role of providing academic knowledge to their pupils, schools shape the identities of their students through both explicit and implicit lessons. Students’ “identities develop within social and cultural groups

and out of the socially and culturally marked differences and commonalities that permeate interactions within and between groups” (Howard, Polimeno, & Wheeler, 2014, p. 8). The people that surround someone on a day-to-day basis are those who will most shape their understandings of themselves and how they fit into the world around them. Adolescents perform their identities by “drawing on resources available within particular social-cultural-historical contexts” and their identities are shaped “relationally between the personal and the social” (Maxwell & Aggleton, 2013, p. 4). As teachers and peers teach individuals the rules about society and themselves, they are socializing students. This socialization is oftentimes done purposely and intentionally, especially at elite institutions.

At institutions with exclusive histories, “enormous effort goes into the process of socialization of the students” (Maxwell & Maxwell, 1995, p. 312). These elite schools create school cultures that build collective identities of eliteness that are specific to their school and its history. For students who attend exclusive schools, their private schools become the location and the mechanism for their elite identity formation and reproduction of elite values (Ayling, 2015). Along with an elite identity, these schools serve to cultivate “privilege within the social enclosure” of their walls (Kenway & Koh, 2014, p. 3). These elite institutions not only teach the rich how to act rich and stay rich, but also serve to teach the upwardly mobile how to enter into elite circles (Ayling, 2015). Because these types of schools have the power to “imbibe and accustom their children to the appropriate dispositions, attributes and lifestyle” of the elite, they are used as tools to maintain a certain elite culture (Ayling, 2015, p. 460).

Everything from testing to a school’s specific linguistic conventions allow elite schools to socialize their students and “maintain a system that inscribes students to various

social positions” (Howard, 2008, p. 18). In this way, schools serve to reproduce both the privilege and oppression that is found in society’s larger class systems. When schools reflect and recreate the existing social order, they are taking part in cultural reproduction, or the “manner in which the processes of cultural production give[s] new life to and reinforce[s] general ideological and social beliefs” (Maxwell & Maxwell, 1995, p. 311). Most elite institutions began at a time when education was limited to the wealthy and powerful. Today, there are still obvious links between certain economic and cultural backgrounds and educational opportunities that stem from a time when elites shaped education systems to benefit their children (Maxwell & Maxwell, 1995, p. 312). Though schools reproduce eliteness in explicit ways such as demanding high tuitions and favoring “legacy” students for enrollment, elite schools help their students form an elite identity in more implicit ways as well. To understand this, one must pay “close attention to the subtle ways through which elites reproduce and legitimate their social and economic positioning” (Ayling, 2015, p. 458). Some examples of this would be the way students walk through the halls, the verbiage they use, and how they dress (Ayling, 2015). In these ways, it is apparent that schools teach students lessons in and out of the classroom.

Though social class is often understood as referring to solely economic resources, social class is more than what we have; it is about who we are (Howard, 2008). This is especially apparent in elite schools where one’s measure of eliteness and privilege are not necessarily dictated solely by inheritance, but by the way one carries themselves. At elite schools, it is not enough to come from a wealthy home. In addition to having money and the opportunities that stems from such wealth, students “must also possess the ‘attributes of excellence,’ which are essentially distinguishable deportment, accent and lifestyle; all of

which are types of cultural and symbolic capitals in Bourdieu's frame" in order to be considered elites (Ayling, 2015, p. 456). Though economic capital and cultural capital are often linked, it is vital that elites display themselves in such a way to express their understanding of elite cultural norms in order for them to be labeled elite.

Part of being elite is gaining access to the group membership that elites value. In an effort to display one's eliteness, people often look, act, and behave in certain ways. These are sometimes referred to as attributes of excellence, and "usually include aristocratic aesthetics, which are manifested in comportment of dress, walking and speaking" (Ayling, 2015, p. 457). Appearing elite is necessary for being recognized as elite both by other elites and by those in the out-group. One's membership in an elite group, especially in an elite context such as a private school, is "dependent on, and regulated by, the acquisition of authentic taste and distinguishable deportment and dispositions" (Ayling, 2015, p. 457). Though being elite looks different in different contexts depending on the culture, a place's history, and the people, it is requisite that people demonstrate the proper behaviors, choices, and knowledge of certain topics in order to be accepted in elite status-groups. Elite schools not only perpetuate these elite stereotypes and aid in reproducing elite norms, but also are responsible for producing distinction, or the social force that separates the elite from the non-elite (Ayling, 2015). Those in dominant social groups determine the rules and norms surrounding elite taste, and are therefore able to exclude those that are unable to follow their aesthetic restrictions.

Group memberships are so important in elite schools because they are one of the ways in which privilege works and in which it is reproduced. Through group memberships, behaviors, and aesthetic appearances, privilege is able to "re-create itself, thereby

perpetuating structures, systems, and practices that create and maintain inequalities” (Howard, Polimeno, & Wheeler, 2014, p. 6). There are two types of privilege: unearned entitlements and conferred dominance (McIntosh, 1988). Unearned entitlements are the rights that are assumed to be accessible to and deserved by all people, like the right to safety and respect. When only certain groups of people receive these rights, they often have privileged identities. These “unearned advantages give members of dominant groups a competitive edge that they are reluctant to acknowledge or give up” (Howard, 2008, p. 22).

Because privilege is often invisible and ignored, especially by those who benefit from it, it is not always obvious when privilege is responsible for a person’s success or failure. On the other hand, conferred dominance occurs when there is an imbalance of power between groups (Howard, Polimeno, & Wheeler, 2014, p. 6). Conferred dominance is not always about the available opportunities or tangible privileges given to one group and not another, but is about the feeling of superiority that those with privilege that is systematically conferred by society have over other groups (Pease, 2010). Conferred privilege is often “entrenched in cultural assumptions that establish patterns of control and maintain hierarchies in our society” (Howard, 2008, p. 22). In this way, those with privilege are able to stay in control and remain the authors of social norms. By reproducing the economic and cultural hierarchies of a broader society, elite schools serve the interests of those in power and tend to mirror the class divisions present in a given context (Howard, 2008).

Narrative Findings

In the following sections, I explore three overarching themes that are connected to the students' identity development around issues of class and privilege. These themes are used to label the feelings and criticisms that my research subjects brought up when they talked about their time at Croft. By telling the stories of my seven participants, I paint the picture of a school that is isolated because of the students' socioeconomic similarities, valued as part of an honored family tradition, and is part of a larger problem when it comes to Chile's notorious income inequality. Croft School works purposefully to educate their students about their position in society and the privilege that it is to attend the School, but because of the homogeneous community and the surface level community service that the School encourages, students at Croft are unable to develop a critical consciousness around their own social class. The following sections explore the exclusivity of the community, the ways in which students step outside of that exclusive community, and how they understand those experiences.

Closed Communities

Homogeneity of the Croft Student Body. Because the Croft School does not accept students who cannot pay the full tuition, only those from the Chilean upper class are able to enroll. This has many different impacts on the way that the school functions and the environment that its students experience each school day. All of the students interviewed for this project were aware that their campus was made up of very similar people when it came to socioeconomic status. Micaela, a seventeen-year-old who hopes to study sociology at university, remarked, "there's not much diversity in any aspect." Kostas, a sophomore and avid soccer fan, explained that "all the people at Croft are from the same social group."

Despite the presence of students from other countries, the culture of the student body is largely shaped by the majority of students that live within the city limits of Santiago. On top of this, most of them live in the same few barrios, or neighborhoods, where the wealthy tend to own homes on the outskirts of the city. This means that even when they are off campus and commuting back and forth to school, most of them are in the same physical space and are not forced to interact with people who are unlike them.

When asked about interacting with people from different backgrounds and social classes, students explained that they had very few opportunities or exposures to people from lower classes. Micaela explained after a long pause, “I mean, it’s sad, but I don’t get to be with people of other social classes, like I’d say the, the most close person that I have is my nanny.” Micaela went on to explain, “I mean I don’t really have much contact with other social classes in general. Like it would be a very little percentage of time that I spend with people of different cultures and other social classes.” Apart from their experiences in different communities for community service volunteering, “there are not many” opportunities to learn about different groups of people.

Magdalena’s frequent travelling for swimming competitions in other countries exposed her to some semblance of difference, but she did not connect this exposure or learning to the Croft or its programming and labelled the exposure as “not profound.” She said, “I learned about other realities and that not everything is like you are told.” Her time abroad for tournaments worked to partially break down some of the stereotypes she previously held. For example, she shared that before her experiences in other countries, she held “this image... that Peruvians were like really intense, and that’s not true.”

However, she was still adamant that this was one of very few opportunities to learn about

people different from herself and her classmates who she has shared a community with since age four. Each student talked about the fact that their peers, teachers, and administrators, for the most part, all came from comparable social class backgrounds to their own. Most of them believed that this limited their frames of reference and kept them from learning about other people and ways of life.

An Elite Image and Culture. Both staff and students are aware of the fact that they are in a community made up exclusively of Chile's elite. Though they discuss this in different terms, all members of the community who were interviewed spoke about Croft's image as being one of prestige. Angelo, a teacher native to Santiago but fairly new to Croft, is reminded frequently that he is "teaching the top 5% of the elite here in Chile." He explained to us that "most of these kids, if not all of them, are part of the elite of this country." Micaela supported this claim by identifying her family's social class background as being "like within the one percent of the of the richest families in Chile." Though she stipulated that she was not part of the most elite group in Santiago, she recognized that she still had enormous privilege that was unfamiliar to most of the country.

The physical grounds that make up Croft's campus embody elite characteristics that help maintain the elite identity of its students. When approaching the school, you immediately notice the clear demarcation of the school grounds. There are tall, wide pillars that mark the entrance and exit for those driving in and out of the school. The school's name is engraved in stone, and behind the gates that automatically open is the security guard's office. Once you state your purpose for visiting the school, you can see twin flags, one British and one Chilean. They were erected on either side of a stone block that memorializes the school's British founder. This nod to Croft's British heritage serves as an

immediate reminder upon entering the campus that this school has elite connections that date far back, to the time of its founding in 1928.

Bianca, a member of the Communications staff and a former Croft student, described the school's students as "a bit snobberish at first cause they love the school very much so they just think they are the best, the best of the best." When asked about how Croft is viewed by those that are not connected to the school, she explained that it was necessary to differentiate between the way that other elites viewed the school and the way that those who are from lower income brackets think of Croft. She said, "the people with the higher income see us as a great school, a great everything. But people in the less usually see us as a school of rich people with rich kids, so we have a lot of hate." While she recognized that they could "get a bit arrogant sometimes... when they go outside and socialize with people and everything," she was also defensive of the school's image.

Students also believed that some of their peers come off as arrogant. Citing instances of school vandalism, Micaela described her peers as being entitled. She remembered students recently "not caring or not thinking like who would that affect" when they did things like "break the recycling paper boxes" or throw wet paper towels onto the ceilings. Alejandro believes his fellow classmates are "really individualistic. Like they don't care about society, they just want to be successful." Magdalena echoed some of this sentiment when she explained the way that some students act about their academics. She said, "they just don't care to learn. They are just there watching and playing and whatever. They don't care because their parents have money... They come to school to do stupid things. They don't care about their future. I see a lot of these people doing nothing." Though Croft is a relatively small school made up of mostly students that have attended for their

entire academic lives, some students feel a disconnection among their peers and suspect that the lack of a community feel stems from an individualistic culture that is promoted by an emphasis on sports and competition.

(In)tolerance and Conformity. Stemming from the sense of competition that extends into social and academic spheres from the rugby fields is the lack of tolerance for those who do not fit into the normative mold of its students. Many students found that the values that make up the school's pillars, despite being spoken about frequently and in administrative, academic, and athletic settings, are not fully demonstrated or embodied by students. A recent Croft alum, Cristobal, remarked, "they talk about being tolerant, but everyone is, like, really closed and in a bubble. They don't accept people being different, so it's hard to be different in that environment." This notion of only being accepted or embraced by the Croft community if you fit into a certain set of norms and characteristics was common in all interviews conducted.

When talking about values she shares with the school, Magdalena explained that the teachers expect students to look similar. Boys are supposed to have the same haircut, something that Kostas seconded with a story of being scolded for his long hair. Magdalena said that she felt like "you have to be perfect" in order to be accepted. Likewise, Cristobal summed up his feelings about Croft's student culture in relation to the school's pillars:

I would say that the Croft Spirit sounds good, but they don't really apply it fully.

They talk a lot about being tolerant and the pillars of social service and being respectful and everything, but I would say it is still a school where it's like really competitive and people are not really tolerant, and it's like academically great, but I would say, socially, it's not like a good environment.

This idea that the school's pillars are not fully embraced even by the school itself is one that was brought up time and time again by different students, as was the importance of conformity in order to be accepted in school.

Though the problem of homophobia exists far past the gates of Croft's campus, students demonstrating homophobia seemed to be one of the most memorable examples of students at Croft being intolerant towards their peers. When asked about an experience that made him look down on a person, Kostas answered, "there's a kid in my school that's like homophobic. You like, I don't really understand. It disappoints me." In the same vein, Cristobal and Fran both recalled their mutual friend, who is now out as gay in university, struggling during his time at Croft. In an effort to conform and become accepted, their friend "always tried to replicate what other boys did. He didn't want to get out, like of the standards." In spite of the Croft's vocalization of the value of tolerance, there is clearly an unspoken rule of conformity that the students are aware of and are scared of breaking for fear of social punishment or ostracization. When I asked Cristobal and Fran to clarify their categorization of their experiences, I said, "it seems like you're not talking about outright bullying, but more that the spirit of the school is not welcoming to people who do not fit the mold." Cristobal responded that that was "the best definition I've heard." This underlying presence of strict norms and rules determines who can fully immerse themselves in the Croft community and who is excluded from it.

Similarly, there is a common understanding that the school expects its students to think in similar ways as its administrators and teachers. Students say they get this impression from the way that certain students who tend to be agreeable and toe the line of the school are treated. When it comes to issuing school awards or selecting prefects, Kostas

felt that there was “a lot of pressure to have the same ideological line as the school.” He explained that the annual prizes are not attainable for those like him who “don’t think the same as the school.” Even though he has good marks and “deserves it,” Kostas would not be selected for leadership prizes or other formal ways that the school honors different students because he tends to be vocal in his disagreement with the way that his teachers think. He went on to say, “if you think differently, it’s not well seen.” Alejandro echoed Kostas’s claims that going against the faculty would end with consequences. He shared many anecdotes about his experiences being publicly punished for his behavior in class. He said, “They just punish you in front of the class so they know they got you punished. It’s more to show power... they want the whole class to know that if they do something similar they will get punished.” Alejandro said that he was willing to defend his views when they differed from others, but that at Croft, “normally if you defend your own views, you get punished.” This notion of conformity proliferated by the school through formal events like award presentations seems to be reproduced by peers as well. Magdalena described the pattern that there is usually one student in each grade who is “completely lonely.” When asked how Croft students treat their peers who feel isolated, Magdalena said “they don’t even look at her or him.” This policing done by both those hired by the school and those attending helps perpetuate the “Croft Spirit” and creates a mold that students are expected to aspire to.

The Croft “Bubble.” One way that students and staff both describe the homogeneity of the Croft community is by talking about the feeling that they exist in a bubble created and maintained by the school and its members. Cristobal remembered that, despite his friend group frequently exiting the bubble, “most of my classmates were not really

interested in realizing in what environment we live... They related themselves with people inside this bubble, and they didn't even do the effort to get to know other people or other realities." According to Cristobal, because it is easier to achieve and succeed if you stay engaged in the community and manage to be noticed and accepted by those alumni with power in the city, many people choose to stay in this bubble and "try to avoid going into the real world." Magdalena described the community as "kind of a bubble that they don't want us to get out of." She explained that the feeling of being in a bubble could be demonstrated in the sentiment that "everything is the Croft and the Croft and the Croft" when you are talking to another member of the community. Even though the bubble is something that is freely and openly spoken about at the Croft, it is common to stay in the closed community of the school and "try not to see the reality" outside of Croft's gated campus.

When asked about the school's role in encouraging a broadening of awareness of cultural differences, Alejandro said that Croft "did the opposite." Instead of promoting opportunities to open their eyes to the diversity of experiences in Santiago, Croft School constructs a community based on exclusivity that teaches students that it is easier not to leave their comfort zone. Micaela felt very similarly and answered the same question by saying:

It sounds very bad but I would say that it does totally the opposite. Cause it's like a very bubble. Like it's a bubble. A social bubble. So I seriously think it has made it worse. Like people are more classist. By being in that circle, surrounded by people that are the same social status are you are, I don't think it contributes at all, it even makes the opposite. It makes you feel more like you're in a bubble.

Students who are involved in different spheres of campus still feel the similar effects of this bubble. Though students could argue over the idea that it is an active choice to stay in the bubble or not, its existence impacts even those who fight against its barriers and explore the world outside of it. In lieu of Croft cultivating a community where it is normal, necessary, and valued to be open-minded and explore unfamiliar territories, it made the feeling of disconnectedness to the outside world worse for many students.

Popping the Bubble. As previously discussed, the lack of opportunities to interact with people from different socioeconomic backgrounds or cultural experiences leads a lot of Croft students to remain ignorant of realities past the communities they are exposed to on a daily basis. However, a few students had encounters with people or situations that opened their eyes to life outside the bubble. For some, this influence to expand their understanding of the world came from their parents; for others it was their time studying abroad with an exchange program through Croft.

For Cristobal, it was a mixture of different factors. He and his friends “always felt like Croft didn’t represent us fully, so we always tried to look and get to know different neighborhoods, different people” in an effort to find other types of communities that shared their beliefs. Because they did not fully buy in or necessarily fit in to Croft’s community, Cristobal and his friends chose to expand their bubble out. This, partnered with his parents’ constant dialogue about the negative aspects of the Croft community and the inequities present in Santiago and his trip abroad, helped Cristobal form a critical consciousness around the spaces he occupied. Cristobal went to Westminster for a month, part of a program that Croft organizes with schools in a few different countries. When asked about his time in England, he said that it helped him realize that “at Croft, we are,

like, all the same... We all come from the same social and economic background.” The opportunity to take classes and spend time getting to know people from different countries, language backgrounds, and home lives “opened my sense of what the world is really like.” Cristobal attributed his interest in and understanding of others to his parents, not Croft or its teachers. Cristobal’s family taught him more about “lessons to accept diverse and different people” than he learned in school.

Micaela also believed that her family shaped her beliefs about difference and the world around her. She cited her mother’s compassion as one of the biggest reasons for her heightened awareness of the inequities surrounding her at Croft and in Santiago. She felt like her family, and by extension she, was not classist. When Micaela searched for an example to demonstrate this, she explained, “They just treat people according to what their personality is like no matter what their social class they belong to. So for example, last Sunday we went to my nana’s house, like our domestic employer.” Though it is not normative in Chile to socialize in this way with those paid to clean, it is worth noting that this is the type of example that came to mind when she tried to explain her parents’ consideration and acceptance. In addition, Micaela explained that she was shaped by her mother’s relationship with her secretary. Despite being from different social classes, they were very close and her mother frequently did things like help pay for surgeries or her psychiatrist visits. She recognized that “it sounds so awful to say this but [my mom] treats people of other social classes equal, and not all people do that, so like, I don’t know, she just has taught me with her example I guess.” With the encouragement of her mother and her boyfriend, Cristobal, she decided to go on an exchange program as well. She spent a month at a private boarding school in the suburbs of Boston instead of Westminster, but was

similarly exposed to people of “a diversity of cultures” to which she had not been previously exposed.

Bianca took part in an exchange trip during her time studying at Croft as well. She went to Tahiti and was likewise changed in terms of her understanding of herself and others by her experiences abroad. She explained that in addition to getting to know people she otherwise would never have interacted with, a big part of why the trip was so transformative was that it was the first time she was expected to be independent. She believes that many of the students at Croft come back from their exchange program having realized how their lives are shaped by the privilege to be with parents and housemates who “do everything for them.” After spending a while away from home, students realize “oh, wow I have to do things for myself.” In addition to just meeting new people and making friends, Bianca felt like this newfound (yet forced) independence usually helps students further expand their bubble and recognize their privilege.

Alejandro’s parents were the people to make him the most aware of his privileged position. He explained, they “have taught me about how much we have.” In addition to his parents, he started to realize and understanding more clearly the differences between people when he started using public transportation when he turned 13. Because the majority of people that rely on public transportation in Santiago are from working class backgrounds or at least income brackets much lower than those present at Croft, he “started to like realize and see the difference” when he started taking the bus. Alejandro’s immediate communities in his neighborhoods and his school did not provide this exposure.

Family Connection to Croft. It is very common at Croft for students to have siblings, parents, and other extended family members who are alumni of the school. All of the

students who we spoke to either had siblings who also attended Croft or parents who had gone when they were in school. Micaela's mother went to Croft and her younger sister is a current student; Alejandro's four brothers and four sisters all went to or are currently studying at Croft; Magdalena's two siblings are both at Croft; Kostas's older sister graduated from Croft this past year; Cristobal's younger brother is still at Croft and his uncle's experience at the school motivated Cristobal's parents to send them there. Cristobal explained this pattern by saying that Croft is "a very closed community, and it has a very important and relevant family tradition." On the weekends, it is common for parents who went to Croft to host barbeques on campus for their old friends who also have sent their children to the school. Events like these perpetuate the closed feeling of the community and allow them to "avoiding connecting with people outside this bubble" even after graduating, entering the workforce, and starting their own families.

Cristobal, in particular, noticed that this family connection changed his experience at Croft. He expressed that he did not "feel that connected to Croft because my parents did not study at Croft and probably because I'm also a critic towards the Croft education system." In order to be fully embraced by the community, you must buy into the community and also have a family history that is connected to Croft. Despite having an uncle who went there and sharing his experience with his younger brother, Cristobal had a hard time fully adjusting to the identity of Croft because his parents could not understand the culture in the same way as his peers' parents. His parents, and the parents of his closest friends, were "a bit different" and "more open-minded" than the parents who were alumni. Instead of trying to play rugby after a barbeque on the weekends, Cristobal's parents and his friends' parents "wanted their sons to look out into the world and know that Croft is not

everything they have. There's like more, it's not like the real reality." In this way, the family tradition aspect of the Croft community has the ability to include or exclude members from feeling fully welcomed or accepted.

Class Acts

Cultural Norms of Discussion. Many of the students who we spoke to shared similar experiences of discussing politics, social class, and social issues with their peers, family, and mentors in more casual ways than is normative in places like the United States. Instead of only discussing these problems when certain events occur or when a class is dedicated to the topic, all of the students talked about the commonality of having these conversations as part of their everyday lives since they were fairly young. When asked if social class was a topic of conversation with his parents, Kostas treated the question as if it had an obvious answer. He said, "yes, it's a privilege thing here in Chile, in big discussions in politics, the main discussion is equality, like from social classes because Chile is a very, it has a lot of inequality." In a follow-up question about how old he was when this started to be a topic of normal conversation, Kostas explained to his interviewer that he was very young when he started to understand issues of social class because it was brought up so frequently. He told her, "in Chile, it's a big topic. People talk the most about social class." This idea was echoed in many other interviews. Angelo discussed his students' awareness of issues of inequity and said that their level of awareness was largely shaped by the societal norms in Chile. He said, "I really feel like it's a cultural thing. I really feel like Chile is a really, very small place." Angelo ascribed this feeling of connectedness to others in Chile with the pattern of students seeming to be more aware of their privilege than some students at other similar institutions.

Micaela explained that she and her friends talk about politics as part of their everyday conversations. When asked about what her friends do when they hang out, Micaela said that they talk about politics and “controversial issues, especially. Like abortion and that stuff. That’s what our main conversations are about, like those types of controversial issues.” Alejandro had a similar answer, although slightly less emphasized. He said that he and his friends “talk about school, we talk about rugby, we talk about the gym. A lot about the gym actually. We also talk about politics and the news.” Even someone who thought of himself as relatively unengaged in social issues, mentioned politics as something normal to talk about with friends in informal and unprompted situations.

In Chile, the social class naming system comes up frequently in conversation. They use a seemingly complex system with a mix of numbers and letters. Magdalena explained it in one of her interviews after she used a term offhand. She said:

Here in Chile when we talk about social class it’s like A, the most rich, the more right, then B then C, then C1, then D E F. So ABC 1 are the people who go to like privileged schools and have the money to have education, health, and the basic things really, food. Then D like public school and public health. E is like the same but with worse houses. And F like very, very, very extremely poor. There is C1 and C2. C2 is to go to public schools and ABC 1 are A, B, and C1. And these are the three categories that assist to private schools and health, but C1 has less money, a lot less money than A for example. But they can still go to, have the privileges we have.

Magdalena tried to spell out the way that class backgrounds are differentiated based on income, education, career, neighborhood, and opportunities. The AB class is so small, about 2.5% of Santiago’s population, that they are often lumped in with the C1 class (Gonzalez,

2010). The ABC1, which includes all of the students at Croft, make up the top 10% of the wealthiest in the city. They have the most socially prestigious jobs, and often live in the same neighborhood. C2, as Magdalena described, is more middle class, and constitutes 20% of the city. Though most of these people received a college degree, they usually do not make enough money to send their children to private schools. Those who fit in the “D” class make very little money and live in neighborhoods that are closer to downtown Santiago. A lot of these people have seasonal jobs or hold otherwise temporary positions (Gonzalez, 2010). Magdalena pointed out two main characteristics of this group: public health care and public schools. Because Chile’s public health system is notoriously bad, it makes sense that this would stick out to Magdalena who has probably only seen the inside of Santiago’s private hospitals. Chileans who fall in the “E” class often rely on assistance from the government because it is hard for them to make the ends meet with their salaries. Though this system is complicated, it is frequently referred to by the elite, and assumed to be understood by everyone in the city.

Responsibility to Do Good. A few of the students who we spoke to were deeply impacted by their understanding of their own privileged positions and believed that they had to use their education, advantages, and opportunities to change the lives of those who had not been given the same things. When asked about if community service was important, Kostas responded, “yes, a lot, because if you have a high education, a higher education than the rest, it’s important that you, since you have a higher education, that you have responsibility to teach or to pass that education to others that don’t have it.” This conceptualization of community service as important because it is one’s *responsibility to*

give back is common among the elite and mirrors some of the language that Kostas would have heard in speeches at Croft about the importance of the Spirit of Service.

Micaela in particular had been influenced by her privileged life and experiences at Croft and believed that she has to use her education to do work for others. Micaela articulated her feelings of responsibility and interest in pursuing a career that would allow her to do social work:

I just feel like having the privilege to be in such a good school like in the academic sense... just like I feel responsible in a certain way like, I think you have to give back what you get in certain ways. Like if I got this education then what can I do with it? I just think that there's nothing more gratifying than making other peoples' lives better, like people who didn't have the same opportunities that I did. That's pretty much like, I don't know, a sense of responsibility.

Micaela felt like, because of the opportunities given to her through Croft, she owes it to her broader society to use her knowledge base and right some of the world's wrongs. Her desire to study sociology stemmed from her hopes to "make a new dent on society" and "make things better than they are now." Micaela has wanted to "do something good for society" since she was very young. Micaela explained that she knew she was "in a privileged position because my parents always made me notice that." This recollection of wanting to give to people because she knew she had things in excess seemed to prove to Micaela that she had been thinking about the things that advantage her from a young age.

Spirit of Service. Angelo describes the different community service programs that are designed for each grade level. He explained that community service begins in seventh grade when students go to a vulnerable school that Croft has economic ties to. In this first year,

seventh graders volunteer once a week in after school programs at the same school. They go in groups of six or seven students, and help with homework as well as play games and eat snacks. Seventh, eighth, and ninth graders all have mandatory fundraisers that are intended to “raise funds to contribute to the school and help build whatever needs fixing,” according to Angelo. The ninth graders work directly with the students at the school in the neighboring town in their after-school programs. Beginning in tenth grade, students are no longer required to do this service. Volunteering in the after-school program becomes an option, and the fundraisers are no longer mandatory. The tenth, eleventh, and twelfth graders are all “open to volunteer and go build houses in this vulnerable town on the outskirts of Santiago.” Angelo explained that it is a popular program, and a few of the students I spoke to had signed up before or had friends who did it regularly. These students give up their weekends and spend time doing manual labor in the scorching heat, which many teachers and administrators later label as noteworthy and surprising.

Though Croft promotes the Spirit of Service as one of their guiding principles, students report doing little critical thinking when it comes to community service. Because the community service opportunities at Croft are limited to fundraising, food drives after local earthquakes, infrequent tutoring, and building houses a few times a year, students are not forced to think critically about engagement with different communities or their role in service. Micaela summed it up when she said, “for being one of the pillars of Croft, social service, it’s really poor. It’s like really basic. Like you build houses three times a year and then, I mean, the last times I haven’t gone because it’s like, they don’t even need me.” Micaela was not the only one to identify Croft’s service programs as lacking. Cristobal agreed that, despite being a pillar of the school’s founding,

it's a not-modern way of conceiving social service. Our schools' youth like to help people by giving money, giving food, and giving things, not like really engaging with them and doing activities. I think that's like – although it's good and people appreciate it really much, it's not enough. I think we should be more involved in their lives, maybe tutor them in some classes or something. But, I think the connection is too superficial, maybe. It's not profound.

Cristobal expressed that, in his opinion, this way of doing community service is outdated and superficial; it is not enough without an aspect of critical engagement.

Micaela had a lot to share on the topic of service and thought for a long time about her answers to questions about Croft's spirit of service. Like Cristobal, she recognized that her exposure through experiences with community service had an unequal power dynamic because of how community service is constructed at Croft. She mentioned, "it's not in an equal to equal relationship. We always go and help them." She realized that this shaped her idea of these communities and told a specific narrative about their ability to help themselves or their lack of skills to teach her (or her peers).

Micaela thinks the school "doesn't incentive like tolerance or being with people of other social classes as an equal like friends." Instead, it focuses on the idea that Croft students are "there to only help." She thinks that Croft fails to move past a one-sided model of the rich giving to the poor. She explained that the school clearly wants students to "have compassion in a certain way, but not truly be... It's much more superficial... It's always like 'oh we're here to like help you' and they want you to understand them and all, but if you're friends with them or if you're similar to them, they won't like you." This line

between knowing that service is valued by the school and the expectation for service to be one directional is problematic for some. Micaela went on to say:

I mean I don't think it's bad to give. Like, of course sometimes I have a lot to give to them, but, I don't know, I imagine myself like maybe working at a school, and of course they give you back so I see more like being a team... But I want to know how the school can make a social service better. Like how to change the mentalities of the people.

Though she was more critical of the service programs at Croft than other students, she recognized that she is not perfect and that she does not do much more than is asked of her, just like her classmates who she criticized. She thinks that the service they do is “not too genuine of the students” because “there’s not that much interest in general. We just get comfort for what they give us, like we’re not looking for more situations” to participate in service. Students tend not to engage with service activities beyond those that the school requires of them. In addition to changing the way that these programs look, Micaela thinks the administration needs to “emphasize it more- on the actions itself and not only the fact that it’s a pillar of the school.”

Staff Views of the Spirit of Service. Teachers and administrators seemed to view the community service that students participate in as part of Croft’s expectations for students at each grade level as great work. They believe that the students who choose to volunteer when it is not required of them by the school are displaying selflessness. When talking about one of the programs that students participate in, Bianca said, “they go there every month or every two months, but they are always going, always going. And they do games with them, and they play, and they send gifts and everything.” The way that she discussed

this commitment made it seem like she, and the rest of the administration, thinks that this is a lot of community service. She was even more vocal about her thoughts on the students who choose to go four times a year to build houses on the weekends. When describing the program, she said, “it’s Saturday and Sunday. It’s both days. And they don’t receive anything, it’s not with a grade or anything. They just go because they want to, so it’s not an obligation.” She was impressed by the students’ involvement despite being given nothing for it. If this is the attitude that the administration has as a whole about service, it is no wonder that students like Micaela think there is room to expand the programs Croft offers and the expectations for students to volunteer.

Angelo felt similarly but seemed to view community service with a slightly more nuanced lens than Bianca. Perhaps this stemmed from Bianca’s experience as a Croft student or her position in Communications where she has to protect the image of the school, but Angelo repeatedly pointed out areas for growth in service opportunities. When asked about the students’ involvement with community service, Angelo said, “well, it’s a big thing. It’s a big thing for students to volunteer.” In the younger levels, students are not expected to leave the school to participate in community service because it is considered unsafe or inappropriate. Instead, they focus on fundraisers and other projects on campus.

Students in Upper Prep are expected to do fundraisers in addition to going to a “vulnerable school which Croft has been economically helping for some time now” to work as a tutor once a week. Angelo shared an experience from the past school year when a few students in ninth grade were “not really supportive of the fundraisers” because they were “fed up with them.” This led Angelo and some of his colleagues to feel like “these kids didn’t really empathize with the cause. They didn’t care. They went to work with these younger

kids at these vulnerable schools and they just went cause they had to- not that they wanted to.” This feeling that teachers had about students not fully understanding the purpose of service or empathizing with the people they were working with can also be seen in the “constant reminders by our bosses that we are teaching, we are really teaching the future, you know leaders of this country.” Because teachers are told time and time again that their students will eventually run the country and be powerful figures in the world, they feel a sense of responsibility to not only make them good students, but also good people.

Angelo shared another common experience for teachers at Croft. He explained that teachers feel the need to remind students of their privilege and opportunity to get them back on track in the classroom. Of the students, Angelo said:

They should feel fortunate and they should appreciate where they are. And you know the place where they go to school, that they’re fortunate and should really value it and make the best of it. It’s being constantly reminded to them... [teachers] tend to use that as a tool to get them back or get them to just pay attention.

Angelo attributes this tendency for teachers to point out students’ privilege to the fact that they come from the wealthiest families in Chile and to the pressure that stems from that to make sure the children recognize and appreciate the privileged place they are in. Especially when students act out or seem to take their position for granted, “you kind of feel like you have to remind them, you know, where they stand and that they should be aware of their position in this country.” However, this tactic sometimes backfires when it is overused or said in inappropriate ways. Angelo explained that some students get sick of hearing the same message about their privilege and stop listening to teachers who implore them to think about it. Other times, teachers have gone too far and made comments that were

slightly more questionable. For example, Angelo shared a story about a teacher telling one student “‘this is what happens when your nanny does your homework’ or ‘pick up after yourselves, your nanny is not going to pick up after you here.’” In this example, the teacher clearly perceived the student as entitled and perhaps unthoughtful. This encounter ended poorly for the teacher who was chastised by the administration after the parents complained, but goes to show the ways in which teachers internalize the feeling of responsibility to make sure Croft students understand their privileged circumstances.

Scripted Awareness

Croft attempts to supplement the common discourse in Chile around issues of privilege, social class, and income inequity with the help of its teachers and staff members. Angelo explained, “the school does its part by getting them involved, you know in society overall, just for them to know where they stand.” He believes that his students, for the most part, know their positionality and recognize their place in society. When asked about the students’ awareness, he said:

I’m pretty sure they’re aware. I mean they’re exposed to it. They’re exposed to it when they do social work... But again that’s only the kids that volunteer. I’d say maybe about 5%, a very low percentage of these kids, are not fully aware or, rather, they don’t want to be aware of their condition. But the majority, they know. They know what’s going on.

This idea that students at Croft are in tune with their privilege and power is echoed in many of the interviews. Bianca reiterated some of what Angelo shared and attributed this knowledge and self-understanding to the community service that Croft students partake in from a young age. She said:

Here usually all the students come from a very good background, a very high class.

Usually none of them has money problems, I mean their parents. So here they teach them that that is not the reality, that we are the 2% of the Chilean people... Through volunteer work, and I think that is very important. Like I think they know that they are very, very lucky to be here.

Because the administration and faculty at Croft know that they are teaching the elite of the elite in the country, they rely on their community service program and emphasize the spirit of service in the hopes that it will help demonstrate the students' privileged position.

Students at Croft depict themselves as self-aware, but because most of this comes from community service programs that are seemingly superficial at Croft, their awareness is oftentimes surface level. For example, when asked about when she realized her own social class, Magdalena replied, "I was eleven, maybe? Ten. I knew it because I searched how much my school was monthly, and I was like, 'oh my God this is not cheap.' And then I suddenly realized, I have a house, I have food every day. I have like literally everything, so yes. I'm so lucky." Though her recognition of her own luck and ability to depend on things like food and shelter without worry are signs of her awareness of her position in society, the examples she gives to show this awareness lack a depth of further thought to her privilege. She went on to say, "I knew there were poor people like when I walked through the streets in the center of Santiago. And, I mean, I wasn't blind and I didn't know like... I knew I had a much better life than many people." However, she tried to explain her family's social class background not only in terms of her access to resources, but also in terms of Chile's category system for socioeconomic status. She said, "ABC1 are the people who go to like privileged schools and have the money to have education, health, and the basic things,

really, food.... And I think I am, well I am ABC1.” Her self-correction at the end of the last statement is a sign that she had difficulty acknowledging this. This displays her knowledge of her position, but also the fact that it is unusual, and therefore uncomfortable, to so openly discuss your own wealth status, despite Chile’s cultural norm of talking about political and social issues with others in casual conversation.

Micaela is one of the students who paints herself as the most aware of her privilege and as someone who intends to dedicate her life, at least in part, to making the world a more equitable place. One small example would be her answer to a question about if she had ever had a job. Her reply was, “no, I was lucky.” She demonstrated her awareness that this is a privilege and something that allowed her to focus on other things, like her school work or her social life. When talking about her social class, she said “I’ve become aware of my privilege, it’s like there always.” Micaela’s reported feeling of awareness can be seen in the way that she talks about community service as well as her future careers. She knows that she is not only from the upper class, but also that this has advantaged her in ways that are unfair.

When asked about if she had felt advantaged by her socioeconomic background, Micaela responded:

Yeah. Umm, it sounds very bad, but it’s true. That I have many contacts because of my school and probably because of the people I know and the university I go to, so I have the power to make a change. So yeah if you have the resources, the people, the money, it’s easier. Unfortunately. I mean fortunately, but unfortunately. Yeah, it’s like a power thing. But you can use your power for good.

This answer demonstrates the fact that Micaela views herself as self-aware and someone who cares deeply about social injustice, but also shows some of her naiveté. Despite her interest in and passion for making change, Micaela revealed some of her inherent assumptions and biases about groups of people who she has only interacted with through service opportunities. When she was talking about the people she worked with as a volunteer tutor, she described the students at the “vulnerable” school as not caring “that much about school” and having “families usually with drug issues and that kind of stuff.” She described her time tutoring as “a very like good experience for noticing how privileged I am,” but failed to recognize the stereotypes she has internalized.

Cristobal is another student who seems to be thoughtful about his position in the elite and recognizes the perks that he and his peers experience on a day-to-day basis. He was ready to talk about inequity in Chile in general terms, and was sure during interviews to make sure that I knew about some of Chile’s societal problems. For example, he said about class, “Chile is really discriminatory in that sense. It’s tremendously unequal, so, like, high and low classes are really different in terms of social backgrounds, and, especially, economically.” This knowledge seems to have come from many different sources in Cristobal’s life. He cites his parents as being a large influence in terms of his understanding of inequity, but also recognizes Croft’s part in his education about others through the exchange program and some of the community service programs offered.

Now that he is studying at university, he is more aware of the fact that “we’re tremendously privileged to the things we have, and, well, I realize, too, that there’s a feeling of anger from people that have fewer resources towards people of higher economic classes.” This awareness of the dynamic of Santiago’s social climate and newfound

realization about the anger that the lower classes have towards the upper classes show that Cristobal is still growing in terms of his self-awareness regarding privilege. As his identity around his own social class background is changing through his exposure and encounters with different people, he seems to be realizing more and more that the resources given to him not only help him succeed in society, but also perpetuate the inequality that he sees around him. On this topic, he said:

The cultural background and our values and the things that our family teach us are tremendously important for our development during our high school and university years. Again, I think we have a really big advantage in terms of, like, cultural resources, somehow. That helps us a lot with really everything in life, and I think that's what really produces this great inequality in Chile. Probably, the cultural background that we have, and that's obviously money and social background.

When asked about the ways in which he and his peers had been disadvantaged, if at all, by their social class background, Cristobal pointed to the feeling of having a misconception "of the value of things. We are used to being able to easily access most things." Cristobal recognizes that because he and his peers are used to things being easy and being given opportunities to thrive, they often are unable to relate to others or be fully independent.

Discussion

When forming an identity or exploring an identity category, much of what someone believes is available to them is dependent on the people who they engage with because people rely on their observations to create a list of possible identities (Aries & Seider, 2007). This means that students have very few identities to pick from at Croft, especially if they have attended since toddlerhood. Because Croft students come from such similar social class backgrounds, their world views are not always challenged. For Crofties who surround themselves in and out of school by people who are very similar to them in terms of their socioeconomic background, family values, and nationality, the presence of encounters with class differences is very rare.

From the stories I gathered from participants, the most notable encounters happened outside of school and their neighborhoods. These encounters took place when students took the subway, decided to go on an exchange program, began participating in community service, or when a family visited their maid's house. As Bilsker and Marcia (1991) have explained, encounters are more likely to occur in environments that include people who come from different places, beliefs, and home lives. Because Croft is homogeneous on almost all accounts including things like religion and family structure, it is easy for students to remain foreclosed around their social class identity (Tatum, 1997). Without a push from an outside source that views the world differently than those they usually converse with, it is unusual that a student would be motivated to think critically about something that is difficult to grapple with. This homogeneity of their school and neighborhood communities adds to the feeling that eliteness is normative and that other social classes do not exist (Thomas & Azmitia, 2014).

Like at many other elite private schools around the world, a large number of students have been in elite schools throughout their education. Most students begin in Pre-Kinder or Kinder, and stay until they graduate from the Senior School. Croft does not allow new admits after seventh grade unless families pay a fee to save a place for their child each year. This means that students at Croft have not changed educational contexts except the transition from one section of the campus to the next. Unless students participate in exchange programs in Senior School, most of them have never experienced another academic setting where they would be able to engage with different people who would prompt them to think in new ways. Frable (1997) explains that social class identities most frequently become salient for children and adolescents when they move from one social space to another. Because changes in social spaces often results in a change in the background of one's peers, the expectations of teachers and other adults, or new social and academic rules to accommodate, individuals are forced to think about things they may have previously ignored. Without this push, it would be hard for students to observe difference or learn about the realities of other peoples' experiences (Tatum, 1997).

Maxwell and Aggleton (2013) emphasize the role that peers play in shaping someone's understanding of themselves. Students at Croft tend to stay at the school for their entire lives and spend the majority of their time with their fellow Crofties and others who live in their wealthy neighborhoods. Social class identities are performed differently depending on the "social-cultural-historical context," which means that students at Croft learn from each other and their surroundings in order to tweak their own performance of privilege and class (Maxwell & Aggleton, 2013, p. 4). Students learn to use the same terminology when they talk about their marks, their PSU preparation, and their future

university choices. Because so many people are the same, or at least appear to be, this could result in a reproduction of the same few identity expressions.

Though I interviewed students in the Senior School, many of them attended Croft from the time they were toddlers. That means that most of the students developed their theories of mind while at Croft, learning to think about what motivates their own behaviors as well as developing an understanding that others have different perspectives from their own. As children become adolescents, they begin to gain cognitive skills that allow them to self-reflect in deeper ways and to think more critically. With these new abilities, they are able to think more seriously about themselves, their feelings, and their roles when they engage in new activities or encounter people who are different than their usual peers. This means that traveling on exchange programs or with their families and their engagement in community service programs should spur exploration of students' class identities if they were interested enough in learning or growing in that way. However, there is little real exploration promoted at Croft. Though teachers and administrators remind students of their privileged class positions, they rarely encourage students themselves to think critically about where they fit in or how they feel about their class identities. Students at Croft do not have the opportunity to participate in "active questioning and engagement in choosing among meaningful alternatives" because they do not see any alternatives when it comes to people with different social class identities (Flum, 1994, p. 435).

Like the rest of Chile's elite, Croft students rarely engage with the lower class of Santiago. This is due to several reasons, including the school's makeup and the city's segregation of neighborhoods. Many of the students at Croft avoid downtown Santiago because their families favor neighborhoods that are more upscale, and they have been

taught to avoid downtown for fear of the poor and the homeless. This caused a disconnection that seemed to make it hard at times for Croft students to readily recognize the experience of the less wealthy.

Inner conflicts mostly arise for students at Croft when they engaged in community service because it was one of the few situations, for most of them, where their contexts were different. Participating in community service and meeting people unlike themselves and their peers sometimes allowed them to notice how different they would behave in these spaces and therefore recognize something within themselves. Often, students at elite schools fail to grasp the ramifications of their own privilege and how it is connected to the oppression that is experienced by the people that they go to “help” in community service (Gaztambide-Fernández & Howard, 2013). Those who noted that they were uncomfortable or acted differently around the “vulnerable” populations they worked with may have felt a “discontinuity between the social performances” and thus begun to explore their identity in more meaningful ways than otherwise (McAdams & Zapata-Gietl, 2015, p. 84).

For Cristobal, experiences that changed his perceptions of social class and his own class identity led him to think more critically and frequently about class. After his time abroad and his exploration of downtown Santiago with his friends, Cristobal reported that he started to view the world differently. He became more critical of Croft, his peers, and the privileges he had without doing anything to earn them. He said that this newfound awareness led him to befriend different people, push out his community, and join different clubs when he got to university. Once he realized just how prevalent socioeconomic status was in his own life, he began to see the countless ways that class shaped the world around him and how it must have shaped the experience of others. In this way, Cristobal’s privilege

seemed to become a lens through which he examined his surroundings (Howard, Polimeno, & Wheeler, 2014).

Even the students who seem very aware of their positionality and privilege do not seem to view social class as central to their identity. Despite being cognizant of their privilege to differing degrees, students at Croft did not seem to believe that social class was integral to who they were or how they viewed themselves. This is probably because they are from the upper classes and receive benefits from their positionality as opposed to oppression or roadblocks. For example, Magdalena has had the chance to travel to compete in swimming competitions and does not remember a time when she was unable to participate in something because of monetary problems. Because of this lack of centrality, their awareness of their privilege and social class does little to impact the way that they live their daily lives (Thomas & Azmitia, 2014). The students at Croft seem aware of their positionality in that they recognize that they are in the upper most class and their lives are very different than those on the bottom of the income ladder, most of the students fail to engage critically with this awareness. They say that they talk about social class and the inequity issues in Chile with their parents and their peers, but these conversations seem to be surface level in that they do not think about the work that they themselves could do to change these societal issues. Except for a few, the students at Croft seem fine with staying foreclosed around their class identity, and thus do not see the world through the lens of their socioeconomic position (Stewart & Ostrove, 1993). This may stem from the fact that they are products of their parents' wealth and therefore may not think of class as a central aspect of who they are as individuals. Because the students (with the exception of Cristobal and Micaela to some extent) do not explore this identity by engaging with different people

or going to different parts of the city, they are able to remain sheltered to the harsher realities of their privilege while seeming to be socially aware.

As Howard (2008) describes, those who are in positions of social power rarely recognize the benefits that they receive from their class position. Especially as adolescents who are separated from their social class because it is more about their parents' success, background, or experience than their own work, it is easy to ignore one's privilege. At elite schools like Croft, privilege is often embodied by students and becomes the lens through which they see the world, understand others, and think of themselves (Howard, Polimeno, & Wheeler, 2014). Even for those who do not recognize their privilege or understand it on a deeper level, a lens of privilege shapes their identity and their experiences (Pease, 2010). At many elite schools, it is easy to remain unaware of the structural, systemic, and real ways that students feel privilege because there are few opportunities that force them to acknowledge their own realities (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2009). Because Croft does not provide financial aid and therefore does not have students from different demographics, it is rare for someone with very different beliefs on class issues to enter their space and force new conversations or realizations.

In terms of group membership when it comes to class identities, the students at Croft are used to being in the majority because of the social spaces they most frequently occupy. They are not routinely pushed to see the other, and are easily sheltered from the experiences of those who come from backgrounds different from their own. Because of this, their identity as the "elite of the elite" locates them within their broader social context without really pushing them to think about the ramifications or privileges that stem from this identity (Howard, 2008). This elite identity helps them feel comfortable with their

peers at school and does the work that identities can, in terms of supporting those who fit in. However, they rarely realize that this identity also isolates those who do not fit in or buy into the Croft spirit (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2009).

In elite contexts like Croft where the majority of students are representative of the dominant groups in society, students often fail to question the status quo or engage critically with one's own privilege even if they superficially recognize the ways in which they are lucky to attend such a prestigious school. Despite their teachers reminding them of the ways in which they should be grateful to attend Croft, students tend to discuss realities of inequality as unavoidable or unchangeable, and therefore accept things the way they are, which allows them to avoid thinking critically about their culpability in the system. In addition to these explicit reminders by teachers and administrators, there are many ways that Croft teaches students about their identities in implicit ways, or the school's hidden curriculum (Jachim, 1987). For example, the focus on sports, preparation for the PSU, and the emphasis on the school's pillars all shape the ways students view themselves, understand the expectations that society has for them, and teaches them how to act. Through things like community service, rugby games, barbeques held by alumni on campus over the weekend, prefect selection, and award ceremonies, Croft teaches students lessons about elite values, expectations, habits, and norms outside of the classroom by forming their habitus (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2009). Students leave Croft with tools to talk about and engage with the Chilean elite.

Class not only determines the opportunities and resources available to an individual, but also shapes individuals' attitudes, preferences, and habits (Stewart & Ostrove, 1993). For students at Croft, this is evident in the manner in which they speak, the

sports that they value, and the ways that they spend their time out of school. Students repeatedly spoke about the emphasis on certain sports, like rugby and field hockey, and ignored the rest that the school had to offer. They talked about the normative and abnormal ways that students could choose to socialize outside of school, and had clearly learned to value certain activities, like partying, over others, like being alone. Lessons for the elite at Croft also shape their understanding of acceptable futures and careers (Aries & Seider, 2007). Micaela in particular discussed her interest in sociology and how hard it had been to talk about this aspiration with teachers and peers because they looked down on the field. Many students reiterated this idea and explained that there were only five specific careers that were encouraged by Croft and the elite of Chile in general, much like the elite of America (Howard, Polimeno, & Wheeler, 2014).

Class also clearly shaped the students' understanding of what made a "good" university. They all shared the same information with me about hoping to go to Universidad de Chile or de Catolica. All of the participants were clear in their conviction that these were the best two universities, and expected to be able to attend because of their marks, their family legacies, and their attendance at Croft. This is a very clear example of the students' shared cultural capital that includes knowledge about what is valued by their fellow elites (Howard, Polimeno, & Wheeler, 2014). They have scripted ways of talking about their plans for the future that align with the values that they have learned to uphold as members of the elite. Their valuable cultural capital was also evident when it came to discussing the family tradition aspect of Croft. Having grandparents, parents, uncles, or siblings who have been through the institution gives students many privileges when they start attending Croft. It means that parents are prepared for the academic rigor,

understand what the school expects of parents in terms of charity donations and participation in school events, students know what different teachers expect of them at each grade level, and that these families know how to work the system better than those with no past connections to the school. By choosing to send children to Croft generation after generation, these Chileans are aiding in social class reproduction (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2009). Legacy students at Croft come from money clearly, but, more importantly, come from households that prepare them in many different ways for their time at the school. They are raised in households that prepare them to fit in easily with their peers at Croft. They tend to have an academic leg up because of things like their reading preparedness or the language used in the home (Bourdieu, 1986).

Aries & Seider (2007) point out that when identities are culturally relevant or used as the basis for systematic division, they are even more important because they have real-world consequences that extend past one individual's experience. For example, being a member of the upper class is not only a matter of one child's personal experience, but also has ramifications for the schools that the child is able to attend, the food that his parents are able to afford, and the career he will enter into after probably attending one of two universities in the city. For the student who is in Santiago's lower class and unable to go to Croft because of tuition, class dictates whether or not they can afford to go to a different, less expensive private school, if they have to have a job in addition to their time in school, and what type of home they live in.

Like many elite and traditional schools in the United States, the history of Croft as a British school for the elite sheds some light on the exclusive nature of the school today (Maxwell & Maxwell, 1995). Because there are still no scholarship programs or efforts to

extend their reach past the 5% of the city's wealthiest children, Croft still operates as a mechanism of social reproduction and exclusion. When teachers tell students that they should feel lucky, they are socializing their students and teaching them the rules of society. This is purposeful and intentional, and helps reproduce elite identities and norms. In this way, Croft becomes the site and mechanism for forming an elite identity and reproducing specific Chilean ideals, norms, and expectations (Ayling, 2015). In order to maintain a certain culture for Chilean elites, parents who attended Croft send their children there to reinforce what they are learning at home about the ways of the elite. This is another way in which social class and privilege are reproduced through the family tradition aspect of Croft (Freie, 2014). When looking at identity through Gaztambide-Fernández's identification theory, thinking more broadly about the context and power dynamics at play, it is easier to see the ways in which schools are institutions that allow for social and cultural reproduction (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2009).

Because the community service programs that are promoted by Croft do not encourage deep questioning or critical thought, students are raised with a surface level awareness of their privilege and identity as it pertains to social class. The school, its administration, and its teachers, seem to think that they are pushing their students to engage in these conversations because their pillars speak about tolerating others, being honest, and participating in service. However, students overwhelmingly reported that they felt these pillars did not actually represent what they were learning or how they felt at the school, but instead seemed to be about maintaining a certain image. The ways in which students are asked to engage with their privilege give them the scripted tools to talk about their "awareness," but do not teach them to consider ways in which they could expand their

worldviews, ask hard questions, or do meaningful work to change the current status quo. Though it is common at elite institutions for students to leave with a socially appropriate and specific way of talking about privilege so as to seem involved and cultured, it is not enough for students to know how to *seem* aware. If Croft wanted to be serious about maintaining their five pillars and promoting excellence, they would create a community service program that was infused in other aspects of curriculum and focused more on a mutual effort where Croft students and those they were volunteering with were learning together about ways to make productive and appropriate change.

Conclusion

Elite schools tend to aspire to lofty goals for their students. They set out not only to cultivate a student's academic mind, but also their curiosity, generosity, or kindness. Elite schools strive to teach lessons that are intended to make their students good human beings and productive, responsible adults after they graduate. However, just as frequently, they do things that contradict their attempts to develop good character. Because of this, they are rarely able to fulfill what they aim to do with each student. If schools like Croft are truly dedicated to the things they put on their websites and brochures, they must work to better align their practices with their noble goals.

Croft's five pillars are repeated across sections of their website, in different books on the school, and in many scripted and unscripted conversations between administrators or teachers and students. The pillars are: honesty, fair play, tolerance, spirit of service, and the notion of an all-rounder. All seven people from Croft shared similar sentiments about these five pillars and how they are valued and enacted in actuality versus in rhetoric. These five ideals are important both for building character and for creating a safe and respectful community. It would seem on the surface like Croft is doing great work to make sure that its students are honest, learn to compete in productive and respectful ways, learn to live with difference, dedicate themselves to the well-being of others, and to foster their learning and growth in areas outside of academics. If this were truly the case, there would be little to critique about the way that these messages impact students. However, these values are often not upheld in meaningful or critical ways in reality.

Students reported their peers stealing, destroying property, and cutting class, all markers of some level of dishonesty. Students on the whole agreed that the school

promoted a competitive environment that, at times, became toxic and spread across many aspects of their lives, from academics and sports to their friendships. Though there were no stories of cheating or breaking rules in games, this overwhelming sense of competition seems at odds with their promotion of fair play. Croft seemed to reject their own ideal of tolerance in many anecdotes that students shared with me. Students explained that, despite not having malicious cliques or friend groups, their peers were often exclusionary towards those who did not fit in. Cristobal, in particular, shared feelings of not fitting in to the Croft stereotype and his resulting isolation from certain social spaces. Many students also noted feeling a pervasive homophobia at the school that they had seen negatively impact a few students in their time at the school. This directly opposes the school's aim to teach students to allow for differences even if they do not agree with them. When it comes to the Spirit of Service, Croft puts this pillar above the rest by including it directly in the school's mission statement. Croft supposedly "prizes" service, and places community service "at the core of [their] educational project." In many ways, Croft succeeds in this goal. They require students to participate in various service opportunities and partner with a local town that has historically struggled to educate and serve its youth population. However, if you dig a little deeper, it is a murkier story. Service opportunities are limited and are structured in a dated fashion that posits Croft students as all-knowing and helpful, and those that they visit as below them. Finally, the school teaches its students to strive to be considered an all-rounder. This means that they hope their students are excellent not just in the classroom, but on the sports field, the theater, the art studio, and in their volunteering participation. This is one of the pillars that students seemed to think was promoted in reality in the same ways it is talked about in promotional materials or information for the greater public.

After immersing myself in the life of students and others at Croft, I use my critical examination of the inner workings of the school to outline suggestions for ways in which it could improve itself and follow through on some of its intentions. I delve deeper in critiques of the pillars of tolerance and the Spirit of Service, as well as ways to change the community's backgrounds and demographics. Instead of promoting tolerance, the school should be preaching acceptance by teaching its students to notice difference, confront the ways in which it may challenge their worldview, and then move on to accept that difference. This seemingly small change would create students who do not close themselves off to difference in the name of tolerance. Instead, a focus on acceptance would encourage Crofties to think critically about why difference makes them uncomfortable and how to move past that to a place of sympathy or understanding.

The Spirit of Service seems to need more extensive work before it can be upheld in the ways that the school seems to intend for it to come across right now. Community service programs, for example, should operate from a transformative model of community service (Mezirow, 2000). This model focuses on transforming students' identities and their understandings of the way that the world operates. Student volunteers are positioned to step outside of their privileged ways of knowing and doing in order to create and maintain productive relationships and connections with new people. Working from this framework would change the ways that students currently view service, and would help students develop a critical consciousness about service and their privilege. Oftentimes, students with enormous economic privilege, like those at Croft, are unaware of the ways in which their service involvement is more self-serving than beneficial for others (Gaztambide-Fernández & Howard, 2013). Privileged students often participate in community service in

order to paint themselves as thoughtful, giving, and selfless. Because the service programs at Croft focus on one-sided activities that frame Croftites as giving and those they are working with as taking, they are adding to the disparities between social classes that they are attempting to fight against.

Gaztambide-Fernández and Howard (2013) conducted research on elite schools that hold social justice at the forefront of their programming and examine the ways in which this can be problematic if done incorrectly. Using their work to analyze Croft's programs allowed me to see the ways in which Croft's service actually works to "place them in a positive light while serving to protect, rationalize, and legitimize their advantages," and, therefore, other's oppression (Gaztambide-Fernández & Howard, 2013, p. 2). Through community service programs, elite schools are able to create the appearance of a "morally responsible community" by reinforcing the widely-accepted notion that "with privilege goes responsibility" (Maxwell & Maxwell, 1995, p. 317). Participation in "giving back" can work to alleviate the anxiety caused by one's privilege. Volunteering can serve as an out for students who have learned about their own privilege without forcing them to think critically about the larger systems that create the inequalities. Howard and colleagues (2014) identify the ways in which students at elite institutions learn to frame their privilege in scripted ways that mirror the "party line" of the elite. When it comes to community service involvement, students tend to "follow a particular cultural script to *displace* (transferring connotations to others) and *rationalize* (defending a set of social relations) their own advantages" (Howard, Polimeno, & Wheeler, 2014, p. 180). Parents, teachers, and other role models teach the young generation of elites to talk about class inequalities and their own privilege in ways that make them seem self-aware, caring, and

generous. At the same time, they are teaching them to minimize the advantages that they have internalized and to rationalize the advantages that are more obvious or undeniable (Howard, Polimeno, & Wheeler, 2014). They do this by talking about their own hard work, their parents' luck, or the history of the country that has led to the majority of the contentious social issues in Chile. By rationalizing their privilege as natural or an unavoidable reality, elite students are further oppressing the populations that they are attempting to help when participating in community service that is framed in these problematic ways (Pease, 2010).

Ayling (2015) identifies many ways in which schools with exclusive histories and elite statuses like Croft's serve as both the location and the mechanism for a new generation of elites to create an elite identity and to reproduce the values that make them elite. Elite schools refine and develop students' sense and understanding of their own privilege within the walls of their exclusive communities (Kenway & Koh, 2014). In these spaces, students "actively construct and cultivate" their privilege and identities (Howard, Polimeno, & Wheeler, 2014). Because they are surrounded by others who share similar advantages and valuable cultural capital, the lens of privilege through which they examine the world often remains unchallenged by peers or adults. In order for Croft to truly do the work that they have set out to do in creating an honest, fair, tolerant, service oriented, and well-rounded community, Croft must change its student body. If administrators were serious about building an inclusive community of educated and caring students, they would use some of the money that is donated to the school to create scholarship funds for students who are currently excluded from the school by its price tag.

In his work looking at elite boarding schools, Gaztambide-Fernández (2009) notes that, despite growing diversity in these schools, they are still aiding in elite creation and maintenance. He goes on to say that, “although elite boarding schools may have changed, their fundamental role in the production of a privileged class has not” (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2009, p. 1115). Though extending Croft’s enrollment to students from lower-class backgrounds may turn them into a new generation of elites, the benefits of this type of education for students who would otherwise be barred from the rigorous curriculum could be life changing in Santiago where the public schools are notoriously lacking. Adding a sense of heterogeneity to the Croft community would allow for students to think more critically about their privilege (or lack thereof) and the societal problems they view as isolated to their textbooks and faraway newspaper stories. Croft claims to foster tolerance in its students, but when students all come from similar class backgrounds, there is little meaningful difference for students to possibly be tolerant of.

Without this demographic change, Croft’s lessons of the importance of caring for others will remain a band aid for the very real problems that exist just beyond their monumental gates. Croft must also address the contradictions between their language and their practices. In order to truly stand by their pillars, Croft must critically examine their practices in all aspects of the school’s organization, student body, and curriculum. They also have to put their money where their mouth is, and prove that they expect the same from themselves as they do from their students. Gaztambide-Fernández and Howard (2013) summarized some of their thoughts on elite schools and their social justice aims when they said:

Unless economically privileged individuals are willing to examine their sense of

entitlement and challenge their own privileged ways of knowing and doing, being in solidarity with less fortunate others will remain about improving themselves. At an institutional level, this means that schools... would have to put their very reputations—along with their economic privilege—on the line by becoming not just more diverse... but by shifting the very fabric of privilege that clothes their elite reproductions (p. 4).

In order for Croft to live up to its ideals, they must align their practices with their pillars. Croft has identified five values that, on the surface, seem to cover the important principles for creating students who are not only excellent in their academic lives, but who also think critically about the world around them, learn to compete in healthy ways, and enjoy their time in art studios or dance classes. However, Croft's teachings currently contradict their agreed upon values and allow their students to leave the campus with an underdeveloped awareness about the world that allows them to disengage from attempts to actually change the problems they have learned to see. In addition to changing its community's demographics, Croft must create a comprehensive community service program that fosters thoughtful and mutual relationships between students and the larger community and extends into Croft's classrooms as well as its hallways and social spaces.

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