Title: Critical Reflections on Modern Elite Formation and Social Differentiation in the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme in England.

Abstract

This paper investigates the changes in educational policy in England regarding the implementing of the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (henceforth IBDP) into post-16 (sixth form) education. The aim is to illustrate the unique trajectory of the IBDP in England: from its adoption in schools and colleges across the country, to its removal, due largely to a combination of specific changes, such as government funding criteria inside state education, and the tariff system for university entry that is deployed for qualifications at 18. This paper explores this combination of changes using interview data with 28 senior leaders from eight schools and colleges that have introduced the IBDP, including state centres that have subsequently had to remove it from their curriculum.

Employing the idea of a neo-liberal social imaginary (Ball, 2012) this paper analyses the resulting level of social exclusion inside the English post-16 curriculum created by the educational policies adopted by successive governments since the 2008 economic recession. The paper argues that the rise and decline of the IBDP in England has resulted in a significant level of socially differentiated take up, largely in independent schools, and in state schools in London and the South-East of the country (Bunnell, 2015). This paper concludes that access to the IBDP is restricted with regard to both geographical and social mobility and that current access to the IBDP in England is helping to sustain a 'globally mobile transnational elite group' (Savage et al, 2015, p.244), thus reinforcing the connection established between the IBDP's wider curriculum and global capitalism (Resnik, 2009).

Introduction.

This paper investigates the implementation and the subsequent withdrawal of the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (henceforth IBDP) into post-16 education in England. There a number of factors that have led to the interest in the IBDP for students in the age bracket 16-19 years old, and which are a reflection of English education policy in the last decade:

- increasing worry about standards of A-levels and other Level-3 qualifications, which are pre-requisites for entrance in Universities
- pressure of entry into one of the elite Russell Group Universities
- institutional funding made available by the last Labour Government for the IBDP
- UCAS (the Universities and Colleges Admissions Services) tariff employed by most Universities allocated to the IBDP (making it worth the equivalent of four and a half A-levels)
- increasing parental power and student choice in the post-16 sector, which tie into the wider marketisation strategies.

The IBDP appears on an ever-growing trajectory, despite both the lack of new state school/ college take up since 2010, and the marked decline in delivery from the state centres that took up the qualification in the 2000s. This level of interest in the IBDP is directly connected to the crisis of A Level qualifications which took place between 2002 and 2014, when successive secretaries of state for education attempted to tackle the issue with a series of curriculum changes that, starting from September 2015, include: the (re)introduction of numerical, 9-1 grading (as opposed to alphabetical, A*-G) for GCSE (General Certificate of Secondary Education) at the age of 16, the reduction in opportunities to re-sit, return to a more traditional curriculum, and the (re)introduction of linear exams for A Level, and substantially reduced coursework percentages (DfE, 2015).

In this context, the paper illustrates the unique trajectory of the IBDP in England: from its adoption in schools and colleges across the country, to its removal to a combination of specific changes, such as changes in government funding for post-16 education and the tariff system for university entry that is deployed for qualifications at 18. Through the analysis of interview data with 28 senior leaders from schools and colleges that have introduced the IBDP, including state centres that have subsequently had to remove it from their curriculum, this paper argues that IBDP is restricted with regard to both geographical and social mobility and that current access to the IBDP in England is helping to sustain a 'globally mobile transnational elite group' (Savage et al, 2015:244), thus reinforcing the connection established between the IB curriculum and global capitalism (Resnik, 2009).

The paper first contextualises the introduction of the International Baccalaureate programme in England with a literature review on educational policy that illustrates the process of elite formation within the educational system. The interview data reveal the tensions experienced by the Senior Leadership Teams in the eight centres taking part in the study, as they discuss the effects of educational policy on wider participation and access, and subject-choices   in higher education.

Literature review-Understanding Education Policy.

In view of the rapid growth in the IBDP, the role of non-mandatory policy change is clearly of interest in social policy terms, particularly considering the changes in English educational policy in the last decade, and how momentous these changes have been.

The education policy that characterises the current climate began with the defeat of Labour in 2010, in particular the consolidation of centralization initiated by post-1988 education reforms and the extensive New Labour education reforms of the 1990s and 2000s. The changes that form the backdrop to this study in particular are:

- the ideological shift that asserts that education is a consumer good, and parents and students have power to exercise choice

- the shift in power base from the traditional Local Education Authorities to individualized individual education provision, through individual schools or groups of schools

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- the shift in individual institutions' power bases from the Senior Leadership Team to the middle tier in terms of day-to-day leadership, but explicitly not in terms of overall operational and strategic leadership

- the creation of Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs) and the nature of branding and chain building that this has recently been brought into education, some of which is 'exogenous' privatization (Ball, 2007)

- an increasing awareness of 'cultural class analysis' that has its roots in Bourdieu, but has played out through the national media with the creation of the Great British Class Survey (GBCS, 2013) and the ensuing BBC online survey (Savage et al, 2015).

- ever-increasing globalization and the lack of 'limit' on nation-state boundaries, as witnessed particularly in the London post-2007/8 crash years, with heavy foreign investment in capital such as housing, and investment in their children through independent school fees, particularly in high status public schools (HMC, 2016).

Parkin's (1971) idea of social closure describes the phenomenon observed in this study, whereby restricting access to a wider choice of curriculum, such as that offered by the IBDP, results in a limitation of social mobility that can be achieved through education (Smith and White, 2015). Bourdieu's (1992) twin concepts of cultural capital and social reproduction inside education seem to fit the nature of the IBDP, as a form of symbolic "goods" (Swartz, 1997:42) that potentially allows access to more prestigious forms of education. This process of reproduction is exemplified by Ball in terms of 'narrative coherence' (2003: 173), which illustrates how middle class families strive to employ education in order for their children to achieve a similar, if not higher, position in the socio-economic order.

From Ball's (2002, 2003, 2006, and 2007) analyses of the middle classes, it emerges that the distinctions inside middle class groups are often based around their use of schooling and curriculum choice. Indeed, the decisions that are made intra-class are more often signifiers of social grouping than inter-class differences. This is particularly evident in the type of choices that middle class groups exercise in regard to state and independent provisions. In this sense, if the local state choice does not have the same curriculum offering as the independent provision, and parents and students are conscious of what may be 'better' in a different educational context, then the opportunity to choose between the state sector or the independent sector is often distinctive of a particular class group or sub-group. The workings of this latter group, which includes an internationally differentiated elite, is illustrated by the 'cultural-class analysis' of Savage et al (2015). Archer's writings (2013) on the social origins of educational systems are pertinent in this analysis of educational change:

> to understand educational interaction means grasping how structural factors shape and action situations and why in turn these are interpreted in particular ways by the people involved. To explain educational change means theorizing about these joint determinants of interaction at their point of intersection.
> Archer, 2013: 89

This interaction between structural factors and the actions of the people involved relates precisely to the space in the education system where traditional middle class group interests (or elite group interests, Savage et al, 2015) can be seen to be intersecting with a globally mobile group, in order to access a curriculum that potentially confers social advantage. However, this advantage is not necessarily conferred through differentiated access to Higher Education Institutions, ~~HEIs~~ an area that requires further research. Instead, this research process identified the advantage conferred by the IBDP in terms of a positional good offered to those who had access to it.

Bunnell argues that it is *access* that confers the IBDP its potential positional good:

> the IB could emerge as an economic positional good, as a vehicle for expressing superiority and perpetrating economic disadvantage. This gives it a potential commercial value beyond the intrinsic one.
>
> Bunnell, 2011: 167.

Understood in terms of a positional good, intrinsic costs such as school fees become a value significantly worth paying for the access that the IBDP gives to social groups, facilitating access (potentially) to elite universities. Although access to these universities is still commonly achieved through the A-Level route, the narrowing of the curriculum occurs in the English system at the age of 16, meaning that students who are financially or geographically privileged to be in area where access to the IBDP exists can delay this narrowing of their curriculum choices until the age of 18. Research conducted by Doherty et al (2009) in Australia showed that International Baccalaureate students' choices are determined by access to international HE institutions, thus demonstrating the global significance of an internationally recognised and externally validated examination system. Groups of students become mobile either because their parents are transnational for work reasons, or because their parents have deliberately become geographically mobile in order to provide better opportunities for their children's education, as detailed by Doherty et al (2009). As Archer comments:

> Weak differentiation and specialisation will be experienced as major deficiencies in the services received by a number of social groups. The uniform and standardised nature of schooling means that many do not get the type of service they require. Despite differences in aspirations and aptitudes parents and pupils confront a system which provides them with relatively little choice or a forced selection between a prestige mainstream and inferior branching alternatives. Other groups will suffer because specialisation hardly begins to meet their needs… many groups in different parts of the social structure will find themselves experiencing severe deficiencies and among them may number the elites of certain institutions.'
>
> Archer, 2013: 255.

The 'deficiencies' here to which Archer refers in relation to elite groups accessing education are based on the industrial model of schooling (Marshak, 2003), meaning schooling on a mass

scale which does not suit their viewpoint and aspirations. In a sense, rather than an explicit preoccupation with grades and access to Higher Education environments, this attitude can be described almost as 'prereflexive' (Bourdieu, 1992). Small public schools suit elite groups as they create students through the networks they develop and the confidence that they exude, or 'ease' as Kahn (2011) described it.

This intra-class interface, or intersection, between the upper middle and the middle middle classes is reflected inside this research process that was undertaken with Senior Leadership Teams in schools and colleges, which has shown that it is the fee-paying centres that can maintain the IBDP whereas the bulk of state maintained centres have subsequently withdrawn from it. The 'choice' over schooling that is left to all parents, and students, if one type of curriculum only exists in the independent sector is therefore one of fee-paying, or the costs of re-locating to the few residue areas where the IBDP is available in the state sector. Even then, it has to be remembered that this still needs to be both a financial possibility and a moral inclination. Paul Luxmoore, executive head of Dane Court Grammar in Kent argued back in 2011 that 'no state schools will be doing the IBDP and the only way to access it will be if your parents have got enough money to send you to an independent school' (Stewart, Times Educational Supplement, 2011). This research process has revealed that whilst this is not factually accurate, and the IBDP is available inside the state sector, it is not now commonly available inside the state sector outside London and the South-East of England. There are now only very few notable exceptions, such as Broadgreen International School in Liverpool, and Impington Village College in Cambridgeshire where the IBDP still exists, and these also are the centres which established the programme long before the rush of state schools in the 2000s. These successful IBDP schools have been delivering the programme for decades, and they have established broad curricular goals that encourage volunteering; sport; music; drama and understanding of philosophy. This experience stands in contrast to those schools which came to deliver the IBDP during the 2000s as a result of Government funding, which was subsequently withdrawn. Thus, these long-term IBDP state schools (as the Impington Village College 2017 website states) are potentially unique as state schools, offering parents a genuine choice in not accessing the independent sector for a wider choice of curriculum.

Exley and Sussia (2013:349) have discussed this concept in the context of parents making the decision to 'go private', but also contributing to what Cribb and Ball (2005) determine as an 'ethical audit' of the wider trends towards privatisation in education. In examining the choices made in education, Hatcher notes that:

> The primary effects of class are the differences in academic ability generated by family backgrounds. The secondary effects concern the rational choices made by young people and their parents at transition points in their careers... What needs to be stressed is that class differentiation in transition decisions does not simply *reflect* class differences in attainment... Choices concerning transition to higher levels of education differ according to class position, *even when there is no difference in level of achievement.*
>
> Hatcher (1998:7) Italics in original.

This recalls the work of Savage et al (2015:5), on the different class-based choices that are made, for example around the 'growing power of elite universities', even when there is no difference in the level of attainment between groups.

What type of curriculum to choose at the age of 16, depends on what is available and affordable, and whether or not the student, parents, and staff involved in the choices are aware of what the differences in transition can make to subsequent higher levels of education. Therefore, as in England state centres have withdrawn the IBDP, often the only opportunity left for most is to study the IBDP inside a fee paying centre: this is a far cry from what the Labour Prime Minister Tony Blair had envisaged in 2005 back in 2005. In addition, from the IBO's (2016) list of schools and colleges that currently deliver the IBDP, certainly outside London the only type of schools that appear to be successfully maintaining this course seems to be the elite public boarding schools, rather than independent day schools. This, in itself, highlights a usage of the English education system by groups/elites, using certain types of school to signify their own internal class differentiation inside their own social grouping. These social groups are often international in background and have an international outlook, they are transnational with regard to the world and the global roles they envisage (or imagine, Ball, 2012) playing out across their lifetimes.

In discussing Ball's (2003) seminal research on class and education, Beck (2007) highlights the moral dimension as one of the elements that have become predominant in research on class choice and education. This moral dimension theme is interwoven with issues of cultural capital, social closure and narrative coherence (Ball, 2007), but it must be noted that the concept of social closure is itself potentially subject to change over time. Wright-Mills (1959:3) defined power elites in terms of dominant groups 'in a position to make decisions having major consequences', and Brown (2013:695) has argued that elites have previously used social closure to 'define the rules of the game to their own advantage' (Brown, 2013: 695). However, when looking at stratification in global society, the traditional focus of social closure based on primarily exclusionary tactics, can now also include 'consideration of inclusionary tactics to usurp the power base of privileged classes or social groups' (Brown, 2013: 695). This idea is echoed by Bunnell (2015) in relation to the IBDP as 'rapidly gaining access to elite private schooling and de facto the future 'power elite', making reference to Wright-Mills (1959).

Paragraph deleted in response to peer reviewer's comments on suitability of content.

Section: Equity, learning and the global context, deleted due to peer reviewer's comment on relevance in the context of the paper.

Achieving social justice- Educational Policy in England.

The issue of social justice and whether or not an education system manages to achieve equity, was discussed in a seminal text by Halsey et al (1965), which detailed the waste of working class talent in the UK due to the nature of the selective grammar school system, a very pertinent topic in England as the current Conservative Prime Minister would like to see a return to an expansion of the grammar school education system. This subsequently led to

Halsey's appointment as an education advisor to the two Labour Governments (1964-66, and 1966-70). In this role, Halsey was instrumental in the drafting and instigating of Circular 10/65 that abolished grammar schools in England and Wales. Halsey's main drive was to create a less divisive and more socially fair system in which all talents could thrive. It is argued here that despite the post-97 Labour Government's overt intentions to create a less divisive and more socially fair system, their tenure saw the expansion of faith schools, specialist schools, and increased diversity particularly with regard to post-16 education (Chitty, 2009). This increased post-16 diversity has led to a more, not less, divisive education system (Tomlinson, 2008). Furthermore, in terms of the entrenching of privilege in England, Milburn's Social Mobility Reports of 2009, 2012, 2015 and 2016 documented the increasing social divide and the lack of social mobility in Great Britain. Significantly, unpaid internships have become common practice for cementing (upper?) middle class connections inside elite groups (Savage et al 2015), and students are seven times more likely to enter a professional career if from professional parents than if not, providing a further example of social closure (Milburn, 2009).

Piketty (2013), documents the ways in which public funding strategies are linked to the post-2007 economic depression, characterised by an increase in wealth inequality. In this spirit, one of most noticeable aspects of Michael Gove's leadership as Secretary of State for Education during the Coalition Government was the recourse to solutions that were ostensibly driven by a sense of social justice, such as additional funding to raise the attainment of disadvantaged pupils under the Pupil Premium Policy in 2010, subsequently recognised as a policy for 'the disadvantaged' (DfE, 2014). This additional budget strand was handed directly from central government to individual school/college leaders, representing an example of a public funding strategy linked to the post-2007 economic depression.

This leaves a situation in England where even Joanne Milner, Chief Executive at Debrett, a specialist publisher concerned with traditional etiquette and people of influence in the UK, has commented that '...Britain is becoming less meritocratic. As a young person growing up in Britain today, you have a far greater chance of succeeding if you come from a privileged background and have inherited a rich social capital' (Milner, 2015).

Cultural Capital.

Piketty draws on Bourdieu's (1986) analysis in this area concentrating on the development of terms such as 'cultural capital'. Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) arguably began the debate around how networks are developed in order to entrench middle-class positions of cultural advantage, meaning that groups with high levels of capital are thus able to maintain parts of the education system for themselves. Such use of cultural capital has continued virtually unrestricted, even after the Labour government made some policy in-roads to address it, such as the development of the Excellence-in-Cities programme (2001) the creation of NAGTY-National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth (2003), and the London Challenge (2003), initiatives that aimed to address the issue of inequality particularly in inner cities and other urban areas. These New Labour policies were criticised by those such as Tomlinson (2008), for effectively pandering to the middle classes. These policies gave the upper middle class (or elite group, Savage et al, 2015), in particular, a reason to stay inside the state sector and

capitalise on educational opportunities that were considered appropriate to them. As a government strategy, it was argued by supporters of the Prime Minister Tony Blair, that keeping the middle classes inside the system, inclusivity was the answer to not only a majority Labour government but also an on-going attempt at social equity (Adonis, 2012). Another example of government policy that attempted to tackle the lack of economic capital during Labour was The Baby Bond (2000), a scheme aimed at providing parents with a £250 cash bond, doubled for lower income families, for every new-born child. This scheme was praised by many social justice campaigners as an example of what can be achieved to redress the balance if political will exists (JRF, 2010). The Baby Bond was phased out by the Coalition government in 2010, but if the individual sums involved in this policy were compared with two years boarding fees to do the IBDP in England of £64,000 (average for best 40 schools in the League Table, according to the website Best Schools), then the gap in lack of equity within the education system can clearly be seen.

The main issue at stake is to establish whether or not this form of entrenchment happens with the IBDP: do groups with high levels of capital successfully maintain the IBDP for themselves? In this context, it is possible to employ the term 'elite' group (Savage et al, 2015 and Dorling, 2014 on the internal differentiation within this elite group) to illustrate the decline of opportunity for students in the state sector to take up the IBDP: only the 'elite' in society are able to access this educational provision, either through independent school fees or by accessing one of the few remaining, declining places where the IBDP remains on offer in the state sector.

Study design and methodological considerations.

This research focuses on the pressures facing Senior Leadership Teams, and in particular how they cope with the amount of change that continually permeates through the education system in England. This one particular non-mandatory policy option relating to the IBDP has been studied at a time of much political, economic and social change and migration. The International Baccalaureate's Diploma Programme has been adopted with a variety of motivations into many schools and colleges by their Senior Leadership Teams (SLTs), and this study explores its curriculum usage in eight centres. Senior Leadership Teams have to ensure that changes implemented in their centres are successful, in order to make them continually viable inside the market economy of choice and parental expectation that characterises the educational landscape in England as previously discussed. Thus, the aims that cut across the range of state and independent institutions in which this research was carried out were to determine:

- Why these Senior Leadership Teams made the decision to implement non-mandatory policy?
- How do these Senior Leadership Teams deal with the successes or failures that this can bring?
- Why do they think it is beneficial? Why was it not? What went wrong? Why do they regard this as a learning curve for their SLT?

These three research questions reflect the endeavour to collect qualitative information on how these senior leaders, in schools and colleges in particular, *think* and *feel* (Mayring, Glaser-Ziduka, 2003). This research process is trying to measure or gauge something that cannot be looked at again in exactly the same way, as it was a response given by leaders to a particular choice of non-mandatory policy implementation, during a specific time frame from 2010-2015. Its significance resides in revealing a difference between the choice of curriculum on offer to class groups that continues to permeate through the education system. These differences have a bearing on access to university, particularly for brighter students who do not know what they want to study or do for their careers, as it narrows their choices at 16, rather than 18.

In terms of generalisability (Silverman, 2011), although only four state centres and four independent centres have been visited for the purposes of this research process, the viewpoints in both sectors were so markedly different to one another that it becomes possible to generalise the findings to their respective wider sectors. However, given the research strategy used, and the paradigm chosen this would clearly need to be replicated on a larger scale for the viewpoints emerged to be confirmed. As Miles et al (2014) argue:

> Multiple-case sampling adds *confidence* to findings. By looking at a range of similar and contrasting cases we can understand a single-case finding grounding it by specifying *how* and *where* and, if possible, *why* it carries on as it does. We can strengthen the precision, validity, stability, and trustworthiness of the findings. In other words we are following a r*eplication* strategy (Yin, 2009). If a finding holds in one setting, and given its profile, also holds in a comparable setting but does not in a contrasting setting, the finding is more robust.

<div align="right">Miles et al, 2014: 33-34.</div>

The data collected for this paper is organised primarily around a qualitative research method that relies on an adapted version of Mayring's (2000) inductive category formation model. Essentially, this involves a mixed approach to collecting and handling data. Learning and social contexts are very closely entwined, and the impact of 'globalisation', 'transition' to HE, and the on-set of mass-change in the education system meant that Senior Leadership Teams experienced very tough choices on curriculum development and the introduction of non-mandatory policy (Dorey, 2014).   Mayring's (2007) system of coding produces an argumentative generalisation in the process of data collection. This method used a semi-structured, open-ended interview study eventually involving 28 respondents from eight schools and colleges, centring on eight open questions, as listed in Table 1. This, then, is a type of inductive theory development where coding of statements leads to considerations of clustering and categorising of views and experiences in order to allow further iterative analysis and interpretation. In this particular application of the Mayring model of content, analysis is via successive coding which has therefore enabled the qualitative data collected by the interviews to generate valid generalisations around their experiences on the introduction

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of non-mandatory policy, in this case their reasoning to implement the IBDP, and how they felt when (in two of the centres) it was subsequently withdrawn.

Open ended interview schedule

1. Why did you choose to introduce the IB into your centre?
2. What were the specific challenges of introducing the IBDP here?
3. What have you learnt from having the IBDP on the curriculum here?
4. Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the IBDP.
5. What do you think you have learnt as an SLT from introducing the IB?
6. If relevant, how did you make the decision to pull out of the IB?
7. If relevant, could you foresee a circumstance where you attempted to reintroduce the IB?
8. Would you like to make any other comments?

By creating categories and sub-categories these are then contrasted, and the properties of categories can be tested against concepts and the 'spoken realities' of the interviewees. The research process intends for a synthesis to emerge where issues can be analysed and explained, which highlights how English education policy, in relation to the IBDP, has been deployed in the last decade, and this is what builds a picture that enables learning to take place from the successes and failures that happen from within the SLT positions and decisions.

Data & Analysis.

Table 1 highlights schools or colleges that:

- Are state or independent
- Cover a particular age range
- Still deliver the IBDP
- And, which other courses they deliver at Level 3, namely:
    - Pre-U (Pre-University)
    - AQA Baccalaureate
    - EPQ (Extended Project Qualification)
    - Other Level 3 courses

For the purposes of data collection, the number of state schools and independent schools is evenly distributed, four state and four independent. The independent schools were more likely to also cover a primary age range, and only two of the state schools are still delivering the IBDP.

Table 1 - Overview of centre profiles

Centre number	Independent or State	Age Range	IBDP Yes or No	Pre U Yes or No	A Levels Yes or No	AQA Bacc or EPQ Yes or No	Other Level 3 courses
One	State	16-19	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Two	Independent	13-18	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Three	State	13-18	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Four	Independent	4-18	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
Five	State	11-18	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Six	Independent	10-18	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
Seven	State	13-18	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
Eight	Independent	7-18	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No

This first category that emerged from the analysis of the data is around the real learning and knowledge that the SLT and the school/ college beyond them experienced. The connected sub-category concerned the identification of the IBDP (What is the IBDP? How is it really different?) as different from the from the mainstream provision of the Pre U and A Levels. Senior staff (across both sectors) all, without exception, referred to the IBDP as giving some variation on the comment that *'breadth of understanding that 3 A Levels don't'* offer/give, whereas some staff qualified this with the level of depth of HL (Higher Level) being not quite the same as an A Level. The only additional qualifier here from staff came when discussing requirements of Russell Group universities for STEM subjects: *'the only real rationale for doing A Levels in Maths and Physics now is that [the IBDP] HL (Higher Level) in those subjects is not quite as detailed [as the A Levels]'*, but the benefits were still thought to out-weigh the disadvantages: *'so it may mean that the IBDP student has to work harder than the A Level student, but look at what they bring to the table: better essay writing skills from TOK (Theory of Knowledge), better well-rounded ability from CAS (Creativity, Action, Service), better language and social science skills to put their scientific research into a wider context from having kept all of those additional subjects going, does that make them a better scientific undergraduate? No, not in their first year, but does it make them a better scientific researcher longer term? Yes, it very much does'* (Head at Centre 2).

The second category is related to the relevance of the programme to the eight centres. For some centres (the 'early adopters' in Centres 6, 7, and 8) the relevance of the DP had been entrenched and they could not imagine life without that level of choice curricula choice, or what might be termed, 'discretion', for being able to allocate students on to particular pathways that create alternative biographical trajectories. But for other schools/ colleges the relevance of choice the relevance of the choice of curricula options (and now lack of that

choice in Centres 1 and 3) brought home a strong sense of relevance around the rationale for *why* it had been chosen in the first place. Overall, SLT positions from the independent sectors were polarised around the theme of offering a curriculum that they perceive as being right for their student body, supported by a student and parent demand for the IBDP. This attitude is influenced by the profit making industry in which independent schools operate (although within the confines of charitable status), whereby even small independent day schools have to run at a low profit. If not successful, SLTs agreed that they would withdraw the programme. However, despite not much effort or resources have been dedicated to advertising, the demand for the IBDP continues to grow. From the state sectors there was a palpable sense of respect for the qualification; the SLTs interviewed mentioned the lack of government interference, the breadth of the curriculum, the wider opportunities and the greater confidence levels provided to the students.

One recurring theme was the lack of genuine opportunity to introduce or to allow the IBDP to properly succeed in the state sector. From this perspective, respondents lamented inappropriate levels of funding, the need to raise parental understanding, and in particular the absence of clear indications from universities on whether the IBDP represents a favourable route for access to higher education. These factors place state schools at a disadvantage, a situation summarised by the Head of one of the independent schools (Centre 4): *'the world has moved-on, unless you really want to do four in-depth sciences, you should be doing the IB it is the only qualification available that prepares students properly for their futures'.*

The third inductively derived statement in this analysis revolves around parental choice: 'Do our students/ parents want it?', as this is the area where views polarized from '*parental pressure'* (in Centres 1 and 2), to a response that can be summarised as challenging '*students expectations*' (in Centre 3). The discussions that had taken place around the costings and the position of introducing something that potentially diverts resources away from elsewhere derived the code of 'Can we afford it?', this is obviously a bigger discussion in the state sector than the independent sector where the additional costs are directly passed on to the consumer. It should be mentioned that for the two remaining state schools interviewed, this is where the bulk of their internal SLT debates still lie.

What is known about leaders in education is that they often feel squeezed between differing groups (Earley, 2013). One the one side, those they answer to – their own 'external' leaders: governing bodies, executive head teachers, Chain school 'owners', Local and National governments. On the other, the people they in turn lead inside their teams and organizations. This latter group comprises what could perhaps be viewed as the 'internal' group involved in education: students, parents, and staff. This squeeze between those leading and those being led appears especially noticeable around agendas of change. Individual leaders who participated in this research process are sometimes overwhelmed by their roles, but still find the 'traditional' perhaps inherent satisfaction inside education - helping people. In the case of the SLT leaders interviewed here, this altruistic element of public service transfers to

implementing the policy that in turn impacts on the students, rather than the direct involvement with teaching that happens earlier on in teachers' careers.

Members of SLTs have a huge sense of responsibility to a very varied group, the combination of the 'internal' and 'external' groups described above: staff, students, parents, governors and the policy makers at all relevant levels. However, it emerges from the interviews that they feel they have insignificant power, being ever reactive to events and often feeling isolated and removed from their 'core' staff teams. Leaders still enjoy making a significant difference in others' lives such as the students and communities that they see themselves as serving, but increasingly this comes from the decisions that they take around the adoption of policy and ensuing curriculum choice. There are a number of tensions that emerge from this analysis, which can be related to the Janus faced nature of leadership (Aronson, 2001). On the one side, SLT face the pressures directed at school leaders deriving from the changes in the shifting political and economic landscapes. On the other, school leaders are held accountable by the insider groups for decisions taken as a response to those changes dictated by external forces. The potential limits on control and agency caused by global, national and local forces become thus critical in order to unravel these tensions, bringing to the fore the role of organisations systems and cultures in which SLT groups are immersed.

Senior Leadership Team members have given witness to how structures can both enable and prevent their students from achieving. Hence being able to influence the choice of curriculum so that appropriate levels of status are conferred or restricted, or agency can be suitably deployed, can be regarded an attractive decision on which to base the implementation of non-mandatory policy. Discussion around levels of 'choice', and what choice means in these differing schools and colleges, was explored in these inductively-derived codes. These Senior Leadership Teams all have different constraints whether state or independent. They also have differing levels of engagement with international communities: some, with the transnational global elite that has been discussed in this paper, but others have international communities from changing urban multicultural environments. Senior Leadership Teams that were visited and interviewed also had an understanding of the fact that they were educating students to be part of a globalized society irrespective of their circumstances.

Conclusion.

In exploring post-16 curricula access as shaped by social, economic, political, and cultural and professional constraints, this research process has revealed a snapshot of how educational leaders can act and how these actions can appear transformative for those who have access to them. This story of the IBDP adoption and withdrawal in state schools and colleges in England, has illustrated contemporary global identities and possibilities for students whose trajectories can be uncertain in transnational market places. It has illustrated how leaders are constrained by their circumstances when willing to engage in something new, highlighting how policy decisions can acknowledge parity whilst not acknowledging funding ratios that ultimately enforce a lack of equity across the education system. In this sense, it is significant that the choices faced by Senior Leadership Teams in the state sector focused primarily on

financial restrictions, and on a lack of parity that exists in educational structures (Archer, 2013).

According to Resnik, while national education systems withdraw from multicultural education, international schools, and in particular IB schools, emphasise multicultural values and competencies as invaluable resources to equip their students with the skills required to succeed in a global and inter-connected world:

> As a result, only children graduating from international and exclusive private schools may have access to prestigious global jobs that required multicultural skills; for the rest of the students, even the most brilliant, becoming a global manager might remain only a dream, an impossible mission.
>
> (Resnik, 2009:218)

This paper has argued that the IBDP is an indicator of new and emerging forms of social differentiation. The increasing disparity between state and independent schools represents one of the major factors that contribute to reproducing patterns of inequality in the wider society. At a time of decreasing social mobility for the mainstream population (Milburn, 2009, 2012, 2015, 2016), this paper has analysed whether education environments are able to influence either their students or the wider education policy agenda to actively achieve social justice. This paper has described the interview processes that took place inside eight schools and colleges that implemented the IBDP highlighting the mechanism by which elite groups are potentially separating their children out from other groups by enabling their access to the IBDP as part of the process of guaranteeing a place in an elite university, by keeping their curriculum options open longer. Savage et al (2015: 245) comment that: 'almost two thirds of those taking the 'royal road' – coming from a senior managerial or traditional professional home, and going to an independent school, then Oxford – reach the elite'. However, as Savage et al (2015) state, this is no longer the case as many individuals from these senior managerial or traditional professional home can no longer afford school fees and large mortgages. Whereas the developing 'globally mobile transnational elite' (Savage et al, 2015: 243), that can afford independent education for their children are paying for something that is now significantly harder to come by in the state sector. In summary, this paper has illustrated *how* and *why* new social forms and forces are emerging and defining their interests via curricular concerns. It has focused on *how* SLTs in particular institutions in England, at specific conjunctions in recent times, have responded as 'professionals' and leaders in defining new ways of learning and organising learning and its 'outcomes'.

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