OLD BOY NETWORKS

The Relationship between Elite Schooling, Social Capital, and Positions of Power in British Society

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Introduction

Scholars of social stratification have long suggested a relationship between elite schooling and obtaining high status positions in society. In Britain studies of elites have persistently cited an 'old boy's network' of social ties as a key mechanism for gaining employment in government and a number of key professions. However, documentary evidence of the existence of 'old boy's networks' or how they relate to the elite public schools to which they are associated is in extremely short supply. More broadly, there have only been limited attempts to bring together and critically analyse data regarding the link between private schooling and esteemed employment destinations. This chapter offers a quantitative and theoretical analysis of the relationship between private schooling (in its various forms) and positions of power in British society; and utilises new web based resources to provide evidence of the existence and structure of 'old boy's networks' in Britain. The chapter puts forward two primary arguments. Firstly, that there is sufficient existing data to identify a strong longitudinal correlation between private schooling and high status employment in Britain; and secondly, that 'old boy's networks' in Britain are structured in such way as to assist their members to attain employment in particular high status professions and areas of business.

Career Benefits of Private Schooling

Established empirical research regarding the link between private schooling and esteemed employment destinations has tended to focus on sampling the educational backgrounds of high status professionals. Boyd (1973) examined the educational backgrounds of senior figures in the civil service, embassies, the army, the air force, the navy, the judiciary, the Church of England, and clearing banks at four decadal stages in the period from 1939 to 1971. His findings clearly show, across all the aforementioned occupational areas, and at every stage sampled, that a consistent majority had attended elite 'public schools.'[i] Unfortunately, the contemporary strength of his findings are somewhat diminished by their age and the professions sampled. This said, the data can be reinforced by more recent investigations. For instance, the Sutton Trust's study (2007) of the 'Education backgrounds of 500 leading figures' in British society comes to very similar conclusions. It also utilises a largely different, and arguably more up-to-date, range of professions and employment destinations. That is, law, politics, medicine, journalism and business, comparing data mainly gathered in the mid to late 80's to records from 2007. In all cases, with the exception of politics, the study reveals that fifty percent and above of the sampled 'leading figures' were former 'independent school'[ii] (an interchangeable name for private school in Britain) pupils. That politics differs from other categories may be partly accounted for by the amount of public scrutiny the profession is subjected to, and the fact that

politicians are meant to be representing the views of the majority. It can also be noted that there are significant disparities between political parties with, for example, fifty four percent of Conservative MPs coming from private schools and only fifteen percent of Labour MPs (Sutton Trust, 2010).

The strength of the correlations made in both studies are not fully apparent until placed in the context of the proportion of school aged students who attended private schools for the periods examined, some five to seven percent (Walford, 1986; Sutton, 2007). In sum, there is a stark disproportionality here between the number of students educated in private schools in Britain and the share of top positions these students obtain. According to the Sutton Trust's (2007) study even those leading figures sampled that did not attend private schools generally came from 'selective' rather than 'normal' state schools. In the most extreme example, out of the hundred high court judges sampled in 2007; seventy percent hailed from private schools, thirty percent from state schools and, out of this thirty, only two percent came from 'normal' state comprehensives. What is perhaps even more striking, in terms of trends in social mobility and stratification, is that between the sampling carried out by the Sutton Trust in the mid to late 80's and the more recent examination in 2007, there has only been a marginal decline in representation of those from private schools. This amounted to fifty eight percent in the mid to late 80's, reducing to fifty three percent in 2007. Even this slight improvement in the progression of those stemming from state education is questionable as the business or 'CEO' category used may not be appropriate. Here, it should be recognised that there has been internationalisation of those at the top of UK companies (Held et al, 1999), and this is likely to partly account for the decline in those educated at British private schools. Removing this category results in only a 1.75 percent decline in the representation of those from private schools in the top professions and areas of business over the last twenty or so years.

One of the key methodological concerns with both the studies reviewed above is that they rely on relatively small, subjectively determined occupational groupings. With regard to the size of the samples it would have improved credibility if figures were, where possible, set against the total in any given occupation. For example, by performing a somewhat crude analysis using Government websites (Official UK Parliamentary Website; 2012, Official Judiciary Website, 2012) it is possible to calculate that the hundred high court judges cited for the Sutton Trust's study (2007) accounted for over half of the total high court judges in the country. In another such case, the hundred members of parliament sampled constitute fifteen percent of the total number in Britain. In this context the results from both samples are statistically significant. The Sutton Trust's study (2007) is also distinct in its methodology in that it focused only on the top representatives of each professional grouping. For instance, the hundred medics examined were selected from those serving 'on the Councils of the medical royal colleges or other national representative bodies' (Sutton Trust, 2007 p.3).

Problems regarding bias in occupational group selection can be mitigated by examining general economic and educational benefits of attending private schools. Here, Green, Machin, Murphy, and Zhu (2010) give a rare statistical insight into this phenomenon by utilising a range of extensive samples from the National Child Development Study (NCDS), the 1970 British Cohort Study (BCS70), and the British Household Panel Survey (BHPS) to arguably form a representative test group. The NCDS and BCS70 are used as the primary instruments to test the hypothesis that wages and educational attainment are increased by attending private schools. Green et al. (2010) employ two convenient variables; education, measured by degree acquisition of participants at the age of 23, and earnings, determined by participants 'hourly rate' at the age of 33. They then set these against whether participants were state or privately educated in order to make inferences. There are two central characteristics that make this research pioneering and creditable. Firstly, the research combines two extensive samples to arguably form a representative test group. For instance, the samples for both the NCDS and BCS70 each account for over four and a half thousand participants, with the two cohorts selected from different time periods. Secondly, the study attempts to control for a range of factors not engaged with in the previously mentioned studies, such as the child's cognitive ability before entering education and their family background. The general conclusion reached after incorporating all controls is that in both differentials, education and earnings, performance of privately educated individuals has 'risen significantly over time' in comparison to those who were state educated (Green et al., 2010 p.18). Despite this study's merits, its narrow focus on income does not engage directly with access to prestigious professions. It would have also been useful if it detailed how the controls used for parental social class were determined (as it does with cognitive ability[iii].

In respect to these shortcomings, it is important to recognise this is a discussion paper rather than a completed body of work.

One aspect which is inconsistent across all of the literature reviewed is the parameters used to define elite schools. For example; the Sutton Trust's study (2007) uses the term 'Independent Schools,' Boyd (1973) refers to 'Public Schools,' and Green et al. (2010) to 'Private Schools'. This is important as the name used can equate to a difference in the catchment of schools encompassed. For instance, the term 'Public Schools' generally refers to the most elite and distinguished private schools. This was once defined as any member of the Headmasters' Conference (HMC), however this is no longer such a useful measure as the HMC has expanded dramatically to take in a large number of new schools (Walford, 1991). 'Independent' or 'Private schools' on the other hand can relate to any school which is not run/funded by the State (Ball, 1997). None of the studies above adequately explain these differences or account for them with regard to data gathering and findings. Failure to distinguish top level schools from the rest of the independent or private sector is further problematised by the fact that many commentators (Bamford, 1967; Scott, 1982; Walford, 1984) attach unique advantageous qualities to these institutions. The foremost of these, known commonly as the 'Old Boy Network,' is a particular type of social capital, which relates closely to career progression (Scott, 1982; Green et al., 2010; Walford, 1986). Defining and understanding the 'Old Boy Network' in Britain is explored through the following theoretical analysis and the primary research presented in this chapter.

Theoretical Considerations and Limitations of Current Research

Ostensibly the studies above converge to identify a strong longitudinal correlation between private schooling (in its various forms) and positions of power. The possible problems with this correlation are not apparent until placed under a theoretical microscope. Here, Bourdieu (1986, p.48) and Lukes (2005, p.29), in particular, suggest that there are a number of elements that may have been 'disguised', or 'covert' in terms of their power, from earlier investigations; and that these should be disaggregated and considered. For example, application of Bourdieuian forms of capital suggest that children are receiving a transmission of 'cultural capital' (that is, crudely put, the advantage an individual gains, with regard to social progression, from personal dispositions, knowledge, objects and habits) long before entering the school system. A child born into upper-class family, for instance, almost immediately starts accruing characteristics such as a certain accent and vocabulary. These 'embodied' elements are also supplemented throughout the individual's life by what Bourdieu coins 'social capital' (Bourdieu 1986, pp. 47-50). Social capital differs from cultural capital in that it refers to the benefits a person obtains through the social networks they are part of, or can access. Here, it is important to engage with the distinctions that exist between Bourdieu and Putnam's concepts of social capital. While both are concerned with the existence of and operationalising of social networks, Bourdieu's orientation is towards critical examination of the mechanisms of social reproduction whereas Putnam (1995) sees social capital as a 'good' to be identified and then developed and enhanced through social programmes.

One key criticism of Bourdieu's (1986) focus on capital influences could be seen as the limited weight he attributes to the innate cognitive ability of the individual. Here, applying findings from Feinstein's (2006) study of 2,457 pre-school children is instructive. On one hand it calls into question the weight Bourdieu (1986) attaches to innate ability by demonstrating that children display substantial differences in cognitive ability even as early as twenty two months. On the other hand Feinstein's (2006) findings show that children displaying low level cognitive abilities from high socio-economic status families overtake children showing high cognitive abilities from low socio-economic status families as early as 78 months. This latter finding to some extent corroborates Bourdieu's (1986) assertions with regard to the influence capital has from the 'outset' (p.49) on educational achievement. Feinstein's (2006) study represents one of many important inroads that have started to be made into disaggregating non-curricular advantages. Other such works include Nash (2010) on the relationship between early cognitive development and class origin, Esping-Andersen (2004) on social inheritance, and Horvat, Weininger, and Lareau (2003) on parental networks.

Despite these important steps forward, there is one non pedagogical aspect that has lacked empirical scrutiny. That is, the relationship between access to elite schooling and entrée to prestigious professions, specifically the role of public school alumni networks, and what is widely, if anachronistically, known as the 'Old Boy Network' (Scott, 1982; Walford, 1984; Walford, 1986). The basic premise here is that alumnus from elite

public schools can access an informal network of connections in top professions which enhance their career prospects. From a theoretical perspective, the constitution of this network may be seen as an example of what Lukes (2005) refers to as the third dimension of power. The third dimension is distinguished by Lukes from the first and second dimensions of power in that the former are concerned with processes of decision making, whether overt as in the first dimension or overt or covert as in the second dimension. Within what Lukes has characterised as his third dimension of power, analysis shifts from the confines of decision making to a wider perspective in which power is exercised through influencing the emergence of potential issues. As such, power operates through circumscribing the parameters of legitimate public discourse. In the present context, a dearth of research and public debate on the links between elite public and private schools and prestigious occupations may itself be seen as linked to the exercise of power.

What is perplexing is that a range of research both refers to, and attributes value to the 'Old Boy Network' (Scott, 1982; Walford, 1984; Walford, 1986; Green et al., 2010), and yet, there is almost no substantiated evidence of its existence or the core facets of how it is operationalised. The extremely limited research that has been conducted dates back to the 1950's (Heward, 1984). This consisted of using, inter alia, letter archives of correspondence between parents and a specific public school to chart how an alumni network helped facilitate occupational attainment. Unfortunately, the size of the sample catchment used, and the timing of execution (1930-50), makes the investigation's findings both antiquated and profoundly questionable in terms of their ability to represent wider trends.

The 'Old Boy Network'[iv]

The following section offers an introduction to, and discussion of, new empirical research regarding elite public school alumni networks. This includes an outline of the methodology employed and the identification of seven salient network features.

Methodology

The units of analysis selected were principally derived[v] from a list of the most elite public schools established through Walford's (1984, 1986, and 1991) extensive research in the area. This list consists of some twenty eight schools divided into two sub-groups; 'The Eton Group,' and 'The Rugby Group'. These informal groupings have been formed through mutual recognition amongst the schools themselves, the entry requirement literally being schools that are considered to be 'something like Rugby' or Eton (Walford, 1986 p.10). It is worth noting here that these schools have now, in public at least, integrated themselves into the much larger private school sector (Walford, 1991). Although the list offered by Walford is by no means definitive, it provides an undiluted snapshot of the majority of top public schools. This is achieved by incorporating the majority of Clarendon Commission schools (Clarendon, 1964)[vi], and many of the original members of the HMC. In the content analysis undertaken seven specific questions were asked of each 'unit of analysis' or school website. That is:

1. whether the school maintains a secure alumni network,
2. the number of alumni clubs and societies present,
3. whether networks are structured towards specific elite professions and career trajectories,
4. whether the school has its own registered Masonic lodge for alumni,
5. whether the school maintains a distinct international network which alumni can access,
6. whether a careers mentoring or advisory scheme is operated by the school,
7. and finally, whether the school connects with other selected schools in terms of both formal links through the HMC and informal meetings through sports fixtures and other inter-school competitions.

A number of these foci require some unpacking. For instance, the term 'secure alumni network' refers to an alumni network that is only accessible through membership; the requirement of which being that you are a current or former student of that particular public school. 'Alumni clubs and societies' are distinct sub groups of an 'old boy' or alumni network tailored towards a specific area of interest. These range from groupings formed around sports and hobbies to more formalised groupings focused on particular areas of business and commerce.

The research questions were emergent, in that they were determined through a process of cross comparison. Here, the first five units of analysis were juxtaposed to allow for a number of commonalities to be identified. The common elements identified were then tested for consistency against the remaining twenty three units of analysis. The key purpose of this stage was to ascertain the extent to which the elements identified initially remained constant. Where new common elements emerged these were added to the search criteria, and the process was reset so that the new elements could be tested against previously investigated units of analysis. Any element that failed to return mutual content across fifty percent of the units of analysis sampled was then removed from the final matrix. The methodological approach used enabled networks to be refined to a succinct list of prevalent characteristics. Testing, adapting, retesting, and reducing the categorisations or coding stems from traditional 'content analysis' techniques (Krippendorff, 2004; Bernard and Ryan, 2010). The crucial methodological strength here is that peers and other researchers can use the table produced, and websites cited, to verify the frequency of the network characteristics.

The list of prevalent network characteristics then informed the extraction of qualitative citations from the units of analysis with the purpose of further detailing the structure of the networks and ways in which they are operationalised. Here it is worth highlighting that this research has clear limitations in terms of the range of sources used and the depth to which each network is able to be examined. Through the compilation of this data it is already evident that additional quantitative and qualitative investigation regarding; the size of the individual networks, their interaction with each other, and the number of members who have benefited through initial position attainment and progression within a given field, would enrich the data and help to establish greater veracity in any inferences that are drawn. Future research in this area would also greatly benefit, in terms validity, from corroboration from sources independent of the schools themselves. This is due to the schools having a perverse incentive to overstate the benefits of the networks as a means to justify their significant fees. Although it is important to recognise all of these limitations, the intention here is to create a preliminary platform to facilitate further discussion and research, rather than an attempt to present conclusive evidence.

Results & Analysis

Table 6.1 The Eton Group

Public School	Secure Alumni Network	Number of Alumni Clubs and Societies	Networks Structured towards Specific Elite Professions and Career Trajectories	School & 'Old Boy' Lodge (Freemasonry)	Distinct International Network	Alumni Careers Mentoring or Advisory Scheme	Formal & Informal Connections with Other Listed Schools
Eton	The Old Etonian Association	23	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Dulwich College	The Old Alleynians Network	13	Yes	Yes	Yes	Not listed/ Accessible	Yes
Bryanston School	The Old Bryanstonians Network	Not listed/ accessible	Yes	Not listed/ accessible	Yes	Yes	Yes
Highgate School	The Old Cholmeleian Society	7 Not fully listed/ accessible	Yes	Yes	Not listed/ accessible	Not listed/ accessible	Yes
Kings School (Canterbury)	The Old King's Scholars Association	7 Not fully listed/ accessible	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Marlborough College	The Marlburian Club	12	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
St Paul's School	The Old Pauline Club	3 Listed, Area of the Site under development	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sherborne School	The Old Shirburnian Society	Not listed/ accessible	Yes	Yes	Not listed/ accessible	Not listed/ accessible	Yes
Tonbridge School	The Old Tonbridgian Society	10	Yes	Yes	Yes	Not listed/ accessible	Yes
University College School	The Old Gowers Club	7	Yes	Yes	Not listed/ accessible	Not listed/ accessible	Yes
Westminster School	The Old Westminsters Online	19	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Table 6.2 The Rugby Group

Public School	Secure Alumni Network	Number of Alumni Clubs and Societies	Networks Structured towards Specific Elite Professions and Career Trajectories	School & 'Old Boy' Lodge (Freemasonry)	Distinct International Network	Alumni Careers Mentoring or Advisory Scheme	Formal & Informal Connections with Other Listed Schools
Bradfield College	The Old Bradfieldians Online	11	Not listed/ accessible	Yes	Yes	Not listed/acces sible	Yes
Charterhouse	The Old Carthusian Club	35	Yes	Yes	Yes	Not listed/acces sible	Yes
Cheltenham College	The Cheltonian Association	6	Not listed/ accessible	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Clifton College	The Old Cliftonian Society	8	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Harrow School	The Harrow Association	16	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Malvern College	The Old Malvernians	6	Not listed/ accessible	Yes	Not listed/ accessible	Not listed/ accessible	Yes
Monkton Combe School	The Old Monktonians Club	Not listed/ accessible	Not listed/ accessible	Not listed/ Accessible	Not listed/ accessible	Not listed/ accessible	Not listed/ accessible
Oundle School	The Old Oundelian Club	17	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Not listed/ accessible
Radley college	The Old Radleian Society	15	Yes	Yes	Not listed/ accessible	Yes	Yes

Repton School	The Old Reptonian Society	5	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Rugby School	Rugbeians On-line	14	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
St Edwards School	The Old St Edwardians Society	11	Not listed/ accessible	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Shrewsbury School	The Old Salopian Club	9	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Stowe School	The Old Stoic Society	8 Not fully listed/ accessible	Yes	Not listed/ accessible*	Yes	Not listed/ accessible	Yes
Uppingham School	The Old Uppinghamians Association	6	Not listed/ accessible	Yes	Not listed/ accessible	Yes	Yes
Wellington College	The Old Wellingtonian Society	13	Not listed/ accessible	Yes	Yes	Not listed/ accessible	Yes
Winchester College	The Community of Old Wykehamists	12	Not listed/ accessible	Not listed/ accessible	Not listed/ accessible	Not listed/ accessible	Yes

(Source: the data in Table 6.1 & 6.2 was compiled using the official websites of some of Britain's leading public schools).

The first striking characteristic of the data sets (Tables 6.1 and 6.2) above is that all of the twenty eight schools sampled displayed significant evidence of operating 'Old Boys Networks'. The vast majority entitle their network, and members of it, by combining the idiom 'Old' with a modification of the school's name using a belonging suffix. For instance, someone from 'Eton' is part of the 'Old Etonian Association' and is referred to by the school as an 'Old Etonian'. This is not to say membership of the alumni network is always automatic, former students normally have to opt in or out after leaving the school, depending on the system operated. Branding former students in this way, and encouraging students to see themselves in this way, may foster an on-going connection between the school and former students and vice versa. Here, parallels can be drawn with Bourdieu's (1986) assertions regarding the creation of social capital by 'application of a common name' (p.51). Bourdieu's concept dictates that for the name to achieve benefits to its incumbents it would have to hold some resonance with proximal social structures. In the case of public school alumni networks, this could mean spheres outside of the schools, for instance professions having existing members who both recognise and attribute credit to the use of a particular 'Old Boy' title. According to Bourdieu (1986) the degree to which individuals can levy capital from such networks depends on two distinct factors; the size of the networks, and the ability of those in the network to bestow benefits on the individual members. Testing the research by the first of these principles is difficult because there is limited information available via non-secure areas of the school's websites regarding network size. The information that is accessible from eight schools varies considerably; suggesting networks ranging from as little as eight hundred members up to as many as fifteen thousand. The validity of the network size data is also questionable as it relies on citations from the schools themselves, without corroboration from membership lists.

One of the most important research findings is that the exact size of the networks may not be as relevant as the way in which they are structured in terms of facilitating access to specific professions or areas of business. Here, the majority of schools sampled showed signs of structuring their networks towards particular employment destinations. The structuring takes two forms; the establishment of tailored occupational clubs or societies, and bespoke networking events focused on certain career trajectories. What follows is a brief précis of extracts from units of analysis demonstrating the common type of groups and events found.

Law
'We are very grateful to commercial law firm Lewis Silkin for generously hosting this first meeting of Old Alleynians in the Law at its Chancery Lane offices. The firm has strong connections to the College dating from the time of its founder, Lewis Silkin, and his son, John, who was, like his two brothers, an Old Alleynian' (Old Alleynians Law Professional Interest Group, 2013).

Medicine
'The Medical Group sets up events between all Old Cholmeleians in the medical, dental and associated professions (including vetinarians, physiotherapists, psychologists and psychiatrists) and Old Cholmeleians interested in entering those professions. The next event will be held at the Royal College of Surgeons' (Old Cholmeleians Medical Group, 2012).

Arts & Media
'The inaugural Old Marlburians Film, TV & Theatre Event at the Only Running Footman in Mayfair was a great success…some Old Marlburians arrived on the way to or from work, including Jack Whitehall, who managed to pop in just prior to his live performance nearby, and Carola Stewart who appeared with great style towards the end of the event having come directly from filming. We were delighted when Damian Jones, who produced the Oscar winning film The Iron Lady, made a surprise appearance too' (Old Marlburians Film, TV & Theatre Group, 2013).

Finance
'Old Harrovians who work in the financial industries held its inaugural meeting at the City of London Club on 1 October 2008…' attendees included '130 Old Harrovians in financial services, financial consultancy and equity trading' (Old Harrovians City Club Committee, 2012).

Property
'The 6th Annual Rugbeian Society Real Estate Dinner took place on Thursday 8 November 2012 at the Army & Navy Club Pall Mall, London. Just over 40 Rugbeians and current and past parents who work in the property business and related professions attended' (Rugbeian Society, 2012).

Notably, the groups and tailored events displayed consistently, although not exclusively, concerned five specific professions and areas of business; Law, Medicine, Arts & Media, Finance, and Property Management. Interestingly there are clear similarities between these and the professions identified by the Sutton Trust's study (2007) as being disproportionately represented by those deriving from private schools.

The units of analysis also give a variety of information regarding what services networks, and specific groups thereof, provide. These commonly include; tailored networking events by occupational area with established 'Old Boys' working in that particular profession, professional mentoring from established 'Old Boys', and internships and work experience placements offered to recent alumni from established 'Old Boys' in prestigious firms. Importantly the services provided indicate that being a member of an 'Old Boys Network' involves active participation as oppose to dormant membership. Indeed, the photographic and textual evidence from twenty four of the sampled schools suggests a vibrant culture of well attended networking events in extremely prestigious venues, and significantly interaction between a range of young and old members. Often this includes older, more established, network members arranging career orientated networking events at a venue connected to their current profession. Typical examples include events held at Inns of Court by 'Old Boys' in the legal profession, events held at City[vii] investment firms by 'Old Boys' at the head of large stockbroking companies, and events arranged by senior medical professionals at royal medical colleges. One purpose of the networks here is succinctly encapsulated by the Old Cliftonian Business Community (2014) 'A specific network of Old Cliftonians with a commercial interest, providing access to and from Old Cliftonians and the school to leverage their combined knowledge to further each other's professional prospects.'

The function and services of the networks towards aiding in members professional development notably reconciles with Bourdieu's (1986) assertions identified above regarding acknowledgement and appreciation from proximal social structures, in that, they suggest both recognition and favoured treatment from existing members of professions. The services provided also share the common characteristics of enabling new alumni to make personal contact with senior staff in a range of top professions. This is a potential key advantage as it allows members to single themselves out from formal application based routes. It is not suggested that 'Old Boys' will not have to go through a formal employment process, but rather that prospects for being offered positions can be enhanced through personal connections. This arguably represents what Lukes (2005) has described as a covert exercise of power. The job application process, to the extent to which it is observable, goes through a conventional procedure. Power is covert in the sense that power relations are at play in selecting candidates from a particular background while ostensibly presenting employment within a meritocratic system. The job application process alluded to above may also be illuminated by Bourdieu's (1979) work regarding classes and classifications that suggests a process of perception and recognition. When applied in this case, network membership may indicate a particular mix of characteristics and competences positively recognised by employers as signaling a certain social class suitable to specific occupations. Here, contemporary economic theorists argue that this is not so much a case applying undue bias, but rather that 'old boy networks' constitute a valuable informal mechanism whereby employers can obtain 'hidden' information on prospective employees (Inci & Parker, 2012 p.30); therefore, allowing firms to make hiring decisions with greater assurity. In the case of public school old boys networks, it could be argued that employers presuppose membership entails minimum levels of both cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986), in the form of accent, dress, manners, and human capital (Halpern, 2005), in terms of knowledge and ability.

Green (et al., 2010) above highlight the educational benefits of attending private schools. However whether these lead to the development of distinct characteristics synonymous with those needed for high status professions remains highly questionable. Furthermore, there is a significant problem with addressing issues of social reproduction if those arbitrating what constitutes required capital levels are largely members of the same network. Here, a combination of earlier data (Sutton Trust 2007; Scott 1982; Boyd 1973), regarding the disproportionate representation in top professions for those hailing from private or public schools, and network data presented in this chapter certainly indicates this may be the case. If correct, this would signify maintenance of the status quo, effectively advantaging those inside the network, but restricting those outside of it. A further issue regards the networks as a mechanism in social reproduction, that is, that existing established members in a given profession may have a vested interest in employing staff who attended the same public school in an effort to make sure the value attributed to attending a given school is continued (Bourdieu 1986; Curtis 2000). In other words, by maintaining the presence of 'Old Boys' in particular professions, established 'Old Boys' in these areas are able to reaffirm their own worth.

Whilst the effect of 'Old Boys' already in prestigious professions trying to preserve their status may be important to the enduring nature of old boys networks, longitudinal network maintenance is also likely to require persistent and widespread 'investment strategies' (Bourdieu, 1986 p.52). Here, data drawn from the schools' websites illuminates some of the resources employed in this respect at the institutional level. For instance, a number of schools have a whole office of professional staff dedicated to this very task. Marlborough College as a case in point, has; a 'Club Secretary', an 'Alumni Relations Manager', a 'Development Officer', a 'Website & Publications Manager', and a 'Information & Communications Officer' working specifically to maintain the 'Marlburian Club' (Marlborough School Development Team, 2012). The majority of networks are also headed by a President who tends to be a distinguished old boy acting as a figurehead and champion. The type of structure identified here only represents one aspect of school level network maintenance and development. On top of this schools can mobilise an array of individuals with semi-formal roles within the network. For instance, St Paul's School's 'Old Pauline Club' has fifty-five 'Vice Presidents', and fifty-seven heads and members of various sub committees (The Old Pauline Club Committee Membership List, 2013-14). However, the quantity here may not be as prevalent to bestowing advantages on network members as the quality of the individuals involved in terms of their prestige. In the example of the Old Pauline Club these include Knights (CBE's), admirals, judges, professors, Lords and the current Chancellor of the Exchequer George Osborne as one of its Vice Presidents (Cabinet Office, 2013).

One further facet of the networks is their international dimension. Here, twenty out of the twenty eight schools sampled, to a varying degree, displayed developed international networks. The remaining eight schools were not necessarily deficient in this respect, but rather that this data was not available in the non-secure area of the websites. The network information that is available tends to consist of an extensive list of international contacts willing to assist old boys wishing to establish themselves in a given country. For instance 'The Old Kings Association' (OKS) cites an impressive and characteristic list of contacts spanning much of the globe. When students or 'OKS' click on a link for a given country they see a personal message from an alumni who is now in a prominent position. The messages differ in content, but in general offer help with moving to/visiting the country and, pertinently, advice on employment in their given field (The Old Kings Association, Overseas Hon Secs, 2013). As with domestic branches of the networks, the affluence of the individuals cited and the social capital they represent is significant. If one accepts Bryanston Schools careers and business networking group statements, such networks are able to provide a 'rich source of useful contacts' that can offer 'career pointers and friendly advice' from established alumni 'working across a variety of industries around the globe' (Bryanston School, Careers and Business Networking Group, 2014). Moreover, the international networks on display transcend lists of useful potential social and business contacts. Instead the schools manage to provide dynamic international networks involving regular social and networking events. To achieve this the schools continuously recruit representatives to facilitate and maintain these international parts or 'chapters' of their networks, assist with venues for meetings, and advertise events through their websites and distinct international newsletters. It is worth noting here that a significant number of international students now attend British public schools, these clearly provide a fertile recruiting ground for schools wishing to develop their international networks.

The development of the international dimension of the networks is significant in terms of discourses regarding the relationship between education and the global labour market. Here, Brown (2000), a prominent commentator in this area, poses the important question of 'whether social elites are increasingly defining positional competition for credentials and jobs in international… terms' (p.643). The research for this chapter certainly shows evidence that elite British public schools are aware of the threat presented by the globalisation of the labour market, and are actively involved in preserving their position in this context. The fact that these schools are mobilising their social capital in this way also challenges the concept (Lauder, 2006 p.319) that a global labour market will result in increased meritocracy through the internationalisation of employment opportunities. The networks' abilities to cross domestic boundaries suggests that those children whose parents can afford this type of schooling will still possess an advantage in an international arena outside of their educational achievements. In a not unrelated point, twenty four out of twenty eight schools sampled had strong connections with the Freemasons. This unanticipated finding is interesting for two notable reasons. Firstly, it shows a distinct link between the schools and one of the biggest gentlemen's organisations in the world (Ridley, 2011), and secondly, it connects the sampled schools as their Lodges are all members of the Public School Lodges' Council. This is an umbrella organisation that arranges a variety of meetings and events between members of these 'Old Boy' Lodges. Examples of the longevity of the link between Freemasonry and public schools, and their connections with each other through Public School Lodges' Council, include Highgate School having the oldest Freemasons Lodge in the world (The Cholmeley Lodge, 2014) and the Old Etonian Lodge hosting 'the 76th Public School Lodges' Council Festival' in 2009 (The Old Etonian Lodge, 2014). In addition to contact between the schools related to Freemasonry, there are also links through events arranged by the HMC and inter-school sports fixtures as indicated by a 'Yes' in the final column of the results table above. These fixtures and events form an important part of the networks as they are not only for existing students, but also for alumni. For instance, there are distinct 'Old Boy' teams and leagues in areas such as shooting, sailing and golf. This is significant as it shows the networks are interrelated and continue to interact long after decoupling from education based contact.

Conclusion

The analysis of existing quantitative data brought together a range of sources not previously engaged with as a body of evidence. Whilst strengths and weaknesses of each source were exposed, collectively the data demonstrated a strong and recurrent link between private schooling and high status employment in Britain. Furthermore, both this and the subsequent theoretical analysis, demonstrated that the category 'elite schools'

requires unpacking both in terms of differentiation when approaching data gathering and findings, and in relation to the disaggregation of advantages that go beyond the curricular or co-curricular. Here, the chapter was able to break free of the confines of traditional ethnographical approaches and utilise contemporary content analysis techniques to examine a wealth of previously untapped data and information. Importantly, this enabled the research to transcend merely noting the role of elite schools in the 'social production of advantage' to actually beginning to evidence some of the mechanisms which facilitate this social production. The paucity of empirical evidence regarding non-curricular based advantages of attending elite schools highlights the significant problems of access associated with researching elite groups in society (Aguiar and Schneider, 2012), and the importance of adopting new methodological approaches. Employing content analysis techniques to elites not only demonstrated their benefits in terms of overcoming access problems, but also illustrated their potential with regard to directing qualitative research.

A research focus on 'Old Boy Networks,' substantiates the role of alumni groups and societies in penetrating prestigious professions. Not only were specific links uncovered in relation to law, medicine, arts and media, finance, and property management, but there were also clear parallels between these groupings and those identified in prior research as containing a disproportionate number of former private school pupils. In other words, networks are generated that enhance access to the higher tiers of the most socially esteemed and financially beneficial professions. Interestingly in terms of contributing to international research undertaken by Kenway and Koh (2013), networks were not bounded within national frameworks but rather gave former pupils access to global elite networks not necessarily connected to or serving any one nation state. Furthermore it was evident that British public schools are acutely aware of the importance of ensuring their sphere of influence extends beyond national borders and have established international networks to ensure alumni maximise their opportunities in global markets. The research also showed that the globalisation of British public schools extended beyond the domestic with regard to a number of schools having already established international satellite schools in locations such as Hong Kong, Shanghai, Tianjin, Iskandar, and Dubai; all including entrée and access to associated British 'Old Boy Networks.' A further dimension here is the extent to which the schools themselves recruit from global elites and enable students to develop valuable international social networks while undertaking studies in Britain.

Theoretically, Bourdieuian concepts of capital acted as a valuable mechanism to inform and direct the research undertaken. In particular these were able to illuminate possible causal factors not addressed in prior studies. Significantly this has included drawing attention to the capital accrued through social networks, and acting as an analytical tool in terms of: aiding an examination of how the 'Old Boy Networks' in question interacted and maintained resonance with proximal social structures; how the networks could be operationalised to bestow benefits on their members; and whether necessary 'investment strategies' were in place to preserve and develop these networks. The research here confirms that the networks examined articulated all of these characteristics, and therefore, supports Bourdieu's foresight in these respects. Bourdieu's work also informed a value led examination of the resources network members had at their disposal. Here the research suggested that individuals, having attended the listed schools, were able to harness an impressive concentration of collective social and cultural capital. This took the form of a range of established and influential network members with official positions within the network structure. One symptomatic example, from St Paul's school, demonstrated both the capital value available in terms of the prestige of the agents listed, and the ease to which these resources were identifiable and accessible to new network members through the attribution of official positions.

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[i] The term 'public' stems from the schools' historical role in educating the poor rather than their current incarnation as the most elite private schools in Britain.

[ii] The terms 'independent schools' and 'private schools' refer to any school not run or funded by the State. The term 'independent' is preferred by the private school sector in Britain as it invokes more positive connotations.

[iii] I.e. vocabulary tests, Harris Figure drawing excises, standardised reading comprehension tests, and math scores (types of tests applied dependent on age).

[iv] This name should be considered somewhat anachronistic as the research for the present investigation suggests the schools networks are equally accessible to both male and female alumni in cases where schools are co-educational

[v] The selected schools are intended to act as a representative sample rather than offering a complete list of the top public schools, however it should be recognised that King's College, London is also part of the Eton group, and Haileybury school has been added to the Rugby Group since the time of Walford's research

[vi] The Clarendon Commission was a Royal Commission set up in 1861 *'to inquire into the Revenue and Management of Certain Colleges and Schools and the studies pursued and instruction given there'* (Clarendon, 1964 p.1). Importantly the commission report identified nine Great Public Schools.

[vii] City, is a term that refers to the 'City of London' or banking and finance district

[viii] As an authenticity measure, only the official school sites, and formal links from the official school sites, have been used in the compilation of the research (2012–2015). Whilst web-based sources have the disadvantage of information not being static, the range of schools examined means it is unlikely that scholars will not be able to access similar information evidencing the central themes and information for this chapter regarding the presence and operation of old boys' networks.