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In Pursuit of the Frontier: Changes at an American School in Switzerland

1 Introduction

This chapter presents a case study of one school's desire and ability to orient itself towards a changing frontier, illuminating both how educational institutions can remake their images and how one notion of the "new frontier" has evolved over time. The Leysin American School (LAS), an American school founded in the early 1960s in Switzerland, provides the example, first through its establishment as an American school abroad in the Cold War era, and then through its sending of graduating students from all over the world to the "West" – to the Anglophone world in general and the US in particular – since roughly the turn of the twenty-first century. These changing configurations, I argue, parallel broader shifts in America's positioning on the global stage.¹

This chapter thus relates to the theme of "Go West" not necessarily in a literal, geographical sense, but in a metaphorical one. In the American context, the phrase "Go West" was probably first used by the newspaper editor and publisher Horace Greeley (1811–1872), in reference to the Manifest Destiny: the contested nineteenth-century idea that Americans had a duty to move westward, settling and colonizing the land along the way.² As such, I understand "Go West" to be relational, to refer to the opening of new frontiers.

When LAS was founded, as will be discussed in Section 3, American educators were tasked with the duty of shipping an American education abroad as part of the nation's Cold War efforts. LAS was very much a part of this narrative, paving the way as the first and only American school in its Swiss educational landscape. As time went on, the Cold War thawed, and the US increasingly focused on using soft power to try to win over the world, thereby shifting the "new frontier." Accordingly, LAS also repositioned itself: formerly a school fulfilling a mission of providing an American education abroad, it became one that facilitated opportunities for graduating students to study in the US. For many of those students, such a route

1 See also Karen Lillie, "Adaptations to Global Changes: Strategic Evolutions of an Elite School, 1961–2011," *History of Education* 51, no. 2 (2022), doi: 10.1080/0046760X.2021.2002433.

2 Elizabeth Knowles, ed., *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 351; Frederick Merk and Lois Bannister Merk, *Manifest Destiny and Mission in American History: A Reinterpretation* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995).

moved westward both geographically and metaphorically, opening what they perceived to be new opportunities for continued physical mobility as well as social mobility, through the building of international networks and gaining of social status on a global scale.

The Leysin American School is a secondary boarding school in the Swiss Alps. At the time of my fieldwork, the school educated around 300 young men and women, from the ages of twelve to eighteen, from around fifty different countries. Less than 3% of the students were Swiss. LAS offered two curricular options: the International Baccalaureate (IB) and the US high school diploma. Admission to the school was effectively open – moderated mostly by the ability to pay. However, as reputedly one of the most expensive schools in the world, with tuition currently costing 124,000 Swiss Francs (SFr.) per year, ability to pay is no small barrier. LAS is, then, a school that serves a global cross-section of the superrich.

To gather data, I conducted fieldwork for just over a year. I collected observations; interviewed students and members of the administration, including one of the school's founders; and analyzed historical documents. Those documents, from which this chapter primarily draws, came from Swiss cantonal and national archives, online repositories, and current and former LAS administrators, staff, and students. The lattermost are here cited as from the LAS Document Collection. They include letters (1960–1982), meeting minutes and school memos (1961–2011), yearbooks (1963–2011), and school publications (1965–2011).³ Although this fieldwork was carried out in the late 2010s, my document analysis only goes up to 2011 as that was the year that LAS rebranded itself (see Section 4).

This chapter starts with an overview of LAS's closest peer schools, which are also located in the Lake Geneva region of Switzerland. It then turns to how the institution came to be part of the narrative of the new frontier of American schools abroad during the Cold War. The section thereafter examines a transition period at the school as this frontier changed. Finally, the chapter ends with a discussion of LAS as a place that, since the turn of the twenty-first century, has sent its global student body westward, mostly to the US.

³ For a discussion of the ethics of this research, see Karen Lillie and Pere Ayling, "Revisiting the Un/Ethical: The Complex Ethics of Elite Studies Research," *Qualitative Research* 21, no. 6 (2021), doi: 10.1177/146879412096536.

2 The Educational Landscape Around Lake Geneva

LAS's closest peer schools – Aiglon College (Aiglon), Collège Alpin Beau Soleil (Beau Soleil) and Institut Le Rosey (Rosey) – are secondary schools located in the Lake Geneva region, as LAS is.⁴ Like LAS, they were founded on educational ideas imported from elsewhere, adapted to the local context. They thus all positioned themselves as schools in Switzerland, rather than as schools for the Swiss. This positioning was consciously cultivated in partnership with the Swiss state. For example, in the early twentieth century, the state worked with the Swiss Private Schools' Association to produce tourism materials suggesting that such schools could educate foreigners without nationalizing them.⁵

Rosey was established in 1880 by a French-Swiss who was in exile from the home he had made in German Switzerland. The school opened a second winter campus in Gstaad in 1916. This began Rosey's association with wealthy foreigners who "wintered" in the Alps.⁶ It taught the Swiss Maturité. Beau Soleil was founded in 1910, also in Gstaad. Originally a sanatorium, it moved to the alpine mountain next to LAS's in 1920 and successfully rebranded itself as a school.⁷ Francophone in origin, it offered the French Baccalaureate and *diplôme national du brevet*. Aiglon was started in 1949 by a tutor who had taught under Kurt Hahn at Gordonstoun School in Scotland. The school followed the British public school model and Hahn's educational approach, centered around leadership, service and outdoor adventure.⁸ It taught the British A-level curriculum.

This was thus the educational landscape that LAS entered in the 1960s, composed of the institutions that it would eventually consider to be its peers. Like LAS, these schools adopted and adapted educational ideas from other regions and catered to a non-Swiss student body. Also like LAS, they have become, over time, some of the most expensive schools in the world. For the 2023/24 school

4 Leysin American School Document Collection (LASDC), Board Minutes, 2010; LASDC, Strategic Plan Meeting, 2016.

5 Michelle Swann, "Promoting the 'Classroom and Playground of Europe': Swiss Private School Prospectuses and Education-Focused Tourism Guides, 1890–1945." (PhD diss., University of British Columbia, 2007), 301; see also Caroline Bertron, "Les scolarités des fortunes internationales entre refuge et placement: Socio-histoire des pensionnats privés suisses." (PhD diss., Paris 1; Université de Lausanne, 2016).

6 Swann, "Promoting the 'Classroom'."

7 Swann, "Promoting the 'Classroom'," 201.

8 Nigel Watson, *With Wings as Eagles: The Story of Aiglon College* (London: James & James Ltd., 1999).

year, Rosey charged 140,000 SFr.; Aiglon, 130,000 SFr.; and Beau Soliel, 125,000 SFr. Thus, like LAS, these institutions all currently serve a global cross-section of wealthy young people – one that, in the case of LAS, is oriented westward.

3 The New Frontier of American Schooling Abroad

Fred and Sigrid Ott, a married couple, founded LAS – the Leysin *American School* – in 1961 in the village of Leysin, in the Swiss Alps. Importing an American school was no easy task, as will be discussed. The fact that they pursued this vision was linked to the moment: the Cold War, which catalyzed America's interests in exporting its education abroad.

American foreign interests were woven into Fred's biography long before he and Sigrid opened LAS's doors. Fred was born in 1914 in the German part of Switzerland but moved with his family to the US in 1925. There, he completed his bachelor's and master's degrees before becoming a secondary school principal (1938–1939) and then a junior college instructor (1939–1942). In 1944, Fred was drafted into the US army to serve in World War II. In 1947, he was discharged.

At that time, American money was being invested in Europe – for example, through the Fulbright Act of 1946, which supported international educational exchange programmes, and the Marshall Plan of 1947, which helped finance rebuilding. This also meant that Americans themselves were relocating to the continent. Fred, then, started a service that connected Americans abroad with Swiss boarding schools for their children. He ran this until 1951.

At that point, he took up a job for the US Air Force. As Director of Plans and Programs for the Dependent Schools, he opened elementary and secondary schools in Europe, North Africa, and the Near East. These were run by the US government for the children of servicemen posted abroad; the schools hired Americans to teach an American curriculum.

It was around this time that Fred's wife, Sigrid, an American brought to Europe by her husband, laid the groundwork for LAS. In 1949, she created a summer camp for the children of American military families posted abroad. According to my interview with Sigrid, the couple eventually felt that Americans should also have a proper boarding school in Europe. They thus started imagining an American-curriculum school for American expatriates, in Fred's home country of Switzerland – a project that Sigrid, in our interview, described as “very, very modest but with good intentions.” They opened LAS in 1961 with eighty-four students, mostly drawn from the camp registers.

To finance the school, Fred and Sigrid incorporated a shareholder's association in 1960, with 350,000 SFr. (1.5 million SFr. in 2023, adjusted for inflation).⁹ According to the Articles of Incorporation, at least 60 percent of shares needed to be owned by Americans. This created a number of logistical problems – for instance, when dealing with US tax filings and German-language financial reports.¹⁰ Nevertheless, American shareholders were prioritised as a means of maintaining the school's American spirit through its governance.

Fred and Sigrid also encountered further logistical problems when trying to adapt American educational standards and practices to their Swiss setting.¹¹ They had difficulties with recruiting and hiring American staff, communicating in the local French language, meeting the local educational legal requirements, and acclimatising to higher costs.¹²

Establishing an American educational institution abroad thus presented a number of issues; however, it also tapped into the mood of the moment. The 1950s and 1960s were the height of the Cold War, a story with which educational institutions were deeply entwined. University academics, for instance, lobbied the US administration for a program to send US citizens abroad, leading to the inauguration of the Peace Corps in 1961.¹³ The Fulbright-Hays Act of 1961 established US government-run international educational exchange programmes. The International Education Act of 1966 poured financial resources into international educational activities. Education became “the very heart of [US] relations with the nations and the peoples of the rest of the world.”¹⁴ With the notion of American educational institutions abroad thus woven into US foreign policy, it is unsurprising that by 1969, there were almost 450 American schools in 110 countries, sponsored by the US Departments of State and Defense, which educated a combined total of almost 185,000 students.¹⁵

LAS, as part of this trend, successfully recruited American students to its campus by strategically advertising to Americans serving their nation politically, mil-

9 LASDC, Articles of Incorporation, 1960.

10 LASDC, Letter from Sigrid Ott, December 6, 1966; LASDC, Letter to Fred Ott, December 12, 1966; LASDC, Letter to Fred Ott, April 18, 1966; LASDC, Letter from Sigrid Ott, December 12, 1968.

11 LASDC, Board Report, 1964.

12 LASDC, Progress Report, 1966.

13 Anne Palmer Peterson, “Academic Conceptions of a United States Peace Corps,” *History of Education* 40, no. 2 (2011), doi:10.1080/0046760X.2010.526966.

14 R. Freeman Butts, “America's Role in International Education: A Perspective on Thirty Years,” in *The United States and International Education: The Sixty-Eighth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education*, ed. Harold Shane (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), 34.

15 Cole Brembeck, “United States' Educational Designs Woven into the Fabric of International Education,” in Shane, *The United States and International Education*.

itarily, or economically from abroad. The year that it opened, LAS cost almost \$2000 per year.¹⁶ At the time, the US median income was under \$6000.¹⁷ LAS would thus have been financially out of reach for the typical American family; however, the US Department of State and many multinational companies helped cover boarding school fees for their employees' children, if their parents were posted abroad.¹⁸ As such, LAS advertised to this clientele. It sent its materials to US firms abroad, US embassies and other government agencies with foreign offices.¹⁹

Accordingly, LAS was mostly composed of the sons and daughters of Americans working for US defence companies, multinational oil corporations, or the diplomatic corps. In October 1963, two years after opening, the student body was 97 percent American but drawn from thirty countries on five continents.²⁰ Almost 20 percent of those students came from families connected to diplomatic efforts – meaning American embassies, US governmental organizations and non-governmental organizations – and 13 percent from families associated with commercial enterprises, primarily oil companies.²¹ LAS therefore became, as was intended, an American school for the children of Americans serving their nation overseas.

LAS's American culture was visible on campus. There was an American flag in the headmaster's office.²² There was also one flying from the school's façade, next to a Swiss flag.²³ The yearbooks from the 1960s and 1970s feature photos of students with American flag patches, American footballs, and American flags in their dorm rooms. They also highlight visits from the US Representative to the European Office of the United Nations (1963) and three US Ambassadors to Switzerland (1964, 1969, 1970).²⁴

The students seemed to take to being Americans in Switzerland. The 1966 yearbook reads: "Uncle Sam wishes to remind you of and thank you for the many gay times when this tiny American community 'traveled' through new experiences to a deeper understanding of other people and their customs." It later features photos under the heading "We learn to live with the Swiss," delineating the students from

16 LASDC, Catalogue, 1965.

17 Bureau of the Census, *Current Population Reports: Consumer Income* (Washington, D.C.: Bureau of the Census, 1963).

18 LASDC, Board Minutes, 1968.

19 LASDC, Board Report, 1960.

20 LASDC, Board Report, 1963.

21 LASDC, Yearbook, 1963.

22 LASDC, Yearbook, 1965.

23 LASDC, Yearbooks, 1965, 1968.

24 LASDC, Yearbooks, 1963, 1964, 1969, 1970.

their environment. It is thus unsurprising that the 1968 Progress Report described the school as “a very marked island” within its mountain village.²⁵

Sigrid Ott, in our interview, also positioned the school as an outsider in the regional educational landscape: “We met some of [the other] school directors [...] we worked with them in that way, but it wasn’t a strong relationship.” Because LAS was American, she felt, “we were absolutely dependent on ourselves for everything [...] the operation was actually from scratch.” She and Fred instead envisioned LAS as a peer to boarding schools in the US.²⁶ LAS was, then, at the forefront of the new frontier of American schooling in Switzerland.

4 A Period of Transition

As the school continued into later decades, it reimagined its connections to its American heritage. The founders’ son, K. Steven Ott, took over in 1982 and confronted a shifting global environment. The Cold War was morphing into international capitalism, changing the constellations of America’s power abroad from primarily military-based to primarily finance-based.²⁷ In parallel, Steven started remaking LAS’s overt American character. By 1984, just two years after taking over, the Swiss and American flags on the façade had both been removed.²⁸ The class of 1984 also hosted the first graduation speaker who was not Anglo-American or Swiss: His Royal Highness Prince Mohammed of Jordan, who had attended Beau Soleil.²⁹

This trend of moving LAS away from its roots intensified in 1990 with the Gulf War. In our interview, the principal working under Steven’s direction at the time recalled a discussion “to drop ‘American’ out of ‘Leysin American School.’ That’s a little-known fact. But it was like Americans should be low profile.” During that period, he told me, students were primarily Americans living in areas of the world where local international schools did not extend through high school. There were very few students from high-profile families: “Leysin American School, when we were here, was a middle-class school for middle-class kids whose parents just happened to be living in Africa, Middle East, or Eastern Europe [...] It just felt like a really normal international school.”

²⁵ LASDC, Progress Report, 1968.

²⁶ LASDC, Progress Report, 1966.

²⁷ Richard Saull, *The Cold War and After: Capitalism, Revolution and Superpower Politics* (London and Ann Arbor, MI: Pluto Press, 2007).

²⁸ LASDC, Yearbook, 1984.

²⁹ LASDC, Yearbook, 1984.

Yet there also seemed to be a concerted push to recruit from outside this American expatriate population. Steven started recruiting privately paying families from the former Soviet Union after its dissolution in 1991.³⁰ LAS enrolled its first student from the former Soviet Bloc in 1992 and its first Chinese student in 1993, facts which it now highlights in the central corridor of one of its two main buildings. In 1995, Steven made a “concerted effort” to make inroads in more international markets, believing that as “more and more countries liberalize trade,” an education in Switzerland would become affordable and attractive to families in those countries.³¹

During this period, in 1991, LAS became the first boarding school in Switzerland to adopt the IB curriculum. The IB was established in the 1960s as an internationally standardized curriculum catering to the children of geographically mobile parents – for example, those working as diplomats or at multinational organizations.³² Over time, however, it increasingly appealed to parents who linked their children’s social mobility to their physical mobility and to the idea of “world citizenship.”³³ This curricular change thus helped the school appeal to a more global clientele.

LAS’s trend of internationalization continued through the late 1990s and early 2000s. In 2007, the school leadership decided to “rewrite our mission statement and in doing so create an LAS ‘brand’.”³⁴ The motto became: *Developing innovative, compassionate and responsible citizens of the world*. Its language and form drew directly from the IB, whose mission statement, according to its website, was: *To develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect*.

The tuition at LAS had been slowly rising over time, hitting 40,000 SFr. for the 2008/09 academic year.³⁵ That year, however, saw a significant drop in the percentage of American students due to the global financial crisis. By 2009, the student body was 12 percent American, down from 32 percent just three years earlier. Rus-

30 Sigrid Ott and Kristinn Steven Ott, with D. Beaudouin, *Saga: How One Family Made a World of Difference Through Education* (Self-published, 2017).

31 LASDC, Board Report, 1995; see also Karen Lillie and Anne-Sophie Delval, “Introduction to the Special Issue: Switzerland as a Site of Capital Accumulation: The Case of International Education,” *Swiss Journal of Sociology* 50, no. 2 (2024), doi: 10.26034/cm.sjs.2024.6033.

32 Saira Fitzgerald, “Blackboard/Whiteboard: The Discursive Construction of the International Baccalaureate in Canada” (PhD diss., Carleton University, 2017).

33 Catherine Doherty, Li Mu, and Paul Shield, “Planning Mobile Futures: The Border Artistry of International Baccalaureate Diploma Choosers,” *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 30, no. 6 (2009), doi:10.1080/01425690903235292.

34 LASDC, Board Minutes, 2007.

35 LASDC, Historical Prices, 2018.

sian students increased to 14 percent. Those numbers would remain roughly stable for the next ten years.

Another change in 2009 saw Steven Ott's eldest son, Marc-Frédéric, take over LAS from his father, meaning the school entered its third generation of Ott family leadership. Two years later, in 2011, the Swiss Franc appreciated almost 30 percent in two weeks. To cover costs, tuition continued to rise, hitting 45,000 SFr.³⁶ According to a 2011 Board report, LAS had become like "all other private Swiss boarding schools" – an institution that not only offered "luxury-valued services" but also no longer identified with American boarding schools in the US, whose tuition fees were now about half those of LAS.³⁷

By this time, then, LAS had evolved from an American-centric, so-called "middle-class" school to an internationally oriented one mainly for the children of wealthy families.³⁸ This ideological shift reflected the school's increasing financialization over three decades, in parallel with the decline of the Cold War and America's changing position on the global stage. LAS had thus transitioned from pursuing the frontier of American schooling in Switzerland, to belonging to its surrounding educational landscape (see Section 1).

5 Sending Students Westward

In LAS's modern era, which we may date from 2011, when it rebranded as a school for "high-end clientele" from around the world, the school facilitates its graduating students' westward movement to the Anglosphere – in particular, to America. This reflects the change in the US's position on the global stage. After the fall of the Soviet Union, the US increasingly shifted its focus from asserting hard power, through the military, to promoting soft power, through its international cultural appeal. This was exercised in part through its higher education system, which became globally renowned and, often, desired.³⁹

³⁶ LASDC, Historical Prices, 2018.

³⁷ LASDC, Board Minutes, 2011.

³⁸ See also Karen Lillie, "Geographies of Wealth: The Materiality of an Elite School in Switzerland," *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education* 45, no. 3 (2024), doi:10.1080/01596306.2024.2335005.

³⁹ Philip Altbach and Patti Peterson, "Higher Education as a Projection of America's Soft Power," in *Soft Power Superpowers: Cultural and National Assets of Japan and the United States*, ed. Yasushi Watanabe and David McConnell (New York: Routledge, 2015); Joseph Nye Jr, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004); Claire Maxwell, "Changing Spaces: The Reshaping of (Elite) Education through Internationalisation," in *Elite Education and In-*

LAS's alignment with this "soft power" approach was intentional and happened in both formal and informal ways. Formally, LAS marketing materials particularly emphasize the US and UK university destinations of its alumni, thereby implying that such destinations are the most desirable. Moreover, they stress the school's English as a Second Language program as excellent preparation for university – seemingly, for higher education in English-language locales.

Additionally, those materials highlight the school's IB curriculum, which is implicitly connected to mobility to Western, English-speaking countries. Although the IB is meant to be an international curriculum that fosters global citizenship, it was developed in Europe and arguably promotes Western ways of thinking and even communicating.⁴⁰ In 2024, for example, the IB diploma in one or more languages was offered by over 5,800 schools in 162 countries, according to the organization's website. Yet, although the curriculum is officially available in forty languages, it is most often taught in English (5,431 schools), Spanish (1,044 schools) and French (365). At LAS, it was taught in English.

LAS also worked informally to orient its graduating students towards a future in America. For instance, despite its internationalized student body, LAS retained its American identity.⁴¹ In interviews, LAS students noted American institutional structures, like the class schedule, pedagogical approach, grading system, traditions (Prom), and codes of conduct (no drinking or smoking). They also mentioned American cultural artefacts, such as the preferred fashions, foods, memes, movies, music, and slang on campus.⁴² There is also the name of the school. As one student summarised, "I think there's quite a lot of American influence in Leysin *American* School" [emphasis his]. LAS thus retained its "Americanness" in feel and in name, despite internationalizing its student body.

Almost all graduating students went on to higher education. In a typical year, 75 percent would attend university in an English-speaking country: 40 percent in the US; 30 percent in the UK; and 5 percent in Canada. The other 25 percent mostly enrolled in English-language programs elsewhere – primarily in the Netherlands

ternationalisation: From Early Years to Higher Education, ed. Claire Maxwell et al. (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

⁴⁰ Barry Drake, "International Education and IB Programmes," *Journal of Research in International Education* 3, no. 2 (2004), doi: 10.1177/1475240904044387; Mico Poonosamy, "The International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme in Post-colonial Mauritius: Reaffirming Local Identities and Knowledges," *Asia Pacific Journal of Education* 30, no. 1 (2010), doi: 10.1080/02188790903503569.

⁴¹ See also Karen Lillie, "Multi-Sited Understandings: Complicating the Role of Elite Schools in Transnational Class Formation," *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 42, no. 1 (2021), doi:10.1080/01425692.2020.1847633.

⁴² See also Karen Lillie and Claire Maxwell, "Practices of Consumption: Cohesion and Distinction within a Globally Wealthy Group," *Sociology* 58, no. 3 (2024), doi:10.1177/00380385231206070.

or Switzerland. Often, the only students who returned to their home countries for higher education were Americans or Brits.

These educational destinations were most frequently geographically located north and/or west from students' home countries. Only 10 percent of the student body came from Northern or Western Europe; 13 percent came from North America, including Mexico. Students from E7 countries – meaning, the seven major emerging markets, named to parallel the so-called G7 group of major advanced markets – comprised 42 percent of the overall student body and 37 percent of the graduating class at the time of fieldwork.

The routes these students took after LAS thus often followed an established path from the so-called Global South to the Global North. This was a conscious decision. University destinations were informed by prestige of location, rather than the details of the study program.⁴³ The students wanted to study in cosmopolitan Western cities like London, New York, and Vancouver. In general, they felt that mastering English through living in an English-speaking locale opened new opportunities for international networking and geographic mobility. As has been argued elsewhere, they sought to join “a ‘superior’ [social] class in a superior location” – the Anglosphere.⁴⁴

These young people might still return to their home countries after university. Follow-up interviews with them suggest that this does, indeed, seem to be the case.⁴⁵ This supports other research showing that students who go abroad for higher education often then seek post-schooling employment in their home countries⁴⁶ – though, on the other hand, studying abroad can also hinder one's ability to suc-

43 See also Karen Lillie, “Mobile and Elite: Diaspora as a Strategy for Status Maintenance in Transitions to Higher Education,” *British Journal of Educational Studies* 69, no. 5 (2021), doi: 10.1080/00071005.2021.1948965.

44 Jane Kenway et al., *Class Choreographies: Elite Schools and Globalization* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 231.

45 See also Claire Maxwell and Karen Lillie, “From a National Elite to the Global Elite: Possibilities and Problems in Scaling Up,” *The British Journal of Sociology* 75, no. 5 (2024), doi:10.1111/1468–4446.13129.

46 Johanna Waters, “Geographies of Cultural Capital: Education, International Migration and Family Strategies between Hong Kong and Canada,” *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 31, no. 2 (2006), doi: 10.1111/j.1475–5661.2006.00202.x; Johanna Waters, *Education, Migration and Cultural Capital in the Chinese Diaspora: Transnational Students between Hong Kong and Canada* (Amherst, NY: Cambria Press, 2008).

cessfully follow this path.⁴⁷ Nonetheless, it is clear that, at least at the point of transition from LAS to higher education, these students' orientation was westward.

6 Conclusion

This chapter started by mapping the educational landscape around Lake Geneva that LAS joined when it was founded. It then discussed how LAS became part of a new frontier during the Cold War, as an American school abroad. The following sections turned to a period of transition at the school that paralleled broader changes in America's positionality on the world's stage. The chapter ended by examining LAS as an institution whose students are oriented westward, mostly to the US.

I argue that LAS provides a case of an educational institution shifting over time, from one that provides an American education abroad, to one that facilitates the westward movement of students looking towards the Anglophone world. This followed changes in America's approach to foreign affairs, as well as evolutions in what was considered "West," in the sense of a new frontier. In this way, LAS was part of the story of looking West, and also of how that gaze, both broadly and institutionally, evolved over time.

It will be interesting to see how LAS develops in the future. We are arguably in an era when the US has become culturally less attractive to the rest of the world – seemingly due to a combination of surfacing racism, sexism, and nationalism. This likely means that the frontier will shift yet again and that LAS, in parallel, will change as well.

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Note: There is no official school archive. This "collection" is located in the school headmaster's office.

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