'How far has the cosmopolitanism of the IB become subverted by neoliberalism? A case study of an international school in Thailand viewed through the lens of Bourdieu'.

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This thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

or for TRR students

This thesis is submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Word Count - 48978

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UK

Abstract

Luke Ramsdale - 'How far has the cosmopolitanism of the IB become subverted by neoliberalism? A case study of an international school in Thailand viewed through the lens of Bourdieu.

This study examines to what extent the cosmopolitan ideals venerated by international schools are subverted by the neoliberal realities of the current education system. The study utilises Pierre Bourdieu's theories such as field, habitus and capital to frame the results. The growth of both International Schooling and the IBO (International Baccalaureate Organisation) has shifted international schooling from a niche sector of education into one which has broad implications for governments and providers in both the public and private sectors. For the purposes of this study, a case study approach was utilised which examined the thoughts, opinions and beliefs of students, parents and teachers within an established K-12 IB world school, situated in Thailand. Data was collected through both focus groups and individual semi-structured interviews. In addition, a comparative website analysis was undertaken of the six K-12 IB schools in Thailand. Findings suggest that the different stakeholders believe that attending an IB school confers significant capital to students, especially in regard to accessing Western universities. The study also highlighted some of the tensions evident between the cosmopolitan ideals of the IB such as the Learner Profile and Service Learning and the parental and student expectations of attendance at an elite IB world school. The website analysis highlighted a disproportionate focus on exam grades within the schools studied. It also underlined the disproportionate number of white leaders undertaking senior roles at these schools. The study also highlights some of the policies and practices which need to be addressed if the IB and international schools are to meet their holistic, equitable goals. The study concludes with areas of necessary further research needed to further understand this rapidly developing area of education.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the school used in this study and in particular the Head of School who was supportive of the research throughout. I would also like to thank all of the teachers, parents and students who agreed to be part of this study. This study would not have been possible without the expert guidance of my supervisor Jo Warin, who had the canny knack of making me feel positive and excited about the next steps whilst simultaneously give me lots to read, write and consider. Finally, I would like to thank my wife Rebecca for her patience and understanding during this process.

Author's declaration: I hereby declare that the contents of this thesis is my own work and has not been submitted in substantially the same form for the award of a higher degree elsewhere.

Signature ....Luke Ramsdale.................

List of Figures and Tables

Chapter 1: Introduction

The growth of international schooling over the past couple of decades has been meteoric. Between 2007 and 2019, the number of international schools worldwide has grown from 4,563 schools educating approximately 2 million students to 11,320 schools and 5.7 million children (ISC Research, 2022). This growth is predicted to further double by 2028 (Gaskell, 2016). Central to this unprecedented growth is the IBO, (International Baccalaureate Organisation) which as of February 2024 has grown to over 5,700 schools in 160 countries (IBO.org, 2022). This growth has shifted international schooling from a niche element of education, catering for the transnational global community (Doherty, 2009) into big business, inclusive of multinational profit-making corporations such as Nord Anglia, Gems and Cognita. Critics of this growth point to fact that these schools perpetuate elitism and benefit those students with the financial means to attend IB schools whether internationally or in a state setting (Doherty, 2009). However, the IB presents data indicating that a large majority of this growth has been within state schooling and that their overriding philosophy is to 'develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect.' (IBO.com, 2022). Despite these admirable sentiments, numerous academics have pointed to the inequalities that both International Schools and the IB perpetuate (Resnik, 2012, Gardner-McTaggart, 2024). The mere fact that there are over 10,000 IB schools operating in the US compared to 169 within Africa highlights this disparity (ibo.org, 2022).

This study will examine to what extent the cosmopolitan ideals of international school and the IB have been subverted by neoliberalism within education. The study will use an intensive case study approach to the data collection. The case study school is an established IB world school situated in Thailand. The school is one of six schools within Thailand which offer a K-12 (ages 5-19) IB education. Pierre Bourdieu's theoretical concepts such as capital, field and habitus will be employed to critically analyse the emerging themes, enabling a deeper understanding of how power, privilege and distinction operate within the context of the IB and international schooling.

1.1 Key Terms and Concepts

International Schools

The term international school refers to a private, fee-paying school which offers a curriculum which differs from the state offering of that country. For the most part, English is the language

of instruction in these schools, although there are also a number of French, German and Swiss schools dotted around the globe. In their early iterations, international schools were tasked with educating a small group of expatriate children who may be overseas due to family working commitments. These schools were, by definition initially elitist as they catered for employees of the UN, diplomats and multi-national company employees (Hill, 2012). However, in recent years the growth of international schools has led to this demographic expanding to include middle-class families of host countries in addition to globally mobile expatriate families. (Bunnell, 2021, Hayden & Thompson, 2013, Hill, 2007)

The school selected for this study is a K-12 IB private, independently owned, day and boarding non-selective International School. The school's status with regards to being a for profit or not for profit institution is unclear as school financial plans or records are not shared with the school community. The school was established in 2001, and was the first school within South East Asia to offer all four of the IB programmes. The school is owned and governed by a Thai family and has a strong emphasis on the Arts. The student population is comprised of approximately 60% Chinese students, with a further 20% from Thailand, and the remaining 20% hailing from various nationalities.

The International Baccalaureate Organisation (IBO)

An integral organisation to the growth and development of international schooling worldwide is the IBO (International Baccalaureate Organisation). The IBO began in Switzerland in 1967 and offers an educational framework for students aged 3-19. Within the IBO there are 4 distinct programmes.

Figure 1.1 (IBO.org, 2022)

In contrast to other national curricula, the IB endeavours to set itself apart by accentuating holistic, rigorous, and inquiry-based curriculum that is grounded in international-mindedness. This approach is particularly evident in the Primary Years Programme (PYP) and Middle Years Programme (MYP), where transdisciplinary and interdisciplinary methodology is emphasised.

Neoliberalism

Neoliberalism is a term which relates to the increasing global ideology which favours free market competition, private property rights, and the reduction or abolition of government intervention. Brown (2003) defines neoliberalism as a system which:

> takes control of the political sphere and subsumes it entirely to the needs of the market. The individual citizen becomes a homo economicus and every single area of social, cultural, and political life is reduced to the simple economic principles of cost-benefit, production, and efficiency (p. 9).

Brown (2003) continues to highlight the fact that whilst neoliberalism is a system by which government intervention is limited, it is not to be confused with a 'laissez faire' approach to capitalism as its success necessitates government intervention and manipulation of all social institutions from the media, law, schools, and universities. It seeks to eliminate the notion of education as 'a common and public good in the public interest' (Luke 2005, p. 161). Ball (2003) identified that major changes within education related to neoliberalism include the drastic transformations in the preparation of teachers, the intensification of the business of accreditation, the appropriation of multicultural education, and the formation of a new managerial and professional middle class to support the privatisation of education. Under neoliberal reforms education is designed to produce subjects with the knowledge and dispositions which service the economy and to develop human capital (Gray, O'Regan and Wallace, 2018). Mikeletau (2023) states that whilst undergoing neoliberal reforms, education has been tasked with responding to the contemporary challenges of globalisation in an increasingly multicultural world, whilst Kymlicka (2013) identifies that neoliberalism favours the 'cosmopolitan market actor who can compete effectively across state boundaries' (p. 111).

Neoliberalism and its specific impact on education has been mostly evident within Western countries such as the US, UK, Canada, and Australia (Doherty, 2009, 2012, Resnik, 2012, Gardner-McTaggart, 2018, Tarc, 2012). In turn, this has led to international schools in other

regions to be shaped by these neoliberal ideologies and practices. This leads to the proliferation of market driven international schools, increased competition, and consumer choice for parents (Khalil & Kelly, 2020).

Cosmopolitanism

The term cosmopolitanism within the context of education refers to a philosophy which emphasises the development of social skills, emotional skills, attitudes, and cognitive abilities while teaching intercultural understanding and global perspectives. As cited in Stornaiuolo & Nichols (2019), Nussbaum (1997) proposed that cosmopolitan education should aim to develop critical self-reflection, a sense of shared humanity and the ability to actively engage across cultural boundaries. This approach is closely aligned with the mission and vision of the IBO and is reflected not only in their stated philosophy but also within curriculum framework elements such as the LP (Learner Profile), which are a set of 10 traits or behaviours representing a "broad range of human capacities and responsibilities that go beyond academic success" (IBO.org, 2022). Other elements of the IB programs that reflect the cosmopolitan approach include SA (Service as Action), CAS (Creativity, Activity, Service), and the CP (Community Project). These elements are designed to allow students to interact with both their local and wider communities. The goal of cosmopolitanism within education is to develop students who have a 'global' mindset and are able to have empathy and respect for diverse communities. It encourages students to be able to critically appreciate multiple viewpoints and opinions. This concept is reflected within the IB mission 'these programmes (PYP, MYP, DP and CP) encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right' (IBO.org, 2022). This study will explore how these cosmopolitan ideals are understood and expressed within the case study school. Are there significant challenges to the implementation of these elements of the programmes, or are they a well-regarded and integral element of the IB experience? The study will use insights from teachers, parents, and students to understand how effective some of these cosmopolitan ideals are manifested within the school culture. Critics of cosmopolitanism within international schools point to the fact that these schools often perpetuate the inequalities that they are purporting to address and favour those students who already possess significant economic and social capital (Gardner-McTaggart, 2020, Resnik, 2012).

Pierre Bourdieu

Pierre Bourdieu (1930-2002) was a French sociologist and philosopher known for his theories

11

related to power, equality and social structures. He was concerned with understanding the practical life and social action in relation to power and domination (Power, 1999). His work on education was integral to understanding how schools and universities reinforce class structures. This work was most notable in his seminal book '*The State Nobility*', in which he analyses how educational institutions in France legitimise social structures. Whilst the empirical research undertaken within the context of the French education systems, the findings can be related to international schooling and the IB. For example, Bourdieu highlights that 'elite' institutions 'attach students to a place and status that are socially distinguished from the commonplace' and that this creates a 'magic boundary between insiders and outsiders' (p.102). This can directly relate to the belief that the IB can function as both sites of privilege and as a mechanism for elite global reproduction. He also highlights that becoming educated is a 'rite of mourning' (p. 110). This symbolic 'death' highlights how elite school graduates need to sacrifice their natural inclinations in order to progress. These connections will be expanded upon within the Literature Review.

Pierre Bourdieu's theories have been widely applied within the context of the IB and International schooling, most notably with regards to how forms of capital, field and habitus shape privilege within these schools. (Cambridge & Thompson, 2004, Gardner-McTaggart, 2016, Bunnell & Gardner-McTaggart, 2022, Khalil & Kelly, 2020). This study builds on this work by further examining how the cosmopolitan ideals of the IB are subverted by neoliberal policies and practices. His work highlights how educational policies often privilege those with pre-existing resources (Bourdieu, 1984). Given that international schools cater to wealthy local elites and transnational families, this study examines whether the IB and International schools exist more as a method of global elite reproduction rather than as a democratising force.

Bourdieu's work also analysed the power dynamics that exist within educational establishments and how neoliberal agendas can undermine any possible equitable practices. Bourdieu highlighted that the education system is an area of society where different forms of capital are keenly contested. Reay (2004) highlighted that cosmopolitan ideals within schooling aim to develop inclusivity and globalised approach, whilst neoliberal policies can limit opportunities for marginalised groups. By utilising Bourdieu's theories, I was able to examine the tensions that exist between cosmopolitan practices and neoliberal realities of international schooling.

Bourdieu's preference for his work to be used for empirical research rather than for theorising aligns well with the aims of this study. As Reay, 2020 notes, his belief that agents of the social world are better than the theoreticians' (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 252) is well suited to a study which aims to examine power relations, elitism and symbolic capital within the field of IB education.

It is worth noting some of the criticisms Bourdieu's work faced with regards to its practical application. It has been noted by Nash (1990), that his theories can be complex and abstract in practice. For example, the term 'symbolic violence' is one which can be difficult to unpack in differing context and therefore apply in real world situations. Swartz (1997) highlighted that whilst Bourdieu's work can be a powerful tool for understanding society, they do require significant intellectual effort to comprehend its complexity and depth. It has also been noted that his work can overlook the influence of race, gender and ethnicity have on societal inequalities (Reay, 2004). Despite these drawbacks in regard to applying Bourdieu, I feel that his theories are the best suited to frame the results of this study. His work will allow the research to define how inequalities and privilege are manifested within international schooling. His work is also relevant when analysing the impact of neoliberal policies and practice within an intended cosmopolitan sector such as international schooling.

1.2 The Researchers Positioning

My teaching career began in 2001 before making the decision to teach overseas in 2008. The intention was to initially enjoy opportunities to travel and live in different cultures before returning to the UK. However, my overseas career has now entered its 16th year and has included periods of work in diverse countries such as China, Tanzania, Ukraine, Sri Lanka, Fiji, and currently Thailand. These jobs have been a mixture of teaching and middle management roles. For the past decade this experience has been solely within IB schools and in particular the MYP (Gr6-10) programme, where I have spent the past 6 years as an MYP curriculum coordinator. These experiences have allowed me to develop an understanding of the pedagogical and philosophical practices evident within both the IB and international schools.

I am also aware of the fact that my own personal educational background is vastly different from the elite one, which I now work. I was educated at a comprehensive secondary school in a town in the Midlands area of the UK. My first teaching post was also in a deprived area of Coventry, which is in stark contrast to the demographic of students which I have taught in the international school segment of my career. This has included children of Presidents, worldwide sports stars, billionaire businessmen and foreign dignitaries. This contrast in professional experiences allows me to attain a reflexive standpoint, from which I am able to critically examine the elitist practices evident within international schools. Rather than utilising my experience in a phenomenological manner, my positionality within this study is acknowledged as a method to examine how privilege manifests itself within contemporary international schooling.

My understanding of the IBO was further developed in 2019, when I was appointed as an IB workshop leader and school visit team member. This part-time role is that of a teacher facilitator, whereby I lead 2.5-day workshops to both new and experienced IB educators in the Asia-Pacific region. The post also allows me to undertake IB authorisation visits, which are mandatory for both new schools to the programmes or for schools at the end of their five-year authorisation cycle. This training further developed my understanding the mechanics of the organisation, further developing my ability to be reflexive to the emerging themes from the study

1.3 Current Research

Catherine Doherty (2009, 2012) was one of the first researchers to align neoliberalism, neo conservatism and cosmopolitanism with the growth and provision of the IB. She highlights how these distinct concepts can have a symbiotic relationship and therefore reinforcing elite reproduction within this educational context. Within this sphere of research both Tristan Bunnell from the University of Bath and Alexander Gardner-McTaggart from Manchester University have published numerous papers focussed on the impact of international schools, the IB, elitism and equality as it relates to International Schooling. Alongside these overarching studies on the topic, there have been a few recent articles which look at these trends within different contexts. Recent studies such as that by (Bittencourt 2020, Resnik 2020) have also focussed on the rapid development of IB programmes within state schooling and the potential benefits and pitfalls of this development. Bunnell, (2020) highlights that this growth and impact on national education systems and provision has taken international schooling from a small, niche market into one which requires further understanding and research. According to Bunnell (2020), the operation and growth of individual schools had relied largely on parental support within a non-for-profit model. The field of 'International Schooling' is now strongly identified with neoliberal practices.

In my literature review, I will examine concepts such as neoliberalism, cosmopolitanism and neo-conservatism as distinct theoretical frameworks before utilising existing research to discuss how these intersect with one another in the context of the IB and International schooling. Recent conceptual developments within the field such as 'cosmopolitan nationalism' (Maxwell, et al, 2020, Bittencourt & Samangiengo, 2024) will also be examined. I will then introduce Pierre Bourdieu's framework, particularly his theories of capital, field and habitus and how these have been applied in the field of educational research.

One of the limitations of studying the impact of international schooling and the IB worldwide is the wide variety of contextual approaches that each country may take to this development. For example, within the Asia region, the governments of South Korea, Thailand and China all have a different approach to the growth of international schools. In South Korea, access to international schools for Korean passport holders is limited unless the student has spent a considerable amount of time abroad. However, these rules a relaxed within 'education zones' such as that situated on Jeju Island. Despite this limitation, the Korean government have partnered with the IB with a view to expanding IB programmes into Korean state schools (ibo.org.) These partnerships will also allow the IB programmes to be taught in Korean at these schools. In China, officially only foreign national are permitted to attend international schools albeit with some relaxation surrounding free trade zones. Thailand seemingly takes a very 'hands off' approach to international school provision. There are no requirements for Thai students to attend Thai state school and there is a freedom to join one of the myriad of schools opening in the country.

This study aims to address some of these broad topics by placing them within the specific context of a K-12 IB school in Thailand, and country that has yet to be thoroughly explored in current research despite the rapid growth of international schools in the region, which currently number 166 (International Schools Research).

1.4 Research Questions

The following research questions were considered when undertaking this research.

- How far has the cosmopolitanism of the IB become subverted by neoliberalism?

- To what extent are the cosmopolitan values inherent in the IB reflected in the thoughts and opinions of stakeholders at an established K-12 IB school?

- To what extend are the professional development needs of teachers met by the IB educator workshops?

- What are the parental expectations of attendance at an IB world school?

- How are different forms of capital evidenced and utilised at a case study K-12 IB school?

1.5 Methodology/Theoretical approach

Given my positionally within this research and therefore my inherent bias and prior experience within both international schools and the IB, an interpretivist approach to the study is the most appropriate. This approach values the role of qualitative research and the subjective experiences of individuals within an organisation. This theoretical approach allowed for a greater understanding of the nuanced, contextual interactions that are uncovered. This allows for a broad and balanced critical approach to examining education whilst not focussing on defining or finding universal truths within the topic. This approach lends itself to utilising a mixed methods approach to data collection.

These approaches to the methodology and theoretical aspects of the study were organically developed over the course of the research. Whilst having a broad understanding of my theoretical direction, I never approached the study with a fixed idea of what this would firmly develop into. This theoretical framing as such chose me, as they mirrored the ambiguity and critical multiplistic perspective that I felt the study would reveal.

The research design for this study included focus groups research with parents, teachers and students and individual semi-structured interviews with a selection of teachers. All of the stakeholders are connected with an established K-12 IB school situated in Thailand. The study also consisted of a website analysis of the 6 IB world schools in Thailand which offer a K-12 education pathway.

This study examines how the development and direction of the cosmopolitan ideals of the IB and International Schooling have been subverted by the neoliberal realities of contemporary education. This will be achieved through a case study of an established K-12 IB International School in Thailand, and an examination of the other 6 K-12 IB schools in Thailand. The study will allow for development of understanding from both a micro and macro level. The use of an individual school for the interviews and focus groups allows for the school to develop a greater understanding of their stakeholders and will hopefully be utilised to make a positive impact within the community. Thinking more broadly, the study will contribute to the following areas.

Using previous research around the IB and International Schools, the study will contextualise these within the 6 K-12 IB schools situated within Thailand.

- Gain an understanding of how the IB curriculum framework is viewed within a case

study school.

- Develop an understanding of how the development and trends of international schooling within Thailand can be explained using Pierre Bourdieu's theoretical work.

- Examine to what extent how the development of IB schools within Thailand is consistent with other regions/countries, with particular emphasis on the neoliberal/cosmopolitan narrative.

- Develop some key recommendations for further development of both IB provision and school participation.

1.6 Chapter Outline

This thesis will be divided into the following chapter.

Chapter 1 - Introduction

Chapter 2 – Review of Literature

Chapter 3 – Methodology

Chapter 4 – Emerging Themes
Chapter 5 - Discussion

Chapter 6 - Recommendations

Chapter 7 – Conclusions

Chapter 2 – Literature Review

This literature review will examine the evolution and intersection of international schooling, the International Baccalaureate (IB) organisation, and the extent to which neoliberalism and cosmopolitanism have shaped the international school market in recent years, examined through Bourdieu's theories and key ideas. Given the interpretive nature of the study, a thematic review of literature was conducted. This approach draws upon Boell & Kecmanovic's

(2014) hermeneutic approach. This approach to the literature requires an iterative, non-linear approach to existing research. This allowed for a deeper synthesis as opposed to an exhaustive list of related research. A core aspect of this approach required engaging with key texts and authors who have shaped the discourse in this field. This critical engagement allowed for key themes to emerge, leading to further lines of inquiry. Key scholars such as Gardner-McTaggart and Bunnell were identified early as central figures in this emerging field of study.

To ensure a structured engagement with the literature, Lancaster Universities One Search was used to access relevant peer reviewed articles and key texts. Zotero was used to store, organise and create notes on these texts. Zotero also acted as an initial tool for organising articles into emergent themes.

This Literature Review will also provide an overview of Pierre Bourdieu's critical theories related to education, with particular emphasis on concepts such as capital, habitus, and field, in order to examine how power and privilege manifest themselves within international schooling and the IB organisation. The review will highlight existing international schooling and IB research whilst exploring how Bourdieu's theories have been applied to understand these concepts. Doing so will identify and address the gaps in the current literature that this study aims to fill, thereby contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of the intersection between global educational trends and sociological theory.

By integrating a hermeneutic approach to this literature in conjunction with a thematic approach, this literature review remains conceptually rigorous whilst maintaining flexibility when engaging with articles and texts. This allows for the study to synthesise existing debates on the IB neoliberalism and Global privilege whilst positioning itself with the wider discourse on power structures in international education.

2.1 What is an International School?

According to ISC Research (2023), an International School can is defined as one which:
'is privately operated in a country where English is not an official language and it delivers a curriculum wholly or partly in English to some or all of its students between the ages of 3-18 or a school which is privately operated in a country where English is one of the official languages whilst delivering an English medium curriculum other than the countries national curriculum' (p. 35).

Traditionally, international schools have catered to temporarily displaced children of workers

who are employed overseas. These schools were often not-for-profit, governed by parents within the school community, and had an incredibly diverse student body. Until the 1990s, these schools saw static or modest growth, reaching approximately 500-1,000 schools worldwide (Hayden, 2011). These schools can be defined as a Type A category international school (Hayden and Thompson, 2013). Type B international schools are ones which seem to be committed to the cosmopolitan goals of global citizenship and international mindedness. An example of this approach would be the UWC group of schools whose ethos is to 'deliver a challenging and transformational education', with a mission that 'makes education a force to unite people, nations and cultures for peace and a sustainable future' (uwc.org, 2022). Type C international schools highlight the most recent development in international schooling and possibly reflect a shift towards a neoliberal model of provision. These schools often cater to wealthy middle and upper-class families of local populations. Often, these schools are run on a for-profit basis. The growth has also created schools which cater for different levels of parental wealth. Hayden (2011) highlighted this trend 'traditional form of international school has been supplemented by another form of international school aimed principally not at the expatriate but at the host country aspiring middle class' (p. 216). This growth in this type of school has rendered the categorisation increasingly challenging to use due to the multitude of different approaches and school groups which occupy this space. An example of this would be a small city like Chiang Mai in northern Thailand, which has 15 different international schools that would fit into this category. This growth is highlighted by Brummitt and Keeling (2013) who found that 80% of international schools fit into this category, in contrast to only 20% in the 1990s. Bunnell (2019) highlighted that there is a clear distinction between the 'old era' and the 'new era' of international schooling which meets a 'growing demand for English-medium of instruction education leading to access to Western-based Higher Education' (p. 139). He also identified that this growth is driven by a growing middle class seeking identity and networking opportunities (social capital).

Tay (2023) utilised the concepts of Globalism and Internationalism to describe different forms of international schools in the current market, highlighting a globalist school as one which attempts to be a pragmatic response to the rise of neoliberal policies and practice in international education. Cambridge and Thompson (2004) described a globalist international education as one which offers.

> quality assurance through international accreditation and the spread of global quality standards that facilitate educational continuity for the children of the globally mobile clientele. Globalised international education serves a market that requires the global certification of educational qualifications. his facilitates educational continuity for the

children of the host country clientele with aspirations towards social and global mobility (p. 173).

The Internationalist approach to international education is described as one which closely aligns to the IBO mission and vision and is defined as.

> The internationalist approach to the practice of international education is founded upon international relations, with aspirations for the promotion of peace and understanding between nations. It embraces a progressive existential and experiential educational philosophy that values the moral development of the individual and recognizes the importance of service to the community and the development of a sense of responsible citizenship. Internationalist international education celebrates cultural diversity and promotes an international-minded outlook (Hayden and Thompson, p. 175).

While the globalist approach is based on self-interest, the internationalist approach is laden with value and embraces the moral development of the individual (Tay, 2023). Despite, the growth in international schools who deliver the IB with its internationalist mission, Tay (2023) highlights that the number of schools which genuinely aspire to an internationalist approach are 'few and far between' (p. 92).

Common Drivers

Some of the most cited reasons for the growing demand for International Schools in Asia include.

- The ability of more families to afford private schooling.

- A desire by more young people to study higher education beyond their home country. The latest data from the OECD suggests that students studying at a university outside their home country will grow from 4.5 million in 2012 to 8 million in 2025.

- A desire for schooling in English SE Asia.

There has been a 23% increase in student enrolment in the past five years, from 540,000 in 2018 to 663,800 in January 2023. During this time, the number of schools has increased by 21%, from 1,600 to 1,940. (ISC Research, 2022)

ISC Research suggests that the following factors have impacted market growth in SE Asia:

- Significant growth in the desire for international school education from local families in countries such as Thailand and Vietnam.
- Growth in demand from families who have moved to the region. Main growth nationalities include China, Korea, Japan, India, Hong Kong, and Myanmar.
- Lower cost of living in some countries in Southeast Asia.
- Emergence of high-profile foreign independent schools such as Harrow School, Bangkok, Rugby School, Chon Buri and Bromsgrove School, Pattaya.

Looking at the dynamics and characteristics of these corporate education companies can help gaining a more nuanced understanding of the evolving landscape of international schools and the IBO. The same is true for the recent development of satellite schools for elite English institutions formed worldwide. The emergence of this financially motivated and seemingly cost-effective, yet high-yielding globalisation of education can be traced back to its early pioneers, such as Dulwich College in Thailand in 1997 and Harrow in 1998 (Bunnell, 2020). These schools have been described as 'Engines of Privilege' (Kynaston & Green, 2019). According to Bunnell (2020) an identified factor driving the expansion of these schools through overseas franchises was the desire to generate revenue that would help sustain lower fees in their home country, particularly in the United Kingdom, where their charitable status and associated financial advantages are under threat. At the time of writing a Starmer led opposition has further stated the intention to end private schools VAT exemptions and business rate relief (bbc.co.uk, 2022). If the Labour party win the next election in the UK, and this policy is enacted, will this lead to further satellite school expansions worldwide? The emergence of these non-equity franchise models of elite English independent schools operating in Asia is another sub-section of International Schooling which requires further attention. Bunnell (2020) commented that academic comments and research still largely ignore this development in international schooling. This major shift in the nature and characteristics of international schooling, whereby the market increasingly attracts a local base of aspiring middle-class families has led growth into a 'transitionary phase' (Bunnell, 2020). This fresh analysis of the 'market' has highlighted a shift away an initial description of the field as an emerging 'discrete industry' (Bunnell, 2008, p. 415) into one which offers a 'powerful model of educational reform and local parental choice' (Bunnell, 2020, p. 765). This rapidly changing educational market is, in general, one which warrants much closer attention (Bunnell, 2022).

Teachers

It is anticipated that by the year 2026, there will be over 800,000 trained teachers teaching in

international schools (Bunnell, 2016). Despite this growing number of educationalists worldwide, more research is required into this group (Bailey & Cooker, 2019). Morgan, Sives and Appleton (2006) also highlighted that 25% of UK schools had lost teachers to overseas international schools in the preceding six years. In addition, the study found that 46% of teachers have considered moving overseas to undertake a role in an international school.

In addition to the scarcity of research into current International Schooling trends, Poole and Bunnell (2020) noted a need for more research and understanding of Western-trained teachers at international schools despite the enormous growth over the past two decades. In 2015, over 300,000 trained teachers worked in international schools worldwide, half of which came from the UK (Robertson, 2018). It has previously been observed that international schools have always been 'tense' and 'messy' places for teachers who are often subjected to unstable contractual and working conditions and substantial micro-politics and tensions, leading to high staff turnover (Bunnell, 2016). International schools' focus on disproportionately recruiting Western-trained (predominantly UK and US) teachers has led to discrimination against teachers from other areas of the world (Canterford, 2003). According to CIS (Council for International Schools), in 2021, 58% of international school teachers were from North America or the UK. A study of international school teachers by Rey et al, (2020) labelled Western trained Anglo-Saxon teachers as 'adventurers' as they seemingly have to freedom to 'travel, work, and negotiate enjoyment and financial considerations' (p. 369) IST's (International School Teachers are often drawn to the choice emerging from international schooling for their children and the associated elite habitus this allows IST families to inhabit (Tarc, et al, 2019). This study examined the motivations and observations of three families of experienced International School teachers currently employed at 'tier 1' schools. The findings highlighted the desire for the teacher parents to offer their children the cultural capital and access to higher classes that would be unavailable in their home countries. Parents also highlighted the intercultural nature of international schooling as highly desirable for their children. Widegren & Doherty (2010) also found that student teachers nearing service within the profession, were receptive to the growing demand for educators in international schools.

2.2 Development of the International Baccalaureate

The International Baccalaureate Organisation (IB) was founded in 1962 and was registered in Geneva, Switzerland, in 1968. The IB was developed to offer a humanist 'progressive' approach to pre-university curriculum using philosophical underpinnings from educational thinkers such as John Dewey, AS Neill, Jean Piaget and Jerome Bruner. Essentially, the aim was to shift towards a more constructivist approach to education, allowing students to not be

passive participants in the classroom but develop critical thinking and trans-disciplinary skills using criterion-referenced norms. At its inception, the IB aimed to develop a pedagogy that develops 'critical analysis and learning to learn rather than to accumulate encyclopedic knowledge and learning through memorisation' (IBO.org, 2022).
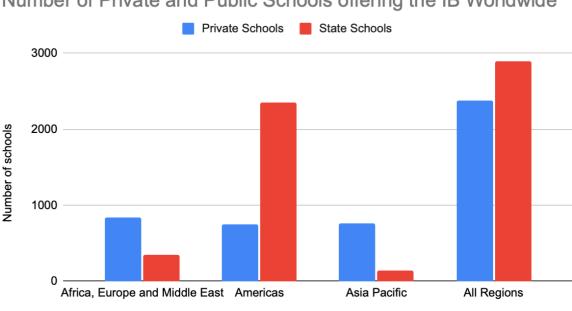
The International Baccalaureate aims to 'develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect' (ibo.org, 2022). The four programmes are designed to encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate, and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right (IBO, 2018). From its inception, the IBO and International Education was aimed squarely at globally mobile families who were overseas and wanted an official qualification which 'would allow them to enter universities in their home countries or elsewhere so they would not be disadvantaged by the constant movement common to children employed by the United Nations and its agencies' (Hill, 2014, p. 44). There are currently over 7,500 IB programmes offered across 5,400 schools and 159 countries. Between 2016 and 2020, there was a worldwide growth in schools of 33% (ibo.org, 2022). This number equates to approximately half of the international schools worldwide offering one or more of the programmes (Gardner-McTaggart, 2020). Gardner-McTaggart (2024) terms this global educational bubble at the 'IB Sphere' (p. 577) who's influence is empowered and enabled by globally mobile and wealthy local families.

Gardner-McTaggart (2020) highlighted that the interpretation of 'Global Mindedness' and 'Criticality' within the IB are taught by predominantly white staff and leadership, leading to a 'blindness' of their white advantage and the reinforcing of cultural hegemony within International Schools. This blindness has led IB International Schools to become vehicles of 'Englishness' under the mantle of (Anglo-European) Internationalism (Gardner-McTaggart, 2018). However, the inherent 'Westernness' within the IB frameworks often attracts parents to the programmes as they are a gateway for students to access the global marketplace and Western universities (Doherty, 2009). One of the perceived benefits of both the PYP and MYP curriculum frameworks are that the IB does not require schools to teach set content. Rather, these frameworks allow for curriculum and units of study which are contextual. However, schools have the ability to incorporate parts or all of content-based curricular such as the British or US systems, within their adoption of the IB framework. This can potentially allow the PYP and MYP to offer genuinely decolonised modes of curriculum, as they do not prescribe specific content. This was highlighted by the IB deputy director Ian Hill (2006), who identified that the IB system allows for an exploration and comparison of knowledge across major disciplines and cultures using critical thinking skills. However, scholars such as Walker (2002)

have found the framework to be 'monocultural with Western thought being the cornerstone of its epistemology' (p. 51).

In recent years, the IB has 'made considerable in-roads into publicly funded schooling in many educational jurisdictions of the Anglo-West'. (Tarc and Beatty, 2012, p. 341). The table below highlights the development of the IB in state schooling in recent years. This growth has been unhindered by legislation (Jaffar, Bodolica & Spraggon, 2023) as it has gained government funding to incorporate programmes into state schooling (Bunnell, 2009).

Figure 2.1 (ibo.org)

Number of Private and Public Schools offering the IB Worldwide

A paper by Gardner-McTaggart, et al (2024) posited the question regarding the potential for the IB to make a better and more peaceful world, whilst illuminating the limits and possibilities of the IB within current global crises. The paper highlights that increasing development of the IB into state schooling appears a productive expansion but it's emancipatory aims are rarely met as it emanates from a 'non-emancipatory ontology' (p. 554). This has led the organisation to become the 'apex animal within the competitive franchised jungle' (p. 554).

In 2006, the IBO partnered with the Ecuadorean Ministry of Education to implement the IB DP programme across state schools in all 24 regions in the country. The initiative was intended to address deeply entrenched inequalities, which were argued to be products of colonial legacies and further exacerbated by recent neoliberal policies (Bittencourt, 2020). Whilst an IBO study

highlighted that an overwhelming majority of teachers recognised the benefits of the initiative, especially some of the cosmopolitan areas such as CAS (Creativity, Action, Service) and TOK (Theory of Knowledge), there has been evidence that the IB has engendered various tensions within schools (Bittencourt, 2020). Notably, a sense of elitism and conflict emerged between IB students and those pursuing existing pre-university qualifications. Monreal (2016) felt that the IBDP, while facilitating university placement and acquiring skills pertinent to a global economy, could also serve as a valuable tool for perpetuating class advantages (p. 29). Paris (2003) found that students elected to pursue an IB DP because it was competitively advantageous, prestigious, and highly regarded.

In August 2021, the Ministry of Education in India signed an agreement with the IB to adopt its curriculum framework in selected schools in Delhi. Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal highlighted that the 'IB curriculum is a pedagogy of the highest international standards... It is a massive opportunity for students. The kind of education kids of the wealthiest families dream of will be accessible to the underprivileged students of Delhi' (hindustantimes.com). Despite this seemingly welcome opportunity for less advantaged students to benefit from the initiative, the program is subject to entrance exams, with 50% of places open to those students currently enrolled in private sector schools. Therefore, IB places will most likely be taken up by those who can afford private education or personal tutors to help aid in successful applications, leading to only those with the relevant capital to gain admission. Despite the declared goals of initiatives such as these to give equal opportunities to state-educated students by disrupting the patterns of social reproduction such as neoliberal policies and colonialism, the methodology employed in these two examples runs the risk of further alienating, fragmenting, and disempowering large swaths of those students, who ironically it claims, these policies seek to empower. In its current guise, is this the most effective method to help ensure that social inequality is not reproduced from generation to generation? The lifting and transplanting of a rigorous curriculum framework such as the IB DP, which has traditionally been associated with elite private international schools worldwide, strikes me as one which may exacerbate social and economic divides. It has been suggested that the current IB mission statement and application in its current guise potentially leads to greater social inequality, not less (Brown 2000, p. 646). This was reflected by Maire and Windle (2022), who found that 'the IB Diploma has re-introduced an exclusive educational model that Australian secondary education had progressively come to shed from the 1960s onward', leading to the IB Diploma being 'tied to a combination of exclusionary mechanisms responsible for educational inequalities in Australia' (p. 2). In South America, the IB is seen as a system for privately educated wealthy local families or a track of academic excellence in state schools (Almeida, 2015).

In contrast, a study commissioned by the IB found that the implementation of DP programs in state schools in Argentina, Peru and Costa Rica found that 'across all contexts, teachers were highly motivated and committed to being a part of the DP, largely due to characteristics of the programme and the opportunity to work with engaged students. Overall, students in the three educational systems had very positive views of the DP, particularly in helping them to develop research and critical thinking skills. Students also valued the DP's learning style and closer relationships with teachers (Beech et al. 2018, p. 7). The report did recognise that in the case of Costa Rica, a two-tier system of education, like that highlighted in Ecuador and India, has developed and should be addressed. The report should have elaborated on how these hurdles could be overcome. In the case of Argentina, there was a recommendation to train more teachers using IB workshops, which could be financially prohibitive to most school districts.

This growth of IB schools within state schooling worldwide highlights the global recognition and prestige that the programmes now enjoy. However, this rapid growth has predominantly been within Western countries such as the US, Canada and the UK. Bunnell (2014) highlighted the inequality of this growth worldwide and the dearth of IB authorised schools in Africa. In 2014, African schools equated to 1.6% of the global number of IB schools. In 2024, the number is similar to that of African schools, which number 80 out of 1,350 worldwide (ibo.org, 2024). This number is put into stark context when considering there are currently over 250 IB schools in Florida alone (ibo.org, 2024). Bunnell (2016) also highlighted the fact that the majority of these schools operating in Africa 'still exist in a 'traditional' model of activity; all IB schools in Africa are private, and the vast majority are traditional-type international schools catering for the expatriate community, largely British or American in origin.' (p. 183). In 1987, the IB stated that their programmes should 'should as far as possible be equally spread throughout the world, with no one area predominating' and that 'as far as the IBO is concerned therefore, we seem to have arrived at an agreed policy...on maintaining within the organisation a cultural and geographical balance' (Peterson, 1987, p. 209).

Cosmopolitanism and International Schooling

Resnik (2018) identified that international schooling and increasingly state schooling aim to instil cosmopolitanism within their students. This cosmopolitanism is seen as a new form of capital in the developing global arenas and is essential for giving students a competitive edge in a globalised marketplace (Weenik, 2007). Resnik (2018) defined this cosmopolitanism or international capital as 'including both dispositions of openness to people and cultures different than one's own as well as the competencies required to enact such openness with ease' (p. 773). International capital is a specific type of cultural capital which manifests itself through 3

states: institutionalised (international certificates), objectified (such as travels abroad) and embodied cultural capital (openness to others and different cultures, easiness in speaking English) (Bourdieu, 2011). Studying interculturalism is at the core of international schooling, particularly the IB. This cosmopolitanism is evident in the IB mission statement:

> The International Baccalaureate (IB) is a global leader in international education—developing inquiring, knowledgeable, confident, and caring young people. Our programmes empower school-aged students to take ownership of their learning and help them develop future-ready skills to make a difference and thrive in a world that changes fast (IBO.org, 2022).

As part of the authorisation process, schools that want to offer one of the IB programs must ensure that their mission and vision statements are aligned with that of the IB. For example, the school's vision statement for this study is:

> Educating global citizens who strive for excellence, live sustainably, lead responsibly, celebrate diversity, and whose integrity champions a just, more equitable and peaceful world. Education systems serve as vital institutional tools for validating cosmopolitanism as a highly valued characteristic of humans living in a globalised environment. This universally valued trait, however, is unevenly distributed throughout a given group, perpetuating inequality. (IBO.org, 2022)

According to Saito (2014), 'education systems operate as central institutional mechanisms that legitimate cosmopolitanism as a desirable attribute of the person living in a global world, while unequally distributing this universally desirable attribute within a population' (p. 223). Whilst Saito (2014) was not referencing the IB and International schools particularly in his study, he identified 3 main mechanisms which institutionalised,cosmopolitanism as cultural capital in education:

- Education systems legitimise cosmopolitan values. The IB addresses cosmopolitan ideals explicitly within its curriculum framework.

- Education systems create unequal access to education. Numerous studies have indicated that IB programmes are not spread evenly worldwide but aggravate disparities (Bunnell 2016, 2020; Garner-McTaggart 2016, 2018, 2020; Tarc, 2015; Resnik, 2009).

- Education systems link academic qualifications that signal cosmopolitanism with

positions that require extensive interactions with people of multiple nationalities.

International Mindedness

International Mindedness (IM) is an overarching construct at the heart of the IB philosophy and practice and a cornerstone of its cosmopolitan approach. Its concept is related to multilingualism, intercultural understanding, and global engagement (Hill, 2012). The IB defines International Mindedness as.

> A multi-faceted and complex concept that captures a way of thinking, being and acting that is characterised by an openness to the world and a recognition of our deep interconnectedness to others. An IB education fosters international mindedness by helping students reflect on their perspective, culture, and identities, and then on those of others. By learning to appreciate different beliefs, values, and experiences, and to think and collaborate across cultures and disciplines, IB learners gain the understanding necessary to make progress toward a more peaceful and sustainable world (IB, 2017, p. 2).

Despite IM being recognised as a critical component of International Education (Hill, 2015), it is an underreported and under-researched aspect of elite international Education (Bunnell et al., 2020). Despite IM being broadly defined by the IB, one of the critical challenges with IM is creating a coherent, effective definition across different cultural contexts. The current fixed definition and lack of contextualisation have led to the term being seen as 'fuzzy' (Barrett and Hacking et al., 2017). Hacking et al., (2018) highlight that there is 'little consensus among wider stakeholders concerning definitions of the concept, the conduct of its development and associated pedagogy, or the efficacy of its outcomes' (p. 2). Poole (2017) described IM as 'enigmatic and under-defined'. A study of 196 stakeholders (parents, teachers and students) at IB schools found that almost all respondents found the concept hard to define. (Sriprakash, Sigh, Jing, 2014). The study also found that parents and students found IM an important and valuable element of 'cultural capital' as they transition to higher education. Conversely, the teachers found the current approach 'narrow and inadequate' (p. 2).

Hayden and Thompson (1995) identified that exposure to a diverse student body is a crucial component to the successful development of IM and fostering an appreciation of other cultures. This was supported by (Lineham, 2013), who found that exposure to a diverse school community can help develop a more comprehensive worldview of students. Van Oord (2007) found that exposure to a diverse study body was more influential in developing IM than

28

studying within an IB program. However, Muller (2012) found that whilst exposure to diverse cultures helps students develop IM, there also needs to be effective intervention through the curriculum to help facilitate meaningful interactions, reflection, and personal relevance. Belal (2017) found that IB school administrators have identified a weakness in the CAS program (Creativity, Action, Service) in that there is no requirement for service outcomes to involve local communities. This means that students can complete the CAS requirements of the DP program while only engaging in service activities in their school or home country communities rather than in the local communities where they are temporarily living.

The school that will be used for part of this study defines global citizenship as 'embodies a life lived sustainably and with cultural sensitivity. It manifests itself in caring and open-minded students who respect and embrace diversity and difference; global citizenship necessitates taking action that results in a more sustainable, equitable and peaceful world.' This definition is closely linked to that of the Deputy Director of the IB. International mindedness is 'about putting the knowledge and skills to work to improve the world through empathy, compassion and openness.' (Hill, 2012, p. 246).

A central tenet of the IB interpretation of IM is the development of the learner profile. The learner profile is a group of ten personal attributes which aim to develop a globally-minded learner. The IB defines the Learner Profile as 'The learner profile concisely describes the aspirations of a global community that shares the values underlying the IB's educational philosophy. The IB learner profile describes the attributes and outcomes of education for international-mindedness' (IBO, 2015, p. 1). The learner profile attributes, including Inquirers, Open-minded, Knowledgeable, Caring, Risk-Takers, Communicators, Thinkers, Reflective, Balanced, and Principled, are integral components that traverse the International Baccalaureate (IB) continuum encompassing the Primary Years Programme (PYP) for Grades 1-5, the Middle Years Programme (MYP) for Grades 6-10, and the Diploma Programme (DP) or Career-related Programme (CP) for Grades 11 and 12.

The IB learner profile attributes are tasked with the holistic development of students, whilst encouraging skills and attributes which will be useful in their personal and professional futures. An IB commissioned paper by Bullock (2012) highlighted the effectiveness of the learner profile attributes in transferring the key values held by the IB. The paper highlighted how the learner profile traits were influenced by educational thinkers such as John Dewey, Piaget, Bruner and Vygotsky and that they were effective in fostering some ethical education and international mindedness. Given that the learner profile is a fixed set of 10 attributes, some researchers have identified that they are 'Western centric' and 'denote a cultural relativism' which prioritises

Western ideals over cultural understanding (Resnik, 2009, Srikapash, Tikly and Walker, 2020). Rizvi et al. (2014) who found a great deal of tension and discrepancy between how teachers understood the purpose of the profile. Van Oord (2013) found that teachers feel constrained by the prescribed nature of the ten attributes and reflect a Western pedagogical bias. Poole (2017) found that implementing the LP attributes in non-western contexts can be problematic, particularly when the LP traits clash with local socio-cultural beliefs and practices. The term 'action' is often used to define what constitutes International Mindedness or being a 'Global Citizen.' However, more guidance is needed regarding what this action should look like or its outcomes. The concept of International Mindedness is not, however, confined to practices solely within IB Schools. The philosophy of International Mindedness is similar to the GCE (Global Citizenship Education), which was one of the strategic UNESCO development areas under their current sector Education Program (UNESCO, 2015). In addition, there have been numerous other like-minded school initiatives such as Global Mindedness, Development Education, Global Learning, Education for Sustainable Development and Oxfam's development of school resources to help promote global concerns. The GCE has come under criticism for being a vehicle for maintaining the status quo of elitism under the guise of progressive educational practices by encouraging learners to help those less fortunate than themselves by donating money and time. Andreotti (2008) criticises this approach, saying that without critical reflection on the causes of inequalities, young people with good intentions and motivated to 'save the world' may inadvertently 'project their beliefs and myths as universal, and reproduce power relations and violence like those in colonial times' (Andreotti, 2008, p. 51).

If the IB are to meet their lofty goals of creating a more just and positive world, then students will need to be encouraged to critically analyse their political positioning. This was supported by Shim (2012) who stated that 'intercultural education classrooms must not be regarded as mere sites of transmission of knowledge, but rather as political sites that represent contestations over knowledge and pedagogy by differently empowered social constituencies mediated by differently empowered individuals' (p. 215).

2.3 Neoliberalism and International Schooling

Rowland and Rawolle (2013) commented that neoliberalism has become a 'catch-all term for something negative, without offering a definition or explanation' (p. 261). The broad definitions predominantly relating to the marketisation and privatisation of public goods and services are overly simplistic as neoliberalism is a loose and shifting signifier (Brown, 2015). Whilst it is apparent that the term neoliberalism is not a simplistic concept and that it has numerous contextual nuances, for this study, it refers broadly to policy agendas which reduce taxes,

encourage privatisation and deregulation, trade liberalisation, insecure labour and the squeezing of education, welfare, and health spending (Connell & Dados, 2014). Within the sphere of education, Apple (1996) identified that neoliberalism is reflective of the current rightward turn within education, which he terms as 'conservative restoration'. Within this, he highlights neoliberals as the most dominant group, whereby economic rationality is the key driver. A large part of the economic rationality of a neoliberal approach to education is the notion that there is 'consumer choice'. This approach to education provision is at the forefront of the development of international schooling and the IB, as it caters specifically to those parents who wish their children to undertake a curriculum framework different from that provided by the state. School and curriculum choices also carry symbolic social standing meanings. Scholars have widely accepted that, while diverse in scope and form, neoliberalism has profoundly impacted how education policies and practices are imagined, designed, and enacted (Oyarzun et al., 2022).

According to Apple (1999) there is a widely held assumption that state education is wasteful, and is money poured into a 'black hole'. This belief is in line with neoliberal thinkers who identify that deregulation and self-regulation of education would lead to more efficiency when educating students for an uncertain future. This deregulatory approach has benefitted the IB as it allows governments and education authorities to essentially outsource education provision. This also allows for governments such as that in Thailand to permit middle and upper-class families to attend international schools whilst not incurring the cost of providing quality state education for this demographic. The growth of the IB fits neatly into the neoliberal landscape, despite its seemingly contradictory vision, which aims to foster holistic education whilst promoting liberal values.

Apple (2010) identifies that neoliberal education policies focus on measurable outcomes and illusional assessments, which can lead to a narrowing of the curriculum and a deemphasis on critical thinking and creativity. An initial observation of the IB's philosophy, with its intended focus on critical thinking and inquiry-based teaching and learning, seems counterintuitive to neoliberal education policies' tendency to favour measurable outcomes. However, whilst the PYP (Primary Years Program) focuses more on the stated aims of the IB, the pre-university DP program is firmly rooted in measurable outcomes. It maintains a reputation as a vigorous academic program and is respected by the world-leading universities (Resnik, 2012). This is also reflected by Giroux (2013) 'neoliberals of the centre, no less than those of the right, are equally committed to the reduction of education to a mean-spirited regime of keeping its subjects' noses to the grindstone' (p. 459). This observation could be aimed at the IB DP programme, given its reputation as a highlight challenging course of pre-university study. This

has also become increasingly the case within the MYP (Middle Years Program), whereby the IB has introduced optional e-assessments for schools to undertake. These e-assessments are delivered through both online examinations and coursework submitted by the school. Schools that do not opt into the e-assessment program cannot award students official IB certification for completion of the MYP at the end of MYP5 (Grade 10). This refusal by the IB to award certification to fee-paying, fully authorised schools' places pressure on school administrators to adopt the e-assessment, primarily due to parental pressure. This also leads to extra workload and pressure for the teachers teaching the class. However, there is empirical evidence that the developments of these 'quasi-markets' such as the IB have led to the exacerbation of existing social divisions and further inequalities as it relates to race and class (Whitty, 1997). In essence, neoliberalism turns political democracy in an economic democracy.

Linked to both the IB's cosmopolitan and neoliberal tendencies is a paper by Palmer (2024), which defined neoliberalism within the International Baccalaureate (IB) environment as a type of socio-cultural capital that opposes critical and non-critical epistemologies. According to the article, the IB framework represents a combination of equality and market-driven principles. At the same time, the soft approach of the IB's International Mindedness can be considered as a diversion that conceals stricter and more coercive commercialisation of education. The current tendency of economic globalisation leads to deregulation and increases global economic inequities while reinforcing cosmopolitan values. As a whole, contemporary economic globalization and neoliberal education policies favour the diffusion of the IB because of its international orientation and the reputation of the International Baccalaureate Programme (Resnik, 2020).

Intersection of Neoliberalism, Cosmopolitanism, and Cosmopolitan Nationalism in Education

Catherine Doherty critically examined how neoliberal policies and practices are evident within the provision of the IB programmes within the Australian context. She examined how the IB was developed with cosmopolitan middle classes in mind, but has morphed into a product which is 'strategically deployed to engage the middle-class consumer' (2009, p. 86). Despite the IB aligning itself with cosmopolitan values, it's positioning as an alternative choice for educational provision resonates with neoliberal values, thus highlighting the 'contradictory nature of the neo-conservative and neoliberal alliance dominating educational environments' (Doherty, 2009, p. 86). This contradictory yet symbiotic relationship favours traditional approaches to education (Apple, 2001). Doherty, et al (2012) found that the IB exists at an intersection of neoliberalism, neo-conservatism and cosmopolitanism. This was achieved by surveying parents and students within those that chose an IB education and those who

undertook Australian state education. Doherty (2013) also examined the development of the IB through the concept of 'Glocalisation', which refers to how global ideas and practices are adapted to fit local contexts. The IB is a good example of a product which is globally available, yet 'can only be animated through the particularities of local school systems' (p. 9). This development is one which local educational authorities are complicit, encouraging denationalised market competition.

Maxwell, et al (2020) developed the concept of cosmopolitan nationalism which highlights the 'conflicting pressures within national education structures to promote internationalism and a global gaze, while also seeking to remain locally relevant and a primary contributor to national projects of economic development, social cohesion and creating the 'right kinds of citizen. (p. 846). This seemingly paradoxical concept combines global openness, aligning to cosmopolitanism, whilst simultaneously being committed to national identity and interests. It seeks to provide an analytical lens to examine global education practices and how these interact with nationalistic identities (Maxwell, et al, 2020).

This concept highlights the need for a less binary approach and towards frameworks which considers intersections, mutual interactions and reciprocal effects. The concept has been used to theorise the changing landscape of international schools and the emergence of international curricular such as the IB, within host-country national students (Bittencourt & Samangiengo, 2024). This particular study utilised this approach to analyse the policy initiative to incorporate the IB DP programme into state schooling in Ecuador. The findings of which highlighted a coexistence and tension between international standards and local needs. It was also highlighted that teachers within Equador used a 'vincular' approach to teaching the IBDP programme, linking global DP content to local realities. This approach exemplifies cosmopolitan nationalism in action as teachers blend global educational mandates with national identity (Maxwell, 2025).

2.4 Pierre Bourdieu and Education

Pierre Bourdieu (1930-2002) was a French sociologist whose work has impacted various areas of social life including education. His theories have helped sociologists understand the complex social structures and power relations that are evident within society. His seminal work 'The State Nobility' (1996), explored how elite educational institutions in France legitimise privilege through inherited social and cultural capital, leading to a reproduction of existing power structures.

No one can deny that the school plays a crucial role in the distribution of knowledge and know-how, although a less important than is ordinarily thought, but it is equally clear that it also contributes, and increasingly so, to the distribution of power and privilege and to the legitimation of this distribution.(Bourdieu, 1996, p. 116)

His work took a multi-dimensional approach to understanding power relations within society, utilising concepts such as field, habitus, and capital. Bourdieu's theoretical tools are intended to be utilised within empirical research rather than as a purely theoretical exercise.

I blame most of my readers for having considered as theoretical treatises, meant solely to be read or commented upon, works that, like gymnastics handbooks, were intended for exercise, or even better, for putting into practice. One cannot grasp the most profound logic of the social world unless one becomes immersed in the specific of an empirical reality (Bourdieu 1993, p. 271).

These theories will be utilised to develop an understanding of both International Schooling and the International Baccalaureate (IB) and how power, inequality and cultural reproduction operate in international education systems across countries and contexts.

One of the critical aspects of Bourdieu's work is the concept of misrecognition, which refers to the process by which power relations and social inequalities are disguised and accepted as legitimate by both the dominant and subordinate groups in society. This concept allows us to recognise how inherent biases are perpetuated within society.

Misrecognition of the social determinants of the educational career – and therefore of the social trajectory it helps to determine – gives the educational certificate the value of a natural right and makes the educational system one of the fundamental agencies of the maintenance of the social order (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 387).

Whilst misrecognition isn't a widely utilised concept, it is one which has been used to gain an understanding into school choices of middle-class families in the UK (Thomson, 2014). This study highlighted that middle class parents maintained a high level of vigilance and close monitoring of their school choice, with their choice continually monitored and managed. These parents are willing to move schools in order to give their children the best possible schooling. Despite this study's focus on state and private schooling choice in the UK, I feel there are potential parallels with this use of middle and upper-class parental choices within international

schooling.

These theories will then be contextualised to the parameters of the school, situation, and teachers utilised for this study. This study aims to use French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's theories to frame the identified development and continued expansion of both international schools and the IB. It used a well-rounded approach to his theories and did not 'cherry-pick' the elements of his work that most conveniently fit this topic. By utilising his work, I critically evaluated the role of international schooling and the IB in social inequalities.

One of the most prominent and widely used concept of Bourdieu's is that of capital. Bourdieu's theories of capital have been influential in several fields, including sociology, education, and economics. These theories have been used by researchers to gain insights into how social advantage is reproduced with a given society. This approach allows for capital to be analysed in a more nuanced way, highlighting more aspects to capital than purely focusing on wealth and qualifications (Reay, 1998). Bourdieu identified that whilst his approach offers more nuance to social reproduction, economic capital is the major influence on the differing forms of capital. However, Bourdieu also stated that is it 'impossible to account for the structure and functioning of the social world unless one introduces capital in all its forms and not solely in the form recognised by economic theory' (p. 5). Warin (2015) also highlighted that these different forms of capital are interrelated and can compound one another. With particular focus on identity capital, Warin (2015) surmised that 'identity capital operates in tandem with other forms of capital to entrench multiple social advantages during the course of childhood and adolescence. (p. 689)

Bourdieu addressed the connection between economic and symbolic capital and how this manifest in the social world. Thus, capital extends beyond pure monetary wealth and allows those with the resulting symbolic capital to reap unequal opportunities and resources. I will address the different symbolic capital forms and how they may manifest within educational research. I will specifically address how economic capital within the realm of international schools translates into symbolic capital influencing educational access, prestige and perceived success. By examining these dynamics, I will attempt to uncover how economic capital shapes the educational opportunities of students within this specific context. This is reflected by Bourdieu and Passeron (1998) when stating that students from wealthier families are imbued with 'cultural capital', which ensure an advantage in gaining success within both education and broader society.

He highlighted that those highest in educational capital in the form of 'legitimate culture' are

those highest in educational capital (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 7). These cultural assets allow students to develop the knowledge, skills, and cultural experiences deemed valuable by the education system. Key factors that develop this cultural capital, such as international work and travel, global citizenship education, multilingualism, and exposure to a diverse student body, are inherent traits of international schools. This allows international students to develop this cultural capital far more quickly than local state schooling. By attending an IB international school, students are enhancing this form of capital. Attendance at IB international schools also allows students to gain access to elite universities around the world, which further develops their cultural capital as alumni of these universities. An international degree is a robust crystallisation of cultural capital with the ability to convert into economic, political, and social capital. Bourdieu argues that the field of education is a site of exercise of power in that success is facilitated by the possession of cultural capital (i.e., familiarity with the dominant culture), and the children from upper and middle classes are more likely to be endowed with the cultural capital (Shim, 2012). Kenway and Fahey (2014) argued that international schools may serve as unique conduits in securing advantages for social grouping that extend beyond the traditional nation-state onto the global stage. Bourdieu's social capital theory relates to the social networks and resources available to individuals. Social capital is embedded within social networks and is related to group recognition. Social capital is not a resource such as an individual possession but an advantage that exists within and through relationships. Individuals can then utilise this capital for their advancement. A classic example would be the social capital accrued by attendance at one of the UK's elite public schools. 20 of the 55 British prime ministers attended Eton College. Within a more globalised economy, the owners of this social capital have become more widespread, diverse, and cosmopolitan. From a critical perspective, several studies point to how international education reproduces social structures, aiding social mobility. It has been argued that the international school system (ISS) provides a fast track to the top universities for global and indigenous elites and might denote the emergence of a global ruling class. (Resnik, 2012).

Gardner-McTaggart & Bunnell (2022) utilised Bourdieu's theories to examine the field of leadership within elite traditional international schools (ETIS). The study utilised Bourdieu's theories, especially, the *State Nobility* to analyse leadership job postings, to highlight the enduring inequalities found within this recruitment process and an inherent 'leadership nobility'. The study also revealed a consistent preference for Native English-speaking leaders, and how they are expected to possess the required objectified, embodied and cultural institutionalised capital.

Linguistic capital refers to the knowledge, proficiency, and mastery of a language the owner

possesses. It also relates to the symbolic power that those with this linguistic capital possess. Ma (2023) highlighted that utilising cultural, social, and economic capital is connected to the ownership of linguistic capital, which ultimately gives those who possess it more power in pursuing social position and respect. The IB requires learners to learn a language other than their mother tongue within their curriculum frameworks. This language proficiency can be seen as an element of linguistic capital as it provides students with a valuable resource for international business (Huckle, 2021).

Several sociologists, such as Gillies (2006) and Reay (2000), have developed the concept of emotional capital within the educational context. This work built on Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital and was first employed by Nowotny (1981). Allatt (1993) defined emotional capital as 'emotionally valued assets, skills, love and affection, expenditure of time, attention, care and concern' (p. 143). This emotional capital is also often referred to and understood as emotional resources. Gendron (2004) posits that these emotional resources are essential in developing an individual's cognitive, personal, social and economic attributes within a school context. Gendron highlights how crucial these personal assets are for individuals when navigating an increasingly complex and competitive global workplace. Zemblayas (2007) highlighted that acquiring this emotional capital may provide different opportunities for converting this emotional capital into other forms of capital. This theory of emotional capital highlighted by Reay (2004) identifies the support that parents (particularly mothers) bring to their child's educational experiences. This type of social capital builds on the theories set forth by Bourdieu and specifically identifies the capital afforded to those children whose parents offer the emotional support with regards to their child's education. Whilst Bourdieu never coined the phrase emotional capital, his work did highlight an understanding of the concept, 'this work falls more particularly to women, who are responsible for maintaining relationships' (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 68). Emotional capital has also been found to aid in the development of close, positive, and supportive relationships between students and their teachers (Sandilos, Kaufman, & Cohen, 2016). Reay (2004) also found that students with high emotional capital will have the highest educational attainment. This also links to the concept of cosmopolitan capital, a term first utilised by sociologists Felix Bühlmann, Thomas David, and André Mach in their 2012 paper *Cosmopolitan Capital and the Internationalisation of the Field of Business Elites*. The paper focuses on the belief that this form of capital was becoming increasingly more important within a globalised economy and the ability to traverse different cultures is one which is deemed necessary in current and future workplaces. This relates to the approach of international schools and their increasing focus of preparing students for a globalised world. Understanding of how students instinctively make sense of the field of international education and the IB, relates to Bourdieu's concept of doxa. Doxa is described a 'set of fundamental beliefs which

does not even need to be asserted in the form of an explicit, self-conscious dogma' (Bourdieu, 1997 p. 15). It manifests itself as a view of the world which becomes the dominant mode of thought. Doxa is reflected in the intuitive knowledge that individuals possess within a specific field. For example, within international schools, doxa could be demonstrated as the knowledge that students have regarding the aims of attending an elite international school.

Students can be acutely aware that this form of education is ultimately aimed at attending an elite Western university. Doxa therefore manifests itself as symbolic power within elite international schools. Another example of doxa within international schooling could be analysed through the dominant ideologies present such as the use of the English language which is at the heart of IB philosophy. Within the case study school, language is timetabled as either English or Languages other than English (LOTE). This approach to the acquisition of language is common across IB schools. The ingrained belief that Western forms of knowledge and language have become the dominant forms of doxa permeating international education. Doxa is also evident within the recruitment practices of international schools, which have come under scrutiny for their preponderance to recruit teachers from white, Western- trained, native English-speaking backgrounds. The term 'native English speaker' is particularly contentious as it is widely accepted to refer solely to teachers from North America or the UK, despite 86 countries worldwide using English as an official or second language. Selvi (et al, 2023) highlighted that there has been a proliferation of research since the 1980's detailing the discrimination and discriminatory practices and hiring practices of English language schools worldwide. These practices led to the NNEST (non-native English-speaking teachers) movement, which is aimed at promoting the 'legitimacy of ethnic, racial, cultural, religious, gender and linguistic diversity in ELT (English Language Teaching' (p. 2). Whilst the vast majority of research has been undertaken within the context of English language learning, the entrenched 'native speakerism' described by Holiday (2006), which attaches superior status to those teachers classed as NEST's (Native English-Speaking Teachers) is also evident within International secondary schools (Yuan, 2018).

However, Bourdieu (1984) suggested that these form of doxa can evolve and change over time. Will it be a case that the growth of the global south and cosmopolitan education lead to a change in the dominant doxa? Bourdieu argued that to understand the interactions between people, events, and social phenomena, it is important to look past what was said and analyse the social space in which these social interactions took place. Bourdieu referred to this social space as a field. According to Bourdieu, a field is:

> Both a field of forces, whose necessity is imposed on agents who are engaged in it, and as a field of struggles within which agents confront each other, with differentiated means and ends according to their position in the structure of the field of forces, thus contributing to conserving and transforming its structure (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 2).

He continued to highlight that a field contains people who dominate and who are dominated. Constant, permanent relationships of inequality operate inside this space, which simultaneously becomes a space in which various actors struggle to transform or preserve the field (1998, p. 40). Dugonjic-Rodwin (2021) argues that field theory has been widely underused in educational research due to 'an unfortunate divide between theoretical discussion and empirical investigation' (p. 328). This is incredibly scarce when researching global institutions such as the IB, as field theory is often believed to be most appropriate within national education contexts.

Bourdieu and Passeron (1997) highlight that schools and schooling can be perceived as a field. To be successful in this field, students need to maintain high test scores, good grades and progress to an elite (Western) university, enabling students from more privileged backgrounds to be more successful within this field. Teaching methods, assessment practices and curriculum were also believed to be based on the cultural capital associated with the dominant class. This is evident within the IB with its inquiry-based model of curriculum development. Therefore, students who have acquired the necessary capital are more likely to be succeed in their education.

Bourdieu's concept of field can be related to international schooling in a number of ways. Firstly, by examining the existing rules of the field in question to see how these interact with Bourdieu's other concepts. It is also beneficial to examine the concept of field from an IB, international schooling and individual school viewpoint. An understanding of the individual contextual understanding could further shed light on economic disparities and cultural differences. It is hoped that broader conclusions and recommendations could be validated by using a case study to illuminate the field. Specific applications of how field could be utilised within this contextual field will be examined later in the chapter.

The concept of symbolic violence relates to Bourdieu's theories of field and how people behave within this sphere. Symbolic violence relates to how the dominant society imposes its views and cultural norms on a particular field. Bourdieu (1991) believed that social inequalities are more likely to be achieved through this practice of social domination that than overt physical force. Within international schools, this symbolic violence could be manifested through a curriculum biased towards a Western mode of thinking. This was highlighted by Deng (2015)

who found that 'curriculum is a mechanism for reproducing social and economic inequality in which the curriculum, a selection of knowledge, is a social and political construct reflecting the interest and ideology of those who hold power' (p. 724). Symbolic violence can also be seen within teacher-student relations. Gast (2018) found that teachers can unknowingly exercise power and authority, which can adversely affect the student's well-being.

This element can be exacerbated in international schooling when students and teachers often have cultural differences. One recent report from Kuwait (Khalil & Kelly, 2020) found that the choices made by and within the international school revealed much symbolic violence. Bunnell and Hatch (2023) identified that Bourdieu's theory of symbolic violence is practical when analysing international schools' admissions policies and how these subtle forms of violence help to maintain inequalities within education. There are often significant variations between the admissions policies of international schools worldwide, often related to whether the school is a not-for-profit or for-profit institution and the situation that the school finds itself in. For example, between 2008 and 2010, I worked for a British International School in China, which had just been purchased by the Nord Anglia group of school's weeks before the economic crash of that year. The ensuing drop in school numbers led to an admissions policy based purely on the parents' financial means of paying the school fees. Admissions approaches such is this are also evident within the case study school, where priority has been given to student numbers over other considerations. However, this is in part due to the negative financial consequences of COVID and the need for the school to recoup some of those losses. Conversely, certain schools enjoy an elite reputation, leading to waiting lists and selective admissions. This approach to pupil selection leads to better examination rates, which further enhance the reputation of the given school. Whilst these examples highlight personal experience within the field, they are not intended to serve as phenomenological data but to contextualise the study within international schooling. Bourdieu (1977) argues that schools teach students particular things and socialises them in particular ways as 'pedagogic action is objectively a symbolic violence to the extent to which it is an imposition of a cultural arbitrary by an arbitrary power' (p. 18).

Habitus

In contrast to Capital, Habitus is less well-known and probably Bourdieu's most contested concept (Reay, 2004). Despite this, it is probably Bourdieu's most cited concept and has been used in an astonishing array of contexts and practices (Maton, 2014). It is the most complex, misunderstood, and misused concept (Swartz, 1998). Habitus refers to the individual or collective set of dispositions which shape people's thoughts, behaviours, and practices. He identified that sociologically, social practices are characterised by regularities despite the belief

that we are free agents. Bourdieu stated that 'all my thinking started from this point: how can behaviour be regulated without being the product of obedience to rules?' (1994, p. 65). Habitus is structured by individual past and present circumstances, such as family upbringing and education, whilst being structured by shaping an individual's future beliefs and practices. Its relationship to Bourdieu's field theory is central to how habitus is actuated. Bourdieu (1986) used the following equation to simplify the relationship between the concepts: (habitus) (capital) + field = practice. (p. 101). Habitus focuses on our ways of acting, feeling, thinking and being. It captures how we carry our history into our present circumstances and how we choose to act in certain ways, not others". (Maton, in Grenfelll, 2012). Within educational research, the effectiveness of Bourdieu's theory of habitus as a tool to understand how the socialising process has led to some dispute. Tooley and Darby (1998) felt that Bourdieu offers little to the field of educational research and that his work is often used with an 'uncritical adulation'. Whilst I appreciate that theories devised decades ago within contexts different from this study, the use of Bourdieu's broad theoretical perspectives continues to be relevant and transferable into different social contexts. The researcher's role is to use theory to assist in excavating the structure and so expose the different habitus. However, to comprehend the habitus of individuals, it is helpful to examine the theories in connection with one another.

Bourdieu's theories offer researchers some explanations of how education, particularly teacher practices, can reinforce or challenge the established habitus. It also offers insights into different school cultures, how normative practices perpetuate dominant social norms, and how habitus helps to shape student and parents' education decision-making. An example of this was a study by Maton (2012) who found that middle-class families were more likely to consider university attendance as a natural educational step as opposed to an aspirational one, which inevitably leading to these students to feeling more comfortable within higher education establishments and not feeling like a 'fish out of water'. Studies utilising Bourdieu's theory of habitus often seek a specific area of education such as school choice or student attitudes. This study hopes to move beyond reductionist and singular approach to Bourdieu's theories and seek to develop an understanding of the interplay between international school stakeholders and his concepts.

Existing research on Bourdieu and International Schooling

The application of Pierre Bourdieu's sociological concepts such as field, habitus, and capital and its relevance to international schooling and the IB has been researched in a number of recent studies (Gardner-McTaggart & Bunnell, 2022, Whitmarsh, 2022, Dugonjic-Rodwin, 2021, Khalil & Kelly, 2020). The use of Bourdieu's concepts highlights its empirical relevance when examining how global education programmes such as the IB interact with social

stratification, power relations and cultural reproduction. The open and adaptable nature of Bourdieu's theories and concepts have enabled scholars to further our understanding of international schooling and the IB. This flexibility has enabled scholars such as Bunnell and Gardner-McTaggart (2022) to develop an understanding of where capital and habitus influence leadership structures in international schools. This expansion of understanding led to further insights regarding cultural capital, embodied capital and objectified cultural capital.

The use of Bourdieu's theories of field, habitus and capital have the potential to offer valuable insights into power dynamics, social interactions and the reproduction of social inequalities. However, it is surprising to find a dearth of literature specifically examining their relevance to international education settings (Dugonjic Rodwin, 2021, cited in Whitmarsh, 2022). Whitmarsh (2022) utilised Bourdieu's theories of field and habits to develop an understanding of international schooling, the IB and international mindedness (IM). He identifies IM as a specific habitus within international education, with the different international schools creating the 'fields' in which school' agents' such as teachers, students and administrators participate. He also identified IM as a desired habitus within international schools and IB as exerting symbolic power on international schools within a Chinese international school context. Gardner-McTaggart (2021) further developed the use of symbolic power within international schooling when looking at the 'whiteness' power evident at schools. He highlights that this whiteness or Englishness grants symbolic capital to those who have it and enacts symbolic violence towards those who do not. His longitudinal study examined stakeholders' racial makeup and opinions within international schools in Austria, Germany and Switzerland. Preponderance of white leadership and teaching staff within international schools, despite diverse student populations, reinforces Western cultural beliefs and implicit racism. The study highlighted that school leaders highlighted an 'equitable and open minded' approach to work whilst engaging in internationalism and global-mindedness. However, despite this outlook the study found that only one participant used their 'considerable policy remit to initiate substantive change in staffing to reflect their values' (p. 24) This refusal to initiate change within an international school context is evident within the growth of elite British International Schools in Nigeria, where parental concerns for western cultural views are being placated by offering a 'British independent school firmly within Nigerian cultural needs' (Nwaubani, 2025, bbc.co.uk). This is highlighted by Charterhouse UK displaying a rainbow flag, a practice the Nigerian school does not.

Gardner-McTaggart (2019, 2020) introduces the concept of the *international gaze* to describe how international schools are framed to reflect Western ideals and practices, which reflect neoliberal values, cosmopolitanism, elite credentialism and performative cosmopolitanism. The concept examines how this field reinforces the hegemonic power structures despite the liberal

progressive ideals of these institutions. This international gaze is reflected by how desirable Western teachers are viewed within the field of international schools, most notably in the global south (Gardner-McTaggart, 2020).

Dugonjic-Rodwin (2021) highlighted that using field theory to examine the IB is a difficult one given the transnational scope of the organisation, and that it has been chiefly utilised when considering national policy and practice. However, given that in 2020, over 1.9 million students were enrolled in IB programs in over 5,000 schools in 159 countries (ibo.org, 2022), it is a powerful actor within the field of education. The IB and International Education were conceptualised as a global field and how 'field theory may help compare schools across nations without compromising context-dependent determinants' (Dugonjic-Rodwin, 2021, p. 342). This particular study effectively positioned the IBO as a global field within the context of international schooling in New York and Switzerland. The sheer number of regional and operational differences between IB schools worldwide probably requires the identification of 'sub- fields' within the sector to gain a more thorough understanding. For example, schools within large profit-making organisations such as GEMS and Nord Anglia could be a specific sub-field, which would develop an understanding of how different fields within the overarching field of the IB and International schooling affect different forms of capital. This argument is supported by (Waddling et al., cited in Maxwell et al., 2019), who felt that when studying education using a Bourdieusian frame, the questions need to be addressed initially within a specific social field. Gardner-McTaggart (2016) connected Bourdieu's theories of social privilege or 'le distinction', highlighting that the IB is merely a gatekeeper for Western universities and global corporations. His study was a theoretical one, which focussed on the ability of the IB and international schools to bestow 'cultural capital' on those students who have attended IB schools, most notably in the global south. He concludes that 'it seems that the IB curriculum can provide private education to a 'global class', thereby promoting cultural capital in keeping with a globalised outlook, as opposed to a nationalist one' (p. 23).

His analysis situated Bourdieu's theories within a broader application of critical thought. By drawing on critical thinkers such as Aristotle, Marx and Engels Foucoult and Heidegger, the study was able to link the applicability of Bourdieu and international schooling to these thinkers. Most notable was the connection between Bourdieu's theory of *distinction*, with Heidegger's *distancelessness* and Marx's concept of *alienation* and the development of international schooling and the IB in a globalised world. This connection between globalisation, the rising middle class and the development of international schooling in the Global South is relevant to the context of this study. Gardner-McTaggart also surmised that the 'IB may have found the perfect vessel for distinctive reproduction, based upon a balanced inclusion of the global and the international'… and that the IB may be perfectly balanced and adapted for the global age'

(p. 23)

Khalil & Kelly (2020) utilised Bourdieu's field theory to understand the behaviour of international school stakeholders in Kuwait. The study identified international schools as a field as they are a bounded social space in which participants implicitly accept and follow its rules. Whilst the study primarily focussed on the usage of the field as it relates to international schooling, there was an acceptance and identification that this is best achieved when considering habitus, doxa and the differing forms of capital. The study's findings revealed evidence of symbolic violence associated with the school's association with "Britishness" and its colonial history. Additionally, the paper acknowledged the potential for schools in Kuwait to utilise the IB curriculum framework to address the intricate dynamics of post-colonial influences. However, it is crucial to critically examine this claim, given the explicit connection between the IB and Western modes of thought, which may pose limitations in fully addressing post-colonial complexities. Dugonjic Rodwin (2021) also utilised Bourdieu's field theory to develop an understanding of the IB organisation. They highlighted that field theory is an underused concept in education and that the IB was the provider of a global field of international education.

Maire and Windle (2022) identify that powerful families have used the IB to secure their 'academic capital', thus securing educational advantage for their children, leading to the reproduction of social inequality. Gardner-McTaggart (2016) also highlighted how IB schools confer economic and cultural capital, which is particularly important for the elite non-utilitarian school's characteristic of international schools. Hagage et al, (2022) used Bourdieu's theories of habitus, field, and capital to understand the motivations, expectations, and experiences of trans-migratory upper- middle-class parents of international school students in Cyprus. The paper focused on the globally rising expatriate population, which is also an area of growth in the context of Thailand. By utilising a qualitative approach, incorporating in depth interviews with the parental population, the study found that parents newly arrived in Cyprus needed more social and cultural capital to integrate fully into the school's community. The study highlighted a parental belief that attendance at an international school will allow their children to access the 'cultural capital' they would be unable to attain in their home countries.

Bunnell (2022) highlighted that, for teachers, International Schooling is often a chaotic and precarious career path. This is often due to the lack of employment protection for overseas teachers, the contract length (typically two years) and substantial micro-politics and tensions (Caffyn, 2015). Odland and Ruzicka (2009, p. 6) revealed that International Schools have an annual average teacher turnover of 14.4%. In the US, this number is approximately 16%, at a time when teacher satisfaction and staff turnover are considered to be in a crisis (Perna, 2022).

44

Despite the precarious nature of international teaching and the lack of employment protection, increasing numbers of Western trained teachers are leaving their home countries to teach at international schools overseas. According to ISC Research, this number is set to double by 2030. Poole & Bunnell (2021) argue that the precarious nature of International Schools coupled with the increasing need for Western-trained teachers has led to an emergence of 'Transition Capital' for teachers. 'Transition Capital' enables teachers to use the short contract length and growing need for Western-trained teachers to their advantage by seeking more attractive packages regarding finances and lifestyle. It also allows teachers to be resilient to schools that view staff well-being as a secondary concern so they can see out their contracts and move to a new role. The high staff turnover in International Schools also allows teachers to progress into administrative roles quickly. A joint paper by Gardner-McTaggart and Bunnell (2022) utilised Bourdieu's theories such as doxa, habitus and capital 'to better understand how (international) schools that celebrate diversity, inclusion, and equity can also discriminate and be biased toward certain types of senior leader' (p. 6). The paper used the recruitment agency Search Associates to undertake the study. Search Associates has been accused for being a racist organisation as its business model is reliant on the teacher preferences of international schools, namely white, Western-trained 'native' speakers (Abdelmajid, 2020). As noted earlier, the development of international schools is so nuanced and widespread that an analysis that investigates a single recruitment agency that focuses mainly on the higher echelons of international schooling gives the study a narrow focus. The organisation is expensive to join, USD 2,000, plus a fee for every teacher placed, leading to it being the recruitment tool of choice for those schools with the financial means. Bunnell and Hatch (2021) identified that Bourdieu's theory of symbolic violence is valid when analysing international schools' admissions policies and how these subtle forms of violence help to maintain an elite school, which reflects parental desires.

I am very mindful that I don't want to take a reductionist approach to engaging with Pierre Bourdieu's work. As highlighted earlier, his work is often considered complex to utilise effectively as the different theories interconnect with one another to create an overall view of how education, inequality, power, and culture intersect. For example, it is difficult to comprehend the habitus of an individual without critiquing other theories and concepts such as fields, capitals, and symbolic violence. In *Reproduction*, Bourdieu claims to show that children from culturally wealthy backgrounds inherit that wealth in the form of embodied dispositions that are recognised and valued both by teachers and by the institutional procedures of the educational field (Crossley, cited in Grenfell p. 93).

In conclusion, it is clear that the growth and development of the IB worldwide during a period of

increasing neoliberal policies and practice, is one which requires further attention. Despite the cosmopolitan ideals of international schooling and the IB, there has been research which has suggested that neoliberal approaches have permeated the educational landscape. The use of Pierre Bourdieu's theories to frame the research will enlighten the power dynamics that exist within education and the expectations of stakeholders within a case study international school. The intersection of Bourdieu's work with the expanding need for further research on international schooling and the IB, offers rich potential for future studies. Potential future avenues of empirical research will be discussed later in this paper.

The following chapters will look to uncover to what extent these neoliberal practices have subverted the cosmopolitan ideals of the IBO by examining the thoughts and opinions of stakeholders at an established IB school.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Given my extensive experience as an educator for over 20 years, 16 of which have been in international schools on four continents, I am in an insightful position to make a valuable contribution to this much-needed area of research. In addition to my two decades of teaching, 12 of which has been within IB international schools, I am also an IB workshop leader and school visit team member. These roles require the delivery of IB teacher training in the Asia-Pacific region and also visiting schools who are either applying for initial authorisation or at the end of their five-year accreditation cycle.

This experience within international schooling and the IB has given me an in-depth understanding of trends, challenges, and opportunities that this sector of education provides. I have therefore designed this study from an insider's perspective, hoping to leverage my extensive experiences to contribute to the existing knowledge and research within this sphere. In the following sections I will discuss the research methodology, philosophy and theoretical approaches that the study employs.

3.1 Sample

The research was conducted in three distinct phases. The first phase involved focus group discussions with teachers, parents, and students, which took place between October and December 2022. All focus groups and individual interviews were undertaken face to face in an office on the case study school campus. I used data triangulation approach to data collection. This approach of using both focus groups and individual interviews may result in a 'broader

understanding of the phenomenon of interest' (Carter et al, 2014, p. 546). Denzin (2011) highlighted that this approach to data collection allows for researchers to extrapolate meaning within the data, which in turn mitigates potential bias. Using triangulation also increases the validity and reliability of the study (Stavros & Wesberg, 2009). The focus group research preceded the individual interviews as they enabled broad discussions, which led to more targeted inquiry during the individual interview stage. This approach is consistent with Morgan (1997) who found that 'follow-up individual interviews can help provide depth and detail on topics that were on broadly discussed in group interviews' (p. 23).

Focus Groups and Number of Participants:

Teachers Group 1: 6 participants
Teachers Group 2: 6 participants
Parents Group 1: 3 participants
Parents Group 2: 3 participants
Students Group 1: 3 participants
Students Group 2: 4 participants

The second phase consisted of semi-structured interviews with six teachers at the school. To ensure a balanced perspective, three of these teachers had also participated in the focus groups, while the other three were new to the study. The interview phase was completed by March 2023. The teachers used in this phase of the study were all approached due to their extensive experience in International Education and the IB. Each of the participants have taught in at least two different International Schools which offer the IB framework. Each of the teachers have experience in both the IB MYP and DP. Each of the teacher participants except one has English as their mother tongue.

The parents and students focus were respondents to the request to partake in the research. This was in part to keep within ethical guidelines with respect to my position of authority as a teacher and curriculum leader within the case study school. Of the student participants, all were either first language English speakers or fluent. All of the students had been studying in an English medium school for at least four years. Within the parent focus groups, all bar one parent was fluent in English and had no issue with understanding the questioning. The one parent who was less fluent in English on occasion needed one of the other parents to translate into Chinese. Given the high usage of anacronyms within the IB sphere, I briefly went over some of these prior to the focus groups beginning.

The first section of data collection was undertaken with focus group discussions involving

teachers, parents and students. These focus groups were recorded and transcribed using an external transcription company. Each of the focus groups lasted between 45 minutes and 1 hour. The second section of the data collection involved semi-structured interviews with 6 teachers from the case study school and was similarly recorded and transcribed.

In addition to the focus group and semi-structured interviews, an analysis was undertaken on the six K-12 IB continuum schools situated in Thailand. An IB K-12 continuum school is one which offers the PYP (Primary Year Programme Grade1-5), MYP (Middle Years Programme Gr6-10) and the DP (Diploma programme Gr 11- 12). There are also 2 schools within Thailand who also offer the CP (Career Related Programme Gr11-12) which is a programme which partners with external businesses and universities in an attempt to cater for those students who may struggle with the academic rigour of the DP. For the purposes of this study and the convenient sample size, only these 6 schools were included within this analysis. It is also felt that the analysis of schools which offer the same curriculum would render the results more impactful and be able to be viewed within wider contexts.

For the secondary data collection, a spreadsheet was developed to compile relevant information from the websites of Thai IB World Schools, which included the school's philosophy, mission, vision, service-learning statements, after-school activities, university acceptances, and IB DP results. The nationality and composition of the school's leadership team were also recorded when available. The analysis focused on how cosmopolitan educational approaches, such as service learning and learner profile traits, were integrated within the neoliberal context of choice, competition, results, and student outcomes. Additionally, the provision of after-school activities was examined in relation to Bourdieu's theories from Distinction.

The sampling strategy for the focus groups varied depending on which of the stakeholder groups were involved. For the teacher's group, the intention was to approach teachers who have had the most experience in international education. All the teachers within the focus groups had at least ten years of experience in international education in various schools/curricula and nations. This knowledge of their professional prior experience was developed from my insider position as a colleague within the school. I was also conscious of getting a good cross-section of experienced international educators in terms of gender and nationality, which I feel was achieved within the contextual limitations of the school faculty. The sampling strategy for the student group was reliant on adherence to the ethical considerations identified earlier in this methodology. I spoke to the Gr10-12 cohorts regarding the study and my goal. During this discussion, I also highlighted the ethical considerations of the study and the requirement for parental approval to partake in the focus group research.

Students were then invited to volunteer to participate if it interested them. From these presentations, 12 students volunteered to participate in the research. Each of these volunteers was then forwarded a participant information form, which further detailed the purposes of the study and a parental consent form. I undertook a similar strategy with the parent group. At the end of a parent workshop I led, I spoke to a large parent group to see if there was any interest in volunteering for the focus group research. Ten parents volunteered to be part of the study, using this approach. Each of these parents was then forwarded a parental information form, which further detailed the study's aims and objectives and the ethical considerations related to the project.

Recruitment

The initial data collection approach was to undertake focus group research with school stakeholders, namely parents, teachers, and students. The study highlighted several ethical and practical considerations when recruiting for the study. Given my current role within the schools as an MYP coordinator, I do have the benefits and potential drawbacks of being an 'insider researcher'. This access and familiarity with the school and IB organisation will enable me to gain insights that would be difficult for an external researcher. My role and relationships with my peers allowed trust to be built easily, subsequently leading to more pertinent data to be collected. My extensive experience both as a teacher and school leader within International Schools and as an IB workshop leader/school visit team member allowed me to deeply understand the culture, norms, and values of the group or institution being studied, further aiding my ability to interpret the data in a more meaningful way. I am aware that the natural development of this study has stemmed from my professional background and personal observations and conversations, shaping my view of both international schooling and the IBO. Given this awareness, I tried to maintain objectivity when throughout the data collection process. I ensured that during the research undertaking, teachers were aware that whilst the data is being collected at an individual school, the research focusses on how this relates to broader trends and developments. There are potential ethical implications for this research method, which will be addressed in the following section.

The parents were recruited by emailing the research and its intentions to garner potential interest. From these initial communications, I was able to arrange a willing research group. Given that this was my first year working in this school, I could not rely on any relationships developed with parents in previous school years. This led to a more difficult recruitment process. However, on the positive side, it did lead to participation from parents who were genuinely interested in the focus of the study. Given my role as a teacher within the school, the recruitment of students required the greatest ethical considerations. The following section will

share the specifics of these ethical considerations during the recruitment process.

The individual school websites were coded using a content analysis approach similar to that used for the focus groups and interviews. For example, the prominence of university acceptances for graduating students on school websites could support the views of school stakeholders that the IB DP programme is focused on providing students with the skills and knowledge necessary to attend elite universities around the world.

3.2 Data Collection Methods

Focus Groups

Focus groups are a commonly used approach for understanding an individual's subjective experiences. Ritchie and Lewis (2003), highlight them as an essential approach within educational research.

> Focus groups can be used to explore a wide range of educational issues, such as student learning, teacher practices, and school policies. They can also be used to develop new educational programs and interventions. Focus groups are a valuable tool for educational researchers because they can provide a rich understanding of the perspectives of students, teachers, and other stakeholders. (p.16)

Focus groups are a valuable tool for developing a rich understanding of the perspectives of teachers, students, and parents within the school context. These focus groups generate new ideas and views that can then be further explored through semi-structured interviews.

Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews allowed for a deeper understanding of participants' experiences and beliefs. It also allowed for further development and analysis of the themes and experiences emerging from the initial focus groups. The semi-structured methodological approach allowed for flexibility and adaptability with the questioning, which will support the thematic approach to data analysis. Semi- structured interviews enabled a tailoring of the questioning to suit the different teachers and their specific opinions and experiences. Benefits of this approach to educational research is reflected by Hattie (2009): 'semi-structured interviews can be used to explore the perspectives of students, teachers, and other stakeholders in depth' (p. 23).

For this study only teachers were selected for the semi-structured interview segment of the

research. This choice stemmed from the realiseation during the focus group research that teachers provided a more perceptive and information-rich perspective. Consequently, the decision was made to concentrate exclusively on teacher interviews, with parent and student focus groups remaining integral components to be later coded during the data analysis phase. In order to gain the most significant insights from the teachers, I tried to approach teachers with multiple experiences in international schools in different countries. I felt that this approach would elicit the most information-rich data.

Content Analysis

When analysing the 6 IB continuum schools' websites, I used a content analysis approach to understand the themes within the school text data. Content analysis is a general term for several strategies used to analyse text (Powers & Knapp, 2006). It is a systematic coding and organisational approach used for unobtrusively exploring large amounts of textual information to determine trends and word patterns (Viaismuradi & Turennen, 2013). Both content analysis and thematic analysis look to understand social phenomena by analysing narratives (Sparkes, 2005). However, they are different approaches. Utilising both approaches for this study is the most appropriate method. The school websites were analysed using a content analysis approach based on the themes developed through the initial focus group and interview research. By utilising both approaches during the research process I was able to support some of the themes identified within the focus groups and interviews. It is also anticipated that the data collected at the individual school can be viewed within a broader national context using IB continuum schools within Thailand for the research. By limiting the sample to just those IB continuum schools within the country, the research will blend appropriately and offer relevant insights.

For the purposes of this study, it was felt that the use of a case study approach in conjunction with focus groups, semi-structured interviews and website analysis was the most effective approach to gain insights from the school stakeholders. Mabry (1991) noted that within most social science research utilising case studies, the researcher assumes the position of an external observer. However, I believe that my positionality within this study facilitated a more naturalistic approach and my pre-existing comprehension of the salient focus areas was a net positive for the study. In the following sections, I will detail how this data was collected and analysed.

Validity and *Transferability*

To enhance the credibility and validity of the research several strategies were employed. Data

triangulation of focus groups, individual interviews and website analysis were used alongside engagement with participants in a familiar situation (case study school). My position as an insider researcher also allowed for authentic access to participants whilst maintaining ongoing reflexivity to limit potential bias. The use of reflexive thematic analysis enabled deep engagement with the data balancing inductive openness with theoretically informed coding. Given the exploratory nature of the study, the research aims to create theoretical transferability, which would allow for readers and researchers to determine the relevance of the themes within their own context. The case study school is described with sufficient evidence and detail for the work to be replicated within different IB international school settings. Whilst the case study setting was within a single site, the addition of the content analysis allows for wider analysis of IB schools within the Thai context. The study was aimed at creating well-evidenced, contextually situated insights into how cosmopolitan ideals and neoliberal realities intersect at an IB K-12 school in Thailand.

3.3 Case Study Justification

A case study approach was utilised as it allowed for an in-depth exploration of the research objectives within the real-life context of an established international school. By focusing on a single school for the focus groups and interviews, the study was able to add context to the theoretical approaches of the study. Gerring (2004) defined a 'case study' as 'an intensive study of a single unit with an aim to generalise across a larger set of units' (p. 341).

Yin (1994) highlighted that an effective case study aims to be 'an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident' (p. 13). Tight (2017), identified nine different typologies of case study, which include the most influential and widely cited. Of these nine approaches, this study would be most closely aligned with an *internsive* case study, as it combines interpretive and explanatory elements, which aligns well with the studies approach and usage of Bourdieu's concepts. This intensive approach is relevant as the study is focused on one case (school) to uncover rich and meaningful insights, by seeking to understand the lived experiences of school stakeholders. The interpretive nature of the case study also allowed for the study to examine the tensions of neoliberalism and cosmopolitanism within the school. The explanatory element of the case study research allows for engagement between Bourdieu's theories and concepts whilst examining how neoliberal forces influence the IB and International education and how school stakeholders respond.

Utilising this approach in a single school will allow for both a micro and macro interpretation of the results whereby the research offers a contribution to both the school in question but also to

the wider discussions centred on international schooling. This was echoed by Tight (2017) who emphasises that case studies offer 'an opportunity to study phenomena in context and in considerable depth,' (p. 23). In addition, the intensive case study approach to this research allowed for a nuanced application of Bourdieu's theories and how different forms of capital are manifested within the school. The narrative form that accompanies the methodological approach used in the study can also illustrate some of the broader theoretical points in a relatable manner. In contrast, Lakomsky (1987) highlighted that case study research within education can overstate the validity of findings due to the findings being heavily based on participants biases and opinions. Despite this, I felt that in order to understand and comprehend the different perspectives of the school stakeholders, intensive case study approach which also utilises an interpretive and explanatory approach was the most appropriate in this context. Stake (1995) highlighted that knowledge is constructed by participants, and thus their subjective experiences are essential for generating meaningful insights.

The table below highlights the methods employed for answering the intended research questions.

Table 3.2

Research Question	Methodological Approach for answering	Stakeholder
How far has the cosmopolitanism of the IB become subverted by neoliberalism?	Focus groups, semi-structured interviews, website analysis	Teachers, parents, students
To what extent are the cosmopolitan values inherent in the IB reflected in the thoughts and opinions of stakeholders at an established K-12 IB school?	Focus groups, semi- structured interviews	Teachers, parents, students
To what extend are the professional development needs of teachers met by the IB educator workshops?	Focus groups, semi- structured interviews	Teachers

What are the parental expectations of attendance at an IB world school?	Focus Groups, semi- structured interviews	Teachers, parents, students
How are different forms of capital evidenced and utilised at a case study K-12 IB school?	Focus groups, semi- structured interviews	Teachers, parents, students

3.4 Research Philosophy

Given the nature and aspirations of this study, it was clear from the outset that research would be undertaken using a qualitative approach. Denzin and Lincoln (2011) highlighted that qualitative research:

> Is a way of understanding the world through the eyes of those who live it. It is a way of studying social life that emphasises the meanings that people give to their experiences and actions. Qualitative researchers seek to understand the world from the perspective of the people they study, and they use a variety of methods to collect and analyse data, including interviews, focus groups, and participant observation (p. 3).

Whilst the qualitative approach will allow the study to evaluate the complex experiences of teachers, students, and parents within an international school, I am conscious of the fact that qualitative research can be interpreted as having a lack of objectivity, which can be a threat to a study's credibility, as an ethical issue, and as potentially hidden from a researcher's knowledge of self (Roulston & Shelton, 2015). From a researcher's perspective, I am fully aware that I have been drawn to this topic for study due to my background as an international school educator and the many conversations and observations I have had over the past 15 years regarding these issues. The undertaking of this PhD programme has primarily given structure, theory, and clarity to some of these pre-existing thoughts and beliefs at the outset of the research process. That said, I feel I was open-minded and objective when interpreting the data to ensure that the results are not biased and reflect the beliefs developed through my journey as an educator within international schools. I would say that what excited me most when interpreting the results was analysing the world, I have professionally inhabited for the past 15 years from differing perspectives and viewpoints. This desire to understand teachers' lives as an international educator also led me to initially identify grounded theory as a philosophical approach that would elicit the most influential research. Initially developed in the 1960s by Glaser and Strauss, grounded theory builds theories from collected data. This initial

approach to grounded theory necessitates researchers to be free of preconceived ideas of what the research methods will generate. Given my extensive experience in international education and my part-time roles within the IB, it would have been difficult to use a grounded theory approach of this nature. A purely grounded approach would have potentially led to a loss of direction for the study and results, which would not be practically valuable within the research context. In the 1990s, Charmaz developed the constructivist grounded theory to utilise more flexibility and recognise the experiences and biases of the researcher. This approach has been commonly used in studies related to education (Norris & Sawyer, 2012; Reed, 2014; Stake, 2010). A constructivist grounded theory was an appropriate focus for this research, as it enables data to analyse how participants view the world they inhabit, which is a core component of my aims. However, whilst constructivist grounded theory has its benefits, the closest fit for this study would be through the lens of an interpretivist research paradigm. An interpretivist approach focuses on action and is thus related to behaviour 'with meaning' (Cohen, et al, 2018, P. 19). This approach also allows for participants to share their intentional shared experiences with researchers, which aligns well with the study's intention to examine the opinions and motivations of stakeholders within an established IB school. The study also shares elements of a phenomenological approach due to its aim to examine the subjective phenomena of experience (Cohen, et al, 2018). However, by applying Bourdieu's concepts in relation to participant responses in addition to utilising a comparative website analysis, a purely phenomenological approach was not appropriate.

Interpretivist Research Paradigm

The interpretivist research paradigm emerged in the late 20th century as a development and response to the positivist approach. The interpretivist approach contended that the social world cannot be objectively observed as it is purely shaped by those people who inhabit the space (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). This approach necessitates that the researchers' individual experiences and predispositions are an integral part of the research process. This sentiment was supported by Hiller (2007) 'from an interpretive perspective, all knowledge is grounded in our particular experiences; it is subjective and bound to the natural contexts in which we enact our lives' (p. 103).

This approach, therefore, leads the researcher to be the 'prime filter and interpreter' (Godwin and Goodwin, 2006, p. 111). Therefore, findings are subjective through their construction and interpretation. They include multiple perspectives, such as existing knowledge, the participants' voices, the researcher's standpoint, and the readers' constructions as the personal meaning makers. Shea et al. (2011) highlighted that 'interpretive researchers seek to understand the concepts and meaning making of those who are "native" to the context they are studying' (p.

39). Approaching the study in this manner allowed me to aptly reflect my position as an 'insider' researcher in the context of international schooling and the IB. One of the significant benefits of using an interpretivist research approach to this study is its flexibility and reflexivity. Consequently, given my extensive involvement in International Schools and my role as a peer of the teacher interview participants, this reflexive approach was the most appropriate fit for this study. Reflexivity is the conscious examination of the researcher's subjective point of view. Identifying how prior experiences and beliefs shape the research process is essential to the success of this study. Cunliffe (2020) highlighted that the philosophical roots of reflexivity are often linked to the 'postmodern' movement and draw upon philosophers such as Derrida (1976) and Fucoult (1970). Shea et al., (2013) identified that an interpretivist research paradigm must be more flexible than other forms of research. Flexibility is a conscious, intentional strategy, and it applies not only to the need to respond in the moment to things said or done but also to how the research process may be changing initial research designs and questions.

Reflexivity is evident throughout this research process as it allowed me to develop an understanding of the research topic whilst incorporating my own personal professional understanding. Continued reflexivity allows for the study to evolve, further enhancing the discussion points reached. Finlay (2002) highlighted that when research participants are encouraged to reflect on their own assumptions and beliefs, the quality and depth of responses is enhanced, thus supporting the use of a case study approach when interpreting participant responses.

When considering which research philosophy was the most appropriate lens for investigating and interpreting my research, a post-positivist approach was researched due to its application in the social sciences and its approach towards the researcher as an active participant in the research process, as opposed to being a neutral observer. Post-positivism arose historically after positivism and replaced it ((Phillips & Burbules, 2000). Post-positivism shifted the emphasis of educational research away from the rigid, objective, single truth to a more subjective approach where 'human knowledge is not based on unchallengeable, rock solid foundations, it is conjectural' (Phillips and Burbules, p. 2000, p. 26) However, whilst post-positivism does appreciate the importance of context when conducting qualitative research, which is an essential ingredient within this study, it is an approach that still relies on the importance of empirical evidence (Panhwar, et al. 2017) and is still more objective than the direction of this study was best suited.

Mehan (1992) eloquently identified the benefits that interpretivism offers researchers. 'In the hands of interpretive theorists, culture is not merely a pale reflection of structural forces; it is a system of meaning that mediates social structure and human action' (p. 3). Social

constructivism and interpretivism highlight the fact that knowledge is not strictly objective but is shaped by our individual thoughts and experiences. Both approaches are tasked with understanding how people make meaning in the world, and used together they can effectively make sense of social phenomena, allowing the study to better understand how international schooling and the IB is impacting our education system. This was highlighted by Patton (2015):

> Interpretivism and social constructivism are both concerned with understanding the subjective meanings that people ascribe to their experiences. However, interpretivism focuses on the individual's perspective, while social constructivism focuses on the social context in which these meanings are formed. When used together, these two approaches can provide a more complete understanding of how people make sense of the world. (p. 67)

For the purposes of this study, it was felt that the use of a case study approach in conjunction with focus groups, semi-structured interviews and website analysis was the most effective approach to gain insights from the school stakeholders. Mabry (1991) noted that within most social science research utilising case studies, the researcher assumes the position of an external observer. However, I believe that my positionality within this study facilitated a more naturalistic approach and my pre- existing comprehension of the salient focus areas was a net positive for the study. In the following sections, I will detail how this data was collected and analysed.

School Selection

The schools which were examined for the analysis of their websites were selected based on their adoption of at least three of the International Baccalaureate (IB) programs: the Primary Years Programme (PYP), the Middle Years Programme (MYP), and the Diploma Programme (DP). Currently, six schools in Thailand offer all three of these programs. Only these schools were included in this research to maintain the focus on IB program-specific schooling. Schools that offer one or two of the programs and mix curricula were not included. For example, several schools follow the British or US curriculum up to Grade 11 (Year 12) and then switch to the IB DP program. The six schools that are currently authorised to deliver an IB continuum of at least 3 of the 4 courses are:

PTIS – Prem Tinsulanonda International School, Chiang Mai
NIST – New International School of Bangkok
APIS – American Pacific International School, Chiang Mai
Concordian International School, Bangkok

UWCT – United World College, Thailand, Phuket

KIS – Bangkok

Ethical Thinking

The following procedures were implemented to mitigate any potential ethical risks or issues associated with this study. First, approval for the study was obtained from the head of the school to ensure cooperation and to explain the purposes and intentions of the study. This protocol is in line with BERA (British Educational Research Association), who state that, 'researchers should think about whether they should approach gatekeepers before directly approaching participants, and about whether they should adopt an institution's ethical approval and safeguarding procedures; this is usually a requirement' (p. 3). The initial meeting with the Head of School provided an opportunity to discuss how the study could be a benefit to the school and to reassure her that the intention is not to be a critique of the school's performance but tasked with understanding the and ideas affecting international education and the IB in a wider context. The results of the study will hopefully prove beneficial to the school in better understanding their stakeholders, and therefore offering opportunities for reflection and growth. It was also agreed that the school would not be named in the study.

Using a robust ethical framework was essential in arranging focus groups for teachers, students, and parents, which was particularly important given my role as the MYP coordinator/teacher and as part of the Senior School Leadership team. I ensured that teachers felt comfortable participating in the study by highlighting at each step that the study was not intended to focus on the school or their performance but rather to explore their experiences and observations as long- standing international educators. The intentions of the study were communicated to all participants before they were asked to volunteer.

Once participants highlighted that they would be willing to assist in the study, a participant information document was forwarded which detailed the study and its intended outcomes. At the outset of the different focus groups and individual interviews, participants signed a document to confirm that they had read the participant information sheet and were happy to continue with the group/interview. To ensure that teachers, students, and parents felt comfortable sharing their experiences and perspectives without fear of judgment, anonymity was assured. Pseudonyms were used to reflect participants' responses. While anonymity could be assured for individual teacher interviews, this was impossible for the group data collection, which was addressed at the outset of the focus groups, with the hope that participants would speak freely within the group setting without judgment or repercussions. At the outset of the focus groups, it was also reiterated that the study was not intended to be critical or

congratulatory regarding the teachers, students and parents' perceptions of the school's performance. However, given the nature of the study, which is to examine people's experiences in international schooling to understand developments, other areas are intended to elicit sensitive information from participants.

The use of the Thai IB schools' websites for examination does not require ethical considerations, given that this information is openly within the public domain. The school will not be directly identified in the project. However, given the contextual nature of the study, the fact that there are only six K-12, IB World schools in Thailand, and that I am currently employed at the school, anonymity is difficult to assure. Nevertheless, it was highlighted to the school's senior leaders that the school is not the focus of the study but rather the wider experiences of people within the school and how these relate to broader issues and trends in international education.

Participants were assured that the data emanating from the research will be stored securely on a password-protected device and will only be potentially viewed by Lancaster University and myself. The study aims to use a professional external transcription service that guarantees privacy. This approach to informing participants how their data is to be stored is in line with the UK's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

Data Analysis

For this section of the methodology, I will begin with some of the theoretical justification for selecting the methods of data analysis chosen. I will then continue to highlight how the data was coded before identifying the emergent themes. The section will conclude with some initial findings related to the emergent themes identified.

Thematic Analysis

For the purposes of this study, I felt that a thematic analysis (TA) approach was the most appropriate. Thematic analysis is a method for developing, analysing, and interpreting patterns across a qualitative dataset, which involves systematic data coding processes to develop themes. (Braun and Clarke (2006, p 4). TA analysis offers researchers a set of 'tools' to organise, interrogate and interpret a dataset. Braun and Clarke highlighted that TA is to be seen as a flexible methodology as there are many different approaches to undertaking a TA as it is a 'theoretically delimited methodology'. Since first adopting the TA approach to research analysis, Braun and Clarke have further refined their approach to TA. This refinement led to the development of Reflexive TA. Reflexive TA allows critical reflection at the forefront of the

researcher's practice. Reflexivity allows the research to be grounded in the subjectivity of the study and its research approach. Conducting a good quality analysis is vital, and researchers must strive to understand their perspectives. (Elliott, Fisher and Rennie, 1999).

Xu and Zammitt (2020) lament that there is a lack of a detailed description of how to undertake practical reflective thematic analysis and an absence of any specific guidelines for the approach (Nowell, Norris, White and Moules, 2017). However, Braun and Clarke highlight that a reflexive thematic analysis approach does not offer any 'hard and fast' rules but that effective reflexive TA happens at 'the intersection of the dataset, the context of the research and the researcher skill and locatedness' (p. 10). This ability of the research being situated and shaped by the processes in place and the experience of the researcher allows me to utilise prior experiences as a critical component of the data set. Berger (2015) stated that:

> It means turning the researcher lens back on oneself to recognise and take responsibility for one's situatedness within the research and the effect that it may have on the setting and the people being studied, questions being asked, data being collected and its interpretation. As such, the idea of reflexivity challenges the view of knowledge production as independent of the researcher producing it and of knowledge as objective. (2015, p. 220).

Braun and Clarke (2006) describe thematic analysis as 'a flexible and useful research tool, which can potentially provide a rich and detailed, yet complex account of data'(p. 5).

Coding

Saldana (2021), described a code in qualitative analysis as 'a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language or visual data' (p. 5). The initial stage of coding involved dissecting the data. This allowed me to read the transcriptions of both the interviews and focus groups with a view to gaining an understanding of the data content. The second stage required me to engage with the data and synthesis of the information, allowing for some initial interpretations to develop. This sequence of identifying and synthesising the data was repeated to allow for highlights and eventually categories to emerge. Given the exploratory nature of this research, I felt that an inductive approach to coding was the most appropriate. Inductive coding is a method which allows for the researcher to engage with the data with very few pre-conceived ideas regarding the final outcomes, allowing me to identify any emergent themes from a more objective standpoint. Inductive coding begins with close readings of the text, highlighting relevant meanings (Thomas, 2003), which was consistent with the methodological approach of

60

the study.

This approach was utilised despite my extensive experience and background with the field of international schooling. In contrast, deductive coding is used when research is looking at the data with the explicit idea of answering specific research questions prior to the analysis of the data. The data was also analysed with Pierre Bourdieu's theories at the forefront. The coding was undertaken with a view to identifying correlations between Bourdieu's theories and the data emerging from the school, which was particularly pertinent when deciphering how different forms of capital are developed and manipulated within the case study school.

By utilising these inductive coding frames once the data has been collated could potentially lead to inherent researcher bias and subjectivity to be evident within the results. Charmaz, (2006) states that inductive coding is 'a valuable tool for qualitative researchers because it allows them to develop codes that are grounded in the data, which can lead to more accurate and insightful analysis' (p. 116). This method of coding required me to read the transcripts of both the focus groups and individual interviews in detail to identify any emerging themes. Whilst inductive coding is often utilised with a grounded theory approach (Charmaz, 2006), it is also a useful tool for conducting a thematic analysis, as highlighted by Boyatzis, (1998) 'Inductive coding is a good fit for thematic analysis because it allows the researcher to develop codes that are specific to the data being analysed. This can help to ensure that the analysis is objective and unbiased and that the themes that are identified are truly representative of the data. (p. 5). An inductive approach to the data allows for an analytical enterprise which is inherently 'open-minded' and is the predominant method of choice for 'most grounded theorists, ethnogrophers, phenomenologists, and researchers of other traditional approaches to qualitative inquiry' (Saldana, 2021, p. 41). Whilst the study employs an inductive approach, the difference between the methods is interrelated, but due to the study creating codes after and not before the data analysis, inductive coding is the most appropriate application.

Given that there are only six schools within Thailand that offer a K-12 IB education, the website analysis could potentially provide limited results. Whilst the study could have extended its scope to include international schools, which offer possibly one or two of the IB programmes, thus broadening the scope, I felt this would also limit the validity and subsequently, any discussion points to emerge.

Once I had successfully collected, transcribed and stored the data, I began to attempt to find patterns and meanings from the data. My initial thought was to use digital software such as Nvivo or Atlas to assist with analysing the data and identifying emergent themes. These programmes allow for volumous amounts of data to be handled, whilst allowing quick and

efficient access for the researcher (Baltazar & Horter, 2008) These methods of analysis are effective for teams of researchers dealing with large amounts of data, allowing for increased auditability and increased rigour and trustworthiness of findings (Clarke et al., 2021). Clarke et al (2021) also highlighted that whilst there are benefits to using CAQDAS software such as Nvivo or Atlas, it's use can lead to a 'disengagement from the data' (p. 2). It has also been highlighted that the use of CAQDAS software packages can lead to researchers over-relying on the technology and subsequently missing relevant context in the results (Glaser and Laudel, 2013). Given some of the nuance, context and sub-text I experienced when undertaking the interviews, coupled with a relatively small data set a manual approach to the coding would be more effective to avoid this potential disengagement and over reliance on the software. The advantage of this approach was the connection and familiarity I began to develop with the various transcriptions. This engagement also meant I could use my own experiences and background to help deciphering the responses whilst retaining reflexivity.

The first step in creating codes and themes for the study was to read, re-read and re- read again the various transcriptions. For this, transcriptions were transferred into Google Docs before making notes and comments while reading the data. From this process, several coding categories either emerged or confirmed. As previously highlighted, the study has firm ideas of what ideas and subjects would be highlighted through the process, mainly due to the researcher's positioning as inherently biased, which inevitably leads to a more deductive approach to analysing the results. I was open to exploring codes and themes that occurring naturally during the process. An example is how student behaviour is perceived within international schools compared to teacher's experiences within their home country.

Coding Categories

From this process, the following code categories and subcategories were identified to allow themes to emerge.
Code 1 – The International Baccalaureate
Sub Category 1a – IB Mission and Vision
Sub Category 1b – Pedagogy/Curriculum Framework Sub Category 1c – IB Training
Sub Category 1d – IB LP
Sub Category 1e – IB Service as Action Sub Category – 1f – IB recommendations Code 2 – Routes into International Teaching
Sub Category 2a – Recruitment – Search Associates etc.
Sub Category 2b – School choice
Sub Category 2c – Non-IB experience
Sub Category 2d – Route to this school

Sub Category 2e – Behaviour

Code 3 – Student Outcomes
Sub Category 3a – Parents Expectations
Sub Category 3b – School expectations

Code 4 – Capital
Sub Category 4a – Cultural Capital
Sub Category 4b – Other types of capital
Sub Category 4c – Other Bourdieu links

Code 5 – International Mindedness
Sub Category 5a – GCE – Service Learning

Code 6 – Future Developments
Sub Category 6a – Pedagogical
Sub Category 6b – Schools
Sub Category 6c – IB

From Codes to Themes

According to Saldana (2021), a theme is an extended phrase or sentence that identifies what a unit of data is about and/or what it means. These themes should not consist of descriptions but rather the researcher's interpretations that summarise our beliefs about the data (Morgan, 2008). These themes or thematic analyses are appropriate when understanding people's lived experiences and perspectives on a subject (Clarke, Braun and Hayfield, 2015).

Ideally, six themes should emerge from the data. Rubin and Rubin (2012) stated that these initial themes should be simple examples of information gathered through the first analysis. 'to extract the meaning and implications, to reveal patterns, or to stitch together descriptions of events into a coherent narrative. Researchers construct from this analysis informed, vivid, and nuanced reports that reflect what the interviewees have said and that answer the research question.' (p. 201).

Research also generated interconnected themes, which were almost themes in itself. For example, much of the data is related to expectations, the IB mission and vision, and IM (international mindedness), which are directly linked to the theories of Pierre Bourdieu.

Theme Example quote

Effectiveness of mandatory IB Training 'I have done online the four-week course, complete waste of time, each time. It was painful. I've done face-to-face and I've had some good workshop leaders. Those were really good. I've done online three-day workshops, which again, it just hit and miss, but that was a waste of my time as well.'

IB DP pathways – 'I do feel like they go to university and they're so much better prepared than students who don't do the IB. Because of the workload and the fact that they are used to juggling so many things and able to just deal with'.

The effectiveness of IB Learner Profiles and Service Learning – 'I think things are changing now because I think now globally a lot of us are aware of this kind of, it's white saviourism'.

Teachers unintentional path to this school and/or IB – 'I couldn't be an accountant because Thai law says foreigners cannot be an accountant. I decided to become a teacher. That's how I started. I was in a Thai school which was a bilingual school and then I moved to an IB school.'

Who are International Schools catering for? 'and they're middle class and local, they probably want to do it because they see their kids going maybe abroad, which means they have to know English, they have to know different languages. It's a status thing. It's probably get out of these very traditional local education systems. I wonder if there's a certain amount of trust that the local people have in seeing white faces. I don't know. It's dangerous territory to say that at the same time—'

Capital, the IB and International Education – 'Maybe they want the kids to leave. Maybe they want them to go work outside, study outside of the country, the whole brain drain situation. Maybe international schools are contributing to that.'

Chapter 4: Emerging Themes

At this point of the study, it is worth reminding ourselves of the intended aim and objectives of this research and some of the issues the research intended to illuminate. The overarching research question was:

- *How far has the cosmopolitanism of the IB become subverted by neoliberalism? A case study of an established IB school in Thailand?*

Sub-question related to the methodology employed by the study included:

- *To what extent are the cosmopolitan values inherent in the IB reflected in the thoughts and opinions of stakeholders at an established K-12 IB school?*

- *To what extend are the professional development needs of teachers met by the IB educator workshops?*

- *What are the parental expectations of attendance at an IB world school?*

- *How are different forms of capital evidenced and utilised at a case study K-12 IB school?*

The findings were divided into the following sections after the focus groups and individual interviews were coded.

- Teacher Routes into International Teaching and the IBO
- IB Teacher Training
- International Schooling, the IB and Higher Education
- IB Core Elements
- Capital, Elitism, International School and the IB
- Future Recommendations
- Website Analysis of Thai IB Schools

4.1 Example Questions and Responses

For the purposes of methodological clarity, the following sections offer a snapshot of the transcript questions and answers emanating from the research.

Parents

Interviewer: Okay, thanks so much. What do you think are the strengths of international schooling? What do you think the benefits are for students?

Participant 1: I think nowadays it's to have children that have an understanding and respect for different nationalities, cultures, and just generally have an orientation of where places are is definitely, is a benefit and a gift, so that they can–Basically, that they can exist outside of the

schooling system, and that they have the–It's a cliché. You have the world at the doorstep because it's no secret that the way we're in some of the crisis when it comes to the future of what we call our home is just the whole of the planet, so to give the children that opportunity, I think, is a privilege. Obviously, not everybody can do it. There are some international schools that excel in highlighting the benefits of international schools. Not all international schools. International by name and nature.

Interviewer: I think that's one of the things is there seemed to be a little bit of a discrepancy in international schools, what constitutes an international school, and it's very vague. At the moment, it just seems to be if it's a curriculum rather than the national curriculum for a country, it's in international school, but they then can vary quite greatly thereafter.

Participant 2: As she mentioned, it's this globalization, that they see a lot of different nationality people are normal to be with them. Then also, there is a variety of languages existing in the world, that they learn it without the somebody make them wrong. This is normal for them to see different people, different languages, different culture. Just be in international school they learn so much about that. Plus, they can have a open-door after graduating in international school to travel or go in a world, instead just staying in one country to go to the university or work because they have wider choices after graduating in international school.

Interviewer: With your children, do you expect that they would--? At the moment, you couldn't maybe imagine where they would be in 10 years' time.

Participant 2: Of course, by financially, we cannot support everything that they want, but at least they can have choices, they can search, or they can see what they want to do in the future and always the best way that they want to go instead of just in small places.

Participant 1: I find that my children, they don't have this closed mindset when it comes to the world. When I speak with friends back in the UK that have stayed in the same city or even in the same country, that they were amazed that their children hoped to go to maybe universities. It's not very common for a child that's always stayed in the same city or same country to then want to go to do further education universities outside of the country that they're known. Just from my perspective, even at a tender age of 10, 11, 12, they're already thinking about, "Oh, I'll go to university in the States," or "I'll go to university in Germany." Somewhere else. Interviewer: Do you think that's the culture of the school? That's the norm that you can go on to universities in different parts of the world?

Participant 2: For example, especially in Asia, if the children graduate in Japanese high school,

it's easy to access to Japanese university, but it's hard to apply for the oversea university as well, but you'll be in the international school and then they already have references and idea in a school going to give the information about all over the world. Then they also have right to access–If they finish IB or if they finish British curriculum, they have a easy–Not easy, but access to international worldwide.

Interviewer: Does the IB help with that process in terms of giving its students that access to higher education?

Teachers

Interviewer: Were any of you brought to (school name) because of the IB? Was that any of the main motivations to anybody?

Teacher: It was, it maybe made it easier for me because I had taught at that school for 10 years. Then it's okay. It's brand new. I had a new role being in boarding and living in Thailand, it was brand new. At least I have some comfort with the curriculum or the framework that I'll be teaching. For me being one half the teaching couple was probably very similar to what Connie was saying. Just time for change and time to get a little more green and a little less concrete coming to Hong Kong. It was a work- life balance decision, not just purely the job. Although I was interested in having new types of roles but was very much a fit for both of us and work-life balance.

Interviewer: Ben?

Teacher: I'm going to say like Sheila, I couldn't care less about the curriculum, whatsoever. It's about the conditions in the school. One thing I did notice though, was that IB schools only want IB educators. That rubs me the wrong way in many ways because good teaching and learning is good teaching and learning and IB is really not a curriculum, it's a framework. Except for DP, DP is a curriculum but otherwise, you're paying for a marketing scheme really and they're different ways of pretending to do things. It's not really a curriculum.

I was attracted to having that on my CV, because then it opened doors and possibilities because of those walls. IB in itself, I don't really care about. One thing that I am concerned about is the fact that it is becoming incestuous IB because you just bring in IB people and then there's no other thinking, no other different ways.
Then that creates sometimes a zealotry that is dangerous, I think.

Interviewer: Do you think there's a difference between the programs themselves and their

effectiveness?

Teacher: Between the programs with the, you mean like IBPYP, and DP?
Interviewer: Yes.

Teacher: I have been privileged enough to work across–working with kids as young as grade two. Sorry, not grade two, age two, two-year-olds. Early childhood within a PYP framework, to grade school, grade one through five, and then now in middle school and high school here at (school name). This is just a very, very–I wouldn't take me too seriously in terms of, because my experience in senior school age curriculum is too, too shallow still. It's only my fourth year doing this. I get the impression that PYP and MYP could be very similar.
They could flow really beautifully if, because MYP theoretically should be inquiry- based as well and should be student-led. I don't see that as much actually happening, actually being put into practice in MYP as I have done in PYP schools. Those have been in different schools as well. Again, different schools interpreting the framework, as Benjamin said in different ways.
Interviewer: That's interesting that you see the school and the relationships as more important. Do you think parents see that, or do you think parents–how much do you think into the fact it's IB school?

Teacher: A great deal because a lot of them may not have gone to an international school themselves, but for whatever reason, they now have the ability to send their children to that. There's a cache or something that they want to tap into, whether it's correct, right or wrong. They view it as a pathway to success.

Teacher: To good universities.

Teacher: Yes, and I think in the student, my opinion, but I think in the student landscape, there's a prevailing idea out there that the DP is two years of pain, and it's your pain, they love it, they hate it. At the end of the program there's a lot of sense of pride. They do believe they're, whether or not they're, they do believe they're prepared for their university or career path, but I don't think they enjoy the diploma. There's a wider sense out there that the MYP is maybe the weaker sister of three programs. People see exactly what you're saying, the inquiry in PYP and people see how direct and almost traditional the DP is loading you with knowledge, getting ready. There's a question of, and you see that in most schools they run the IGCSE, PYP, IGCSE and then DP. It seems most schools don't seem to value among the MYP, rightly or wrongly.

Students

Interviewer: Moving back to the idea, what about service learning? Do you value service learning?

Speaker 3: I think that service learning's a great way to grow, and like David was saying, not only grow as a student but grow and adapt as a person and develop your sense of what you think is right and how to help people. Also, whether helping or not, just the social part of the service activity and just getting to interact with people that may not be a part of the Prem environment, whether they're other students or adults or people completely outside of any educational system, just getting out of the school environment and interacting with people in the outside world can be ' huge learning experience on its own because that's something, just interacting with people that aren't teaching you or learning with you can be just a valuable learning experience on its own.

Interviewer: The IB talks about educating global citizens. What would you think that means? What does that mean for you?
Speaker 3: I think that's just creating a well-rounded individual who is both high- achieving or maybe not even high-achieving, but highly motivated and highly enthusiastic about–

Speaker 3: Right, high aspirations in both their academic area, but also in their personal lives, whether it be part of their service learning or with their own personal goals and wherever that may–I think that's what a global citizen is, just trying your best wherever you may be applicated.

Speaker 1: Also, I think it's about accepting diversity in other cultures.

Speaker 3: Yes, definitely.

Speaker 1: It's all global citizenship, it's the whole globe, the whole world.

Speaker 3: Right. It's an international school.

Speaker 1: It's an international school, so I think part of being a global citizen is accepting others in their situation, that's part of what service is about, is about helping others in another situation that you can accept, in other cultures that you can accept, and helping them in whatever way that's relevant to them.

Speaker 7: When you're being a global citizen, it's really good at Prime Health to push you to

develop as a global citizen because no matter how good your academic grade is, you're going to be just a sea of a million people, right? So many other people are going to be like the same grades as you, the same academics as you. When you're going to colleges or going to job applications and you want to stand out, global citizenship, service learning, these are the things that really make them say, okay, we want this person specifically, not because their academics are high because so is everyone else's, but because they've also done this and they've done this and they've done this.

Initial Themes

There was a clear trend of teachers' falling into teaching at both international schools and at the school used for the study. Whilst the individual stories behind their arrival at an IB International School varied, this system and the school's lack of deliberate targeting was starkly evident. This will link to IB DP pathways and university admissions. There was an explicit agreement with teachers that parents see the IB DP program as an elite pathway to higher education establishments worldwide. The universal nature of the qualification allows transnational families to be less restricted by country choice concerning university. Teachers' perceptions and experiences of the DP program align with research highlighting its reputation as an academically rigorous and elite qualification. The acceptance of students' stress levels for the two- year duration was interesting as there is an acceptance that being stressed is a 'normal' function of this qualification. The findings also suggested that there is an expectation from parents that Western trained teachers should teach their children.

In a previous school during COVID, I was asked to teach some primary classes online instead of the local teacher as, in the words of the head 'we need parents to pay their fees, so we need a white face in front of the camera'. I politely declined the opportunity. Commodification of Western culture especially in the global south, can be seen as a form of educational capital for teachers. However, this is an area that clearly need to be challenged. However, does the responsibility for shaping parental attitudes lie with the school or organising bodies such as the IB?

There was an agreement among teachers that the model of professional development and teacher training within the IB needs revising. In its current guise the effectiveness of expensive workshops is sporadic and determined greatly by the expertise of the teacher trainer. Teachers' experiences at these offering ranged from 'complete waste of time' through to those who had experienced highly positive workshops. It was also highlighted that the cost of these courses is often prohibitive for schools which lead them to only use the online and virtual options, which are far less effective in adequately preparing teachers. One teacher talked about her

experience at a state school in the UK which adopted the MYP programme only to withdraw a couple of years later due to the costs involved with teacher training and authorisation. She felt that the school had no choice, as the IB fees were diverting much-needed resources from other already strained areas of the school.

Pedagogically, there was a broad agreement from staff that the inquiry-based model of education promoted by the IB frameworks was more beneficial to learners than other curricula or frameworks. However, it was also highlighted that the IB is not the only school-based curricula which promotes inquiry-based and project-based learning within their curriculum. It was also felt that this approach is not necessarily a good fit for all students and that they may thrive better in a different system. A couple of teachers also felt that the fact that students at the school complete the MYP programme without any IB certification regarding achievement is a weakness compared to the IGCSE programme. The IB offer schools the option off adding e-assessments, which consist of a number of computer and project-based testing.
However, the cost of this suite of exams is prohibitive for a lot of schools. In addition, students who do not have the correct language profile would be unable to achieve the full certification, thus flying contrary to the IB's quest to be an equitable approach to education.

The use of the IB learner profile within the school elicited mixed opinions. While some teachers valued its holistic nature, others were skeptical of its worth in developing students 'soft skills'. The ten traits fixed nature do not necessarily fit into every school and context that delivers IB programmes. For example, developing 'risk takers' may be addressed differently in various national contexts. It was highlighted that these Learner Profile attributes were mere window dressing, whereby cosmopolitan values and intentions are incorporated whilst being driven by neoliberal realities. The belief further developed this argument from a teachers focus group that the IB needs to do more to help develop its courses, which allow access to the IB programmes from more socially deprived regions.

The study employed a methodological triangulation to data collection, by combining focus groups, individual interviews and content analysis, which enhances depth, credibility and validity to these themes (Noble and Heale, 2019) and delivered a rich source of findings for further analysis and discussion in the following chapters. The emerging themes chapter will highlight the findings of the focus groups, interviews and website analysis, utilising the categories selected during the initial coding.

Emerging Themes from Data Collection

To ensure anonymity in accordance with the stated ethics procedures, all of the names used in these findings are pseudonyms.

4.2 'Just kind of fell into it'

There was a surprising trend of teachers at the school who unintentionally found themselves both teaching and at this school. Whilst the individual career path stories varied, there was a consistent thread of teachers who didn't target IB schools nor this particular school in their job searches. There was an overwhelming sense of serendipity relating to their arrival at this case study school. This was slightly surprising to me as I thought more teachers may have deliberately plotted to work at IB schools within a preferred region. A couple of teachers had found themselves at the school purely because they had followed a spouse to the city and has taken an available job at the school.

'I couldn't be an accountant because Thai law says foreigners cannot be an accountant. I decided to become a teacher. That's how I started. I was in a Thai school which was a bilingual school and then I moved to an IB school.' (Maya)

There were also a few teachers who ended up at this school as a consequence of a desire to travel extensively. This travel led to a desire to remain in Thailand and pursue a role by which they could remain in the country.

'Just kind of fell into it. I was travelling, I was lecturing actually in the UK before I left. Through all that work, I didn't want to do it anymore. I thought I didn't have enough life experience of the kids I was working with. Went travelling, I worked in local Thai schools actually first. '(James)

> 'I kind of just fell into it back into it back in 2003. I saw a job in Shanghai, and I figured that might be quite exciting. I'm also married to an Australian. Living in England wasn't ideal, but we didn't particularly want to move back to Australia. We worked in Shanghai and then just travelled the world with our job. Still doing it.' (Ian)

> 'I fell into it as well, after university, there were no jobs in England. I was landscape gardening for a year, and I got a TEFL certificate. I came out to Thailand, and I taught at a TEFL school, first of all. I taught with the British Council for two years. Then because of my I have quite an athletic background and knew a lot about athletics. I went for a job at NIS in Chiangmai. I got the job as athletic director, and I taught PE to every student in the school back then. There's only one of me, and then I got qualified along the way afterwards. I got the bachelor's in education, I got a master's in

education, and long after the fact that I became a teacher. I did it the wrong way around.' (Austin)

Whilst it was somewhat of a surprise to find that none of the teachers interviewed deliberately targeted the IB or this school, I also found that my route into international teaching was similar. After teaching in the UK for a few years, I decided to travel and teach internationally. This was in part due to a disillusionment with teaching in the UK. This sentiment was echoed by Mandy.

'I felt emotionally pushed out of the UK system because it was just brutal. I thought, "This is not what I want to be doing." I thought going to South America for two years would make me a more interesting person. Planned to go back to the UK and do something else when I got back but then I actually had a child out there and just thought I would like my child to have this international experience rather than put them through the UK state system. That's been a driving force for a lot of the moving that we've done.'

David also highlighted how a few teachers have travelled and undertaken some TEFL (teaching English as a foreign language) courses before completing a PGCE via an online format to gain admission into more reputable International Schools.

'I just wanted to travel, and therefore, I fell into teaching because I don't come from a rich family, Luke, so I had to work my way around while I was travelling, so I did one of those CELTA things, and then I just fell into it. By the time I got to Turkey, I was teaching university level. Then I moved to China, that was my first international school job, and that was actually the first IB job as well, and then from there I got my PGCE, moved to here, and got my master's here.' (David)

Despite the route to international teaching and this particular school, there was a consensus that undertaking a role within an IB school was a progressive career move.

'I couldn't care less about the curriculum, whatsoever. It's about the conditions in the school. One thing I did notice though, was that IB schools only want IB educators. I was attracted to having that on my CV because then it opened doors and possibilities because of those walls.' (Ken)

'I think it's IB for me, this school. If I had one in Bangkok without IB, I would still choose (school name) because of the IB.' (Maya)

This feeling that IB schools prefer to hire IB educators was also something that seemed to be relevant to both British and American International Schools.

'(British International Schools) Only want British to people who could taught the British curriculum and specifically have QTS as well from the UK. They are sticklers about that. '(Austin)

4.3 'Complete Garbage'

There was a broad agreement that the mandatory training required by the IB for schools and individual teachers to undertake needed to be increased if the organisation's stated aims were to be met. The teacher's experiences ranged from having a positive experience to the training being a 'complete waste of time', which was especially true for the IB MYP program, as the IB charges a great deal of money for essentially providing a mark scheme. It was also felt that the cost for schools is prohibitive. This links to studies in Canada and elsewhere, which found that adopting the IB system for state schools has led to a diversion of funds and teachers to this 'elite' stream and, in essence, potentially reducing the quality of education for others. (Resnik, 2020, Bittencourt, 2020). The neoliberal approach has meant that parental wishes for the IB program, given its elite reputation, have led to schools pursuing the IB to be perceived as delivering the desired curriculum. One teacher spoke about her experience in a UK state school which adopted the IB DP program and how this negatively affected the school and its available funds.

(IB training) 'Complete garbage' (Ian)

Others felt that the experience of IB workshops did not sufficiently prepare teachers to teach the different programmes successfully.

> 'They have a problem: There's not enough qualified workshop leaders. You told me about your experience. I've been going these IB workshops for 13 years, and something I've noticed is that I think they're trying to address that problem, but they're addressing it in maybe the wrong way. They're tightening up the schedule of what happens in an IB workshop and even in category two or three, their leader doesn't seem to have much leeway to create'.

> 'I go to a workshop because I want to hear from someone who's more experienced than me or has had different experiences. I'm not there to hear the IB jargon and to have principles in practice read to me and to learn about every different IB selling point. I

want to hear from an interesting person who's been working somewhere else and things like that. They've corporatised it and taken away the personality, and it's almost like they don't trust their workshop leaders. I know there are a number that they shouldn't be trusting. You need to let people do their job of sharing their knowledge with other people and not make it a sales pitch for the IB. I'm already working in an IB school' (William).

The criticism for the workshops was especially virulent for the virtual workshops, which were introduced in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. These have been viewed as a financially more efficient use of school resources but at the expense of teacher experience and professional development.

'I don't think these remote IB courses are beneficial, in my experience. You could keep them face-to-face so that you can network with people, you'll get to know people' (Ken).

However, there were a couple of examples where teachers found the IB training beneficial.

'Very useful. I still–Everything that I put onto Google Classroom (for the Personal Project), that comes from the workshop leader. She was super knowledgeable. She knows what she's talking about.' (David)

It was also highlighted that the requirement for schools to put all of their teachers through IB-mandated training at great expense does not fit well with their mission and vision. This means that a school could fail an accreditation visit due to a lack of money spent on IB-mandated training.

'To say you failed because you haven't spent enough money, it's pure capitalism and they're supposed to be challenging this with their mission statement' (Mandy).

It was also highlighted that the continuous subject group updates meant that teachers needed to be constantly re-trained via IB-mandated workshops and courses. It was felt that despite the advantages of ongoing continuous curriculum development, there is an element of profiteering with this model.

'(The IB) is coming up with a whole load of new things for us. You know what they're doing? Is it that they're rewriting all their courses so that we all have to go on new trainings?' (Gemma).

Costs can be prohibitive for schools, especially those which rely on public funding. One of the

respondents worked in a state-run IB school in the UK which reverted to the UK A-level system. 'I taught in the UK for a couple of years and then they switched to A Levels (from the IB DP) and one of the reasons was money' (Mandy). This point was also supported by Maya who related this experience to International Schools within Thailand, '(In Thailand) there are more than 300 international schools. I think 21 schools have the IB program. Not even a complete one. It's not approved, it's just maybe they have the IB–Because they can't afford for the teacher training. Teachers' training is quite expensive, it's like $900'.

It was also highlighted that the IB charges schools for access to past exams at the DP level. 'It annoys me that we have to pay for them and then when you get them, Removed Copyright' (Mandy).

4.4 'I think the IB is responding to this universal law, which is the fact that money talks'

All three stakeholder groups agreed that the IB programmes (DP in particular) offer families a reliable pathway to elite Western universities. It was felt that the international and boundaryless nature of the IBO posits it in a unique space to offer higher education opportunities in a broad spectrum of countries. This fact, however, was highlighted with scepticism from the teacher's perspective.

> 'What I've observed is that basically, the IB has become an extension of what private expensive universities are. Basically, the students who want to go to private expensive universities do the IB because that's going to be their entry ticket to that. Which also leads to the fact that then Grade 11 and Grade 12 students' study for their results, they don't study for their passion. The only thing that I see possible, viable in order for this to change is to make a radical stance' (Olivia)

In offering her seasoned insights, Olivia illuminates a compelling facet of the International Baccalaureate (IB) framework. From her extensive experience, Olivia suggests the IB has deliberately aligned their frameworks to complement neoliberal principles. According to her observations, the IB has strategically developed curriculum frameworks and processes that seamlessly integrate with the tenets of neoliberalism. Olivia's perspective emerges from a broader societal context where the IB responds to a prevailing desire for educational pathways perceived to enhance individual success, financial prosperity, and employability. Olivia contends that the IB strategically positions itself by providing a challenging program that aligns with societal aspirations and facilitates access to prestigious universities, contributing significantly to the IB's enduring success. In her own words:

'I think the IB is responding to this universal law, which is the fact that money talks, and so this is what people want. They want to have something that is going to make them be more likely to be successful in life and earn more money, be more hirable, etc. They have understood that having a very demanding program that would lead people to then be able to access easily some elite universities is a definite, is something that people want. This is one of the things that makes the IB so successful. It's difficult for them to give up that part.'

David also reflected that 'It's money-orientated. This is the issue, it's any business, isn't it? The parents are paying for a product. They want an education for their kids. They want this and you have to deliver it.'

Ralph highlighted the belief that the IB has become more rigorous in part to meet the demands of universities.

I know a lot of the IB has become more "academic" in areas just because I think that for certain markets, they've had to demonstrate that you're testing, that you are standardising. They've had to do that I think for a lot of universities as well, they've demanded that. (Ralph)

Ian continued to assert that there is a tension and contradiction between how the IB focuses its mission and vision on cosmopolitan values of a holistic education whilst meeting parental and university expectations. 'Even here we are now in a school that aspires to be all about holistic, experiential creative learning, making the kids sit SATs. I'm sure that's a parental pressure as much as anything.' (Ralph)

Despite some criticism of the IB DP program and the tension between the IB's aims and the neoliberal reality of essentially providing a service for students to gain access to elite higher education institutions, there was also some appreciation for the IB and its potential.
'I do feel like they go to university and they're so much better prepared than students who don't do the IB. Because of the workload and the fact that they are used to juggling so many things and able to just deal with, by the end of it, if they pass, then they're clearly able to deal with that workload and they've managed it somehow.' (Gemma)

'I think IB is great. I think the DP is great. I taught the DP before and it's a great course.' (James)

It was highlighted that whilst the MYP does allow teachers to be creative in creating their units

of inquiry and collaborate with students to co-construct their learning, this often leaves students unprepared for the challenges of the DP program after completing the MYP.

'There is a gap between MYP to the DP. It's a totally different way. Of course, they learn the skills in MYP, but again they are not so much content-based. When they come here, suddenly they have this in DP 1. Oh my God, it's a lot.' (Maya)

4.4 'It's just a tick-box exercise, isn't it?'

Service Learning or CAS (Creativity, Action Service) is one of the fundamental cornerstones of an IB education. Within the three groups, there was a net positive on the aims and objectives of service learning within the IB. However, there was also notable criticism from the teachers regarding the approach towards this element of the programs and their effectiveness in genuinely leading to change. There was a feeling amongst some teachers that service learning is essentially a form of 'white saviourism'.

> 'I do think that's a little bit difficult because we all traipse out to some hill tribe community and go and do some service for them and help them build this, that, or the other, innit? It is almost like that our kids feel they are better than them and we go in and save the day kind of thing. I do have a little issue about that, but I feel like it's more of a personal way that I see that interaction.' (Gemma)

Sheila highlighted the potential issues of service learning which is seen as a 'tick box' exercise yet could be harmful to the local communities in which the service activity is attempting to support.

> '.until a few years ago, one of the things that were part of the suite of service- learning offerings here was going down to Kingdom kids (orphanage)…all the research shows that that's extremely harmful because there's a lot of tourism based around going to orphanages and spending time in orphanages.

Extremely harmful. Kids coming in with their brand-new Nike shoes and being their big brothers for like a half an hour. Then they're gone and they never see them again in that abrupt severance of that relationship again.'

Several educators expressed that the compulsory nature of service requirements within the programs sometimes prompts students to opt for facile or less challenging service-learning experiences merely to fulfil the obligations associated with the service learning or Creativity,

Activity, Service (CAS) components.

> 'The other thing I feel about service is that often it is, let's just do a bake sale, let's do this, let's do that. The advocacy side of it I feel really for it is quite lacking. They do just go for, a lot of the time, the very easy option. Which selling cookies to raise money, as much as it's vaguely service, it's not really. Again, it's just a tick-box exercise, isn't it?' (Gemma)

Whilst it was apparent that there was a great deal of cynicism towards the IB's focus on service learning, this didn't seem to be shared with the students, who predominantly thought the experiences gained through this element of the IB system worthwhile. Andy reflected this.

> 'It's a great way to not only grow as a student but grow and adapt as a person and to develop your sense of what you think is right and how to help people but also, whether helping or not, the social part of the service activity means getting to interact with people that may not be part of the school environment, whether they be other student, adults. Just getting out of the school environment and interacting with people from the outside world can be a huge learning experience on its own because that's something, interacting with people that aren't learning with you can be a valuable learning experience.'

The students also highlighted a belief that service learning is embedded within their curriculum, managing to point towards specific examples.

And it's nice that those services coincide with the school curriculums to encourage them for example lids for kids, eco committee, operation smile, a lot of people are doing those things for their service, CAS IA (International Award) and those things. It's both academically encouraged and encouraged generally. (Nick)

This seemingly disjointed view of service learning between student experiences and teachers' views, could be due to teachers' acceptance that this is what the IBO requires and, therefore, what teachers need to deliver.

4.6 'It's Just Noise'

The learner profile traits which run throughout all of the K-12 IB provision were a source for disagreement amongst the different stakeholders. There was a feeling within the student focus group that the LP's (Learner Profiles) were predominantly aimed at the PYP program and were

less of a focus as students moved through the school.

'We are definitely constantly reminded of the LP, more so in JS and somewhat in MS. They will force it on you and remind you of it almost daily, and they phase it out a little bit as you progress to Senior School, where they remind you of it less and less.' (Andy)

This view was supported by a teacher who highlighted that the LPs become more diluted to students as they progress.

'I wonder whether with some of our kids, because they do run all the way through whether by the time, they get to grade 11 and 12, it's just noise to them because it is something that's just been all the way through.' (Emma)

'I loved the learner profile, but actually, what sold it to me was that the students would be imbued with these attributes that I believe they've had anyway, to lesser and a greater degree, depending on the individual.' (Bree/Parent)

However, the teaching staff met these LP traits with less enthusiasm.

'I don't care. When I first started teaching, I'd be like, "Ooh, are you open-minded (one of the LP traits)?" Dah, dah, dah. No, I just don't pay any attention to that.' (David)

4.7 'You're going to be 1 in a sea of a million people'

There were explicit opinions from both parents and teachers that both international schools, particularly those who delivered the IB, were beneficial in bestowing capital on their graduates. Parent Bree highlighted this:

> 'I find that my children, they don't have this closed mindset when it comes to the world. When I speak with friends back in the UK that have stayed in the same city or even in the same country, that they were amazed that their children hoped to go to maybe universities. It's not very common for a child that's always stayed in the same city or same country to then want to go to do further education universities outside of the country that they're known. Just from my perspective, even at a tender age of 10, 11, 12, they're already thinking about, "Oh, I'll go to university in the States," or "I'll go to university in Germany." Somewhere else.'

This view was supported by a Japanese parent who highlighted that the global nature of the IB

allows students to access universities and pathways, which would not have been open to them had their children pursued high school in Japan, therefore highlighting both the received and real effects that an international IB education can have on the future outcomes of these children.

> 'For example, especially in Asia, if the children graduate in Japanese high school, it's easy to access to Japanese university, but it's hard to apply for the overseas university as well, but you'll be in the international school and then they already have references and idea in a school going to give the information about all over the world. Then they also have right to access–If they finish IB or if they finish British curriculum, they have an easy–Not easy, but access to international (universities)' (Tanaka)

However, Bree felt that this global mindset has more to do with attending International Schools as opposed to undertaking the IB framework.

> 'We came from an international school, but it was a British international school. They also had an international mindset in the students, in that the students had similar plaques all over the school that showed where the students went to university. Is it specific to IB? Then no, because they came from a British international school and the students also have that mindset.'

Students' perspectives on embodying the role of a Global Citizen mirrored those of parents, who believed that this facet of the IB curriculum framework affords them a distinctive advantage when seeking admission to competitive university positions.

> 'It's really good at the school how they push you to become a global citizen because no matter how good your academic grade is, you're going to be 1 in a sea of a million people. So many people are going to be like the same grades as you and academics as you, so when you're going to colleges or job applications and you want to stand out, global citizenship, service learning, these are the kind of things that really make them say 'ok we really want this person specifically.' (Steve)

There was also a seemingly elitist idea from the parents regarding their expectations for their children when investing in an expensive private international school education. 'In private school, we're spending so much money because we are nurturing leaders, not computer language writers' (Eva)

Some teachers disputed these thoughts regarding the value of an IB education over other

curricula, feeling that the IB plays a small role in students' development. As long as there is adequate support, care, and guidance for students, the curriculum framework has little impact. 'I actually feel really strongly that it doesn't matter whether I'm in a school that does British curriculum, or IB, or American curriculum. It's about the relationships between the teachers and the kids and between the teachers themselves and then between the kids.' (Sheila)

I couldn't care less about the curriculum, whatsoever. It's about the conditions in the school. (Ken, teacher)

However, there were a few teachers who thought that the pedagogical approach of the IB, especially in the PYP and MYP was preferable over different systems such as that used in the UK or US.

'The MYP really focuses on that (critical thinking skills, which is why I love it and I don't want to move out of IB. I never want to teach anything other than–I will if I have to, but it's the most flexible curriculum available.' (David)

He continued to highlight how the MYP's approach allowed teachers to be more creative in devising units of inquiry rather than the constraints of a content-based curriculum such as that of the UK.

> 'They're both a lot better than the British content base, learn this, learn this, you've got to know this. The IB, certainly the MYP, as you well know, is basically you're creating. Your unit is based on questions. You're not going in and saying, "Right, this is what happened, learn it, remember the dates." You pose things as questions, which get them to think critically, which is very important, which is also the hardest thing for them to do, certainly at a young age.' (David)

(Ralph) felt that the parental expectations for their children were biased more towards the traditionally well-perceived career choices.

> 'Specifically in Southeast Asia that you don't have a large percentage of parents who are going, 'I want my kid to be an artist. I want my kid to be a musician, or a cook, or an actor or a director." There are some, obviously but the sense that those careers are somehow–that they sit somewhere down the down the rungs of the ladder on aspiration for a parent. They, generally speaking, want their kid to become either a lawyer, or a doctor, or an engineer. More traditional aspirational careers tend to be more front and centre'.

This was reflected by other teachers, including (Gemma) who felt that parents chose the IB, not because of the academic approach to education but because of 'the doors that the IB education opens.' However, one outlier parent felt that 'going to university is not the ultimate goal. Many people graduate from very famous universities but end up being very common. It's more about learning. We are here to learn how to do things and how to think rather than what to think so it's more about creativity and go off and see what you can get. It's not really the number one top priority as far as I am concerned (Eva). However, this quote does highlight that whilst this particular parent is not primarily concerned with university admittance, there was a sense that an IB international education would add to the cultural capital of her child by making them less 'common'.

The parent focus groups also felt that the school is being used primarily as a vehicle for students to learn English, enabling them to be more successful in university or in their home countries.

'Some parents think that international school is a place to learn English, which is not. They just focus that. Actually, it's not international education they learn. Then, those parents expect their kids bring back English skills to their own country.' (Tanaka, parent)

This view was echoed by Ken (teacher) who also continued to voice his thoughts that as well as learning English, there was a parental expectation that their children will be taught by white teachers from Western trained backgrounds.

> 'And they're middle class and local, they probably want to do it because they see their kids going maybe abroad, which means they have to know English, they have to know different languages. It's a status thing. It's probably got out of these very traditional local education systems. I wonder if there's a certain amount of trust that the local people have in seeing white faces. I don't know. It's dangerous territory to say that at the same time—'(Ken)

The parents also expressed the view that, for the school to successfully align with its overarching goals of fulfilling its objectives and those of the International Baccalaureate (IB), there should be a heightened emphasis on ensuring that students enrol with the specific intention of aligning with these stated objectives. It was 83llusion83o that achieving this has proven challenging, particularly in the aftermath of the revenue decline the school faced amid the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

'Maybe incorporating something with admissions that we're admitting the right types of–Not that at the moment, we can be too choosy, but I guess it's important for the whole temperature, for the whole ethos of the school if we have the right mindset in terms of student and family.' (Bree)

Although not directly attributed to emotional capital, the interviews revealed numerous instances where emotional capital was clearly prevalent within the school. This is reflected predominantly within the teacher student-relationships in the school. For example, Hannah highlighted that 'students are very comfortable in asking teachers why they got this grade or that'. The small class sizes (average 15-1) also help to contribute to these relationships to be developed. It was also highlighted that the extensive extra-curricular programme at the school is very extensive, to the point where it theirs deemed excessive for the teachers. 'The amount of extra-curricular activities at the school are great for the kids but a real burden on the teachers who have to deliver these activities.' (Hannah). There are also aspects of the school curriculum within the IB framework which could be attributed to developing emotional capital. For example, the use of Learner Profile traits and ATL (Approaches to Learning Skills) point towards developing the emotional intelligence, empathy and interpersonal skills. The student focus group highlighted an acute understanding of these and were able to recite them verbatim.

Several teachers felt that the school has benefitted from a prestigious reputation in the region. Mandy highlighted that she felt that the main driver of admissions to the school was its prestigious reputation both within Thailand and internationally. William felt that by attending the school there was a 'cache or something that they want to tap into, whether it's correct, right, or wrong. They view it as a pathway to success.'

Another teacher felt there was a distinction between the expectations of the population of Asian parents compared to Western. 'I would say the Western parents are a bit more concerned about their kid actually learning stuff and doing well and being able to transpose that knowledge into their everyday life, whereas the Chinese parents, it's about prestige.'

4.8 'the DP is two years of pain'

One of the most unequivocal and widely agreed upon facets of the Diploma Programme (DP) involves the consensus among all three stakeholder groups— teachers, parents, and students, that the DP program is an extremely rigorous and demanding curriculum. It was highlighted that success in the program is associated with high levels of workload and stress.

'I find that the DP program is unnecessarily demanding, and therefore, it creates a sort of like, it's like an elite program. It's only for some students who are extremely academically oriented or very capable in those fields.' (Olivia – Teacher)

The teacher's focus group also echoed this sentiment that the IB DP program is a demanding one.

'there's a prevailing idea out there that the DP is two years of pain, and it's your pain, they love it, they hate it. At the end of the program, there's a lot of sense of pride. They do believe they are, whether or not they are, they do believe they're prepared for their university or career path, but I don't think they enjoy the diploma.' (William)

The parent focus groups also mentioned the DP program's reputation as rigorous and stressful for students.

'Only from feedback from parents in the older grades. I understand that there's quite a lot of stress. There's quite a lot of demand of what's expected from them (Bree, parent)

Olivia emphasised that, for a student to succeed in the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IB DP), requisite familiarity with supportive structures and guidance is imperative.

> 'I think that the IB sells itself as a program with all these great values around wanting to develop balanced students and simplistic education and it's a program that's meant to be promoting internationalism and global citizens. At the same time, it's only very few students who can actually do the IB successfully because they need to have the backup of families who can support them financially, backup of families who can support them academically with tutors and help in this way, but also they need to have an ability within themselves to balance all the demands of the IB, which is not easy at all. I had students, very bright students in my classes that ended up with a nervous breakdown at 16, 17 years old'.

There was a sense amongst the teachers that the IB needs to be accessible to more schools. Sheila highlighted that 'I think that if (the IB) it to live up to their mission, then surely that should be what they're looking to do to make it accessible and available to all.' She continued to highlight the need for the IB to be more accessible in more disadvantaged areas (outside of the US) 'you do that in terms of a country getting a scholarship (to deliver the IB) because economically they're not in the same economic privileged position as others.'

There was a strong sense from all three stakeholder groups that the IB DP program is deliberately demanding and culminates in high-pressure content-based examinations. An approach of high-stakes examinations seems to be in contradiction to the aims of the organisation to offer a balanced and holistic approach to education. Ken highlighted the need for this approach to be amended;

> No exams or multimodal assessments and kids can choose the best way to demonstrate what they're good at in the ways that make sense to them. Something like that. More ability to say, this is what I bring to the table, these are my strengths. Let me show you my understanding in a way that means something to me (Ken).

It was also felt that these high-stakes end-of-course exams lead the IB DP program to allow capable students to coast before focusing on the test at the end. Again, this seems to be counterintuitive to the intentions of the IBO when attempting to develop DP graduates.

> Exams. I've never ever been a fan of exams. I don't really see the point of them because it's just. You don't have to do anything, really, and if it's all based on one exam, you could just not pay attention for 19, 20 months and then cram everything into the last month or something like that, which basically just tests what short-term memory (David).

This was echoed by Maya when asked what she would like to see changed. 'The exam at the end of the second year for the DP, which I am literally not enjoying. Our kids don't enjoy it too. It's just like a memorisation and just writing it after two years period. Of course, they forget, but they can review whatever it is but still, the exam is like testing their knowledge.

This traditional approach to subjects and traditional notions of educational priorities is an area that the IB needs to address. The advent of generative AI and the need for an urgent solution to climate change seems to have hastened some of these inevitable discussions.

> The idea that you have sciences, mathematics, technology, or engineering as being these very, very important subjects, hasn't gone away. Look, even in a supposedly progressive model like the IB and even at its most progressive foundation component like the PYP, these kids are doing six-plus periods of maths a week, one period of art. To me, makes no sense. Especially as these generative language models and artificial intelligence being the way that it is. I can speak to my watch and get most mathematical equations solved. I can turn on ChatGPT and I can get some pretty complex coding done if I need it to be (Ralph).

'There are in a very, very, very short period of time, fundamental skills that our young people need in order to not just make a difference on the planet, but potentially to ensure that humanity remains part of the planet. They're not in our learner profile.' (Ralph) This idea that there urgently needs to be a re-dressing and transformation of the knowledge and skills within schools was surprisingly shared amongst some parents. I say surprisingly as I was expecting more support for traditional subjects and student progression from the parents.

> …national disasters, do we incorporate what happens with global alerts, national disasters, farming, all of these things that I believe we're heading towards what we need to focus on? Because we are in a crisis, and we just keep ignoring it. The generation that we're in education now, we will be turning to these people to solve some of the huge issues that are going to be faced in the next 15, 20, and 25 years. The curriculum is not designed (for this) (Bree, parent).

There was a sense that the MYP program needs to prepare students sufficiently for the demands of the IB DP program. Sheila stated that I 'think a lot of students would be feeling that they're not prepared for DP through the MYP program'. David also felt that this discord between the DP and the MYP means that some of the positive inquiry-based approach to the MS years makes it ultimately redundant. …but then the things that we learn through MYP have sometimes no relation to DP, so if everything's supposed to be a means to an end, what does MYP do?

This lack of harmony between the MYP and the DP is something that needs addressing. However, this could lead to issues with the IB philosophy as a final exam approach to the MYP would more likely resemble the current GCSE approach, and a more holistic approach in the DP years would likely render the DP program less attractive to universities and, therefore, parents and schools worldwide.

It was also highlighted how the organisation is focussed on DP graduation and higher education and that the MYP does not give students a tangible qualification 'If they leave here at 16 (after the MYP), what do they take with them? Nothing' (Gemma). 'There's a wider sense out there that the MYP is maybe the weaker sister of these programs'.' (William) At the time of writing the IB is part way through the process of updating the MYP program, with specifics to be announced in December, 2024.

The current provision of mandatory IB training is insufficient, mainly in developing educators to deliver programs that are in alignment with the stated aims of the IB. Whilst some resources

are available on the IBO website's teacher portal, it was highlighted that there was nowhere near enough free ongoing training and support for teachers. This was highlighted by Olivia' the IB should have, for example, a system whereby all IB teachers receive very basic free training that they can attend to become IB teachers who become TOK teachers. Some primary resources should be free for classes. (Olivia)

It was highlighted that the tension between neoliberal requirements of schools such as parental choice, university admissions and the job market need to be openly addressed.

> I feel passionately that conversations regarding what universities might want, what pressures universities face from the careers, say career sector from the job market, that type of understanding that maybe parents have, not all parents but some parents may have less of that, that sits as a responsibility with a teacher, with an educator. Anyone working in education, it shouldn't just be about educating the children, in my opinion. (Ralph).

> There are in a very, very, very short period of time, fundamental skills that our young people need in order to not just make a difference on the planet, but potentially to ensure that humanity remains part of the planet. They're not in our learner profile. (Ralph).

However, James continued to eloquently stress that addressing these institutional changes is going to be difficult in the current educational context.

> I feel it's come back to that first point of institutional change and how it's slow, whether you are changing systems of law, whether you are changing systems of government, whether you are changing systems of education, generally speaking, it takes time. The thing that I feel that an institution like the IB is either unaware of or is aware of, but doesn't know what to do, is the need to make change really bloody quickly. I feel as though, again, to return to that point of automation and of artificial intelligence, or to climate change, global warming, displacement of communities and cultures based on access to the fundamentals of food and water and otherwise, well, the sheer number of people that there are on the planet and how many people it can sustain. (James).

The situation and the issues that the IB faces was summed up eloquently by Ken.

> I was in the belly of the beast (IB centre in The Hague) and I tell you the people there are tremendously interesting, tremendously progressive and tremendously intelligent. I

was shocked but they say that they can't move that big ass boat because it's just too big. There's too much in terms of the university piece. There's too much in terms of re-educating teachers. There's too much in terms of curriculum and there's this problem of standardisation. It's taught in the trap of how do you standardize, 'this is a big program. Then you can't do what kids need nowadays, which is having more personal experiences.

"A good school, like a good football player, will know to go to where the ball is," but he says, "A great school, like a great footballer, should know to go to where the ball will be." (Ralph, quoting Sir Ken Robinson)

'Change is coming. I think the IB are clever enough to realise that. I know that there's definitely reform going on and it hasn't been unleashed as it were quite yet. I'd be very surprised if the next iteration of certainly the MYP won't have changed massively.' (Ralph)

The IB should have, for example, a system whereby all IB teachers receive a very basic free training that they can attend in order to become IB teachers who become TOK teachers. Some basic resources should be free for classes. (Olivia)

'I think with the MYP programme, it doesn't entirely fit with the later IB' (DP and CP) (Nick)

I feel that IB demands a lot from students and teachers but doesn't give enough. What the IB should do is to adjust the balance between this and should be giving more to teachers and to students. (Olivia)

'There's a wider sense out there that the MYP is maybe the weaker sister of three programs' (William)

4.9 Website Analysis

Fees

In light of the implications highlighted in the literature review, which suggest that IB international schooling caters to elite communities worldwide, the initial analysis of the websites will focus on the school fees of the schools, which offer a K-12 IB education operating in Thailand. For clarity, each school's current academic year's fees (2023/24) are utilised, specifically for a Grade 11 student. Additional costs, such as development and application fees, which most international schools summarily add, were excluded from the analysis. The fees

have been converted from Thai Baht (THB) into both US Dollars (USD) and British Pounds (GBP). The exchange rate from the 21st Feb, 2024 was used.

Table 4.1

School	Annual Fee	USD Conversion	GBP Conversion
1	722,000	20,156	15,962
2	1,021,700	28,527	22,588
3	908,000	25,352	20,075
4	463,900	12,952	10,256
5	876,000	24,459	19,367
6	840,300	23,462	18,578

Average Annual Cost – 805,316 (THB) – 22,476 (USD) – 17,804 (GBP)

School Status

Of the 6 schools examined for the purposes of this study, only NIST (New International School in Thailand) is advertised as a genuinely not-for-profit school. Given the benefits that this status offers schools, such as financial transparency and reinvestment into school projects, it can be assumed that the other 5 schools who offer K-12 IB education are operating within a for-profit model of provision.

Global Citizenship

Four of the six International Baccalaureate (IB) schools under examination explicitly articulated the objective of nurturing Global Citizens within their mission and vision statements. In contrast, the remaining two schools indirectly conveyed the significance of global citizenship through phrases such as 'Concordia fosters academic excellence while nurturing moral and responsible young leaders with dignity, integrity, and compassion, who want to make a difference in the world,' and 'to make education a force to unite people, nations, and cultures for peace and a sustainable future.' Although the term "global citizenship" was not explicitly employed, the implicit emphasis on a global approach to education is evident in these statements.

Some of the schools examined explicitly defined what global citizenship means in the context of their school. For example, 'KIS believes a Global Citizen values their own and other cultures, espousing the IB Learner Profile attributes while taking principled action with social, political, economic or environmental issues of local and global importance.'

Higher Education

All the schools examined provided detailed statistics regarding the number and location of the university acceptances. Five of the six schools also highlighted how the DP results of their senior class compared to national and worldwide averages. Schools were also keen to highlight which universities had offered scholarships to their graduating students. Only NIST highlighted that every student in the graduating cohort received an offer into one of the top 100 universities worldwide. It is worth highlighting that some of these statistics regarding university acceptances can be misleading. Schools often list the universities that students had received offers from, which can read very impressively to prospective families. However, often the acceptances of the more established universities may be attributed to only a handful of students who have numerous offers from different elite universities, thus skewering the statistics. Of the six schools, only NIST specifically gave information regarding student matriculation year on year. Two other schools highlighted student matriculation but used a window of five to seven years to highlight these enrolments. The only school which didn't highlight results and university acceptances rates was Prem whose website was more focused on the holistic, arts-based nature of the school. The 100-acre site, farm and forest schools were the prominent emphasis of their site.

Racial Diversity of SLT (Senior Leadership Team)

Whilst this study is not focussed on the racial make-up of leaders within these IB schools in Thailand, it would be interesting to use the information posted on these school websites to make some brief observations. It is worth noting that in most cases, the school has included brief bios of the leadership team, which makes identifying their background relatively straightforward. However, in a couple of cases, I have to make a racial judgement using the school photograph. According to Thai law, each International School needs to have a 'Thai Principal' on staff, who is part of the Leadership Team. Due to the mandatory nature of this role, I excluded the Thai Principal from the observations. Therefore, I only examined the Head of School and Divisional Principal positions.

Five of the six schools seemed only to have white US/UK/Canadian educated leaders, with one exception of a US educator who has a Latin American background. The remaining school has a 50/50 split within their Senior Leadership team between Western and Chinese-educated leaders. However, this school is an exception to the rule as it advertises itself as 'Thailand's IB English Chinese International School', and therefore, this leadership team is reflected by the school's ethos. This is a highly crude and rudimentary approach to this topic, and it is an area

which could be explored further and in greater detail to understand this imbalance. From my extensive international teaching experience, I feel this is a key area of future focus, and one in which the IB should play a more prominent role.

Balanced Schooling

All of the schools analysed as part of the study highlighted a solid commitment to providing extracurricular activities. The websites all had a prominent space for advertising the sports, music and service-learning offerings. This approach highlights the different school's commitment to creating balanced students, which is one of the cosmopolitan learner profile attributes. The case-study school has over 100 different after-school activities on offer during the school year as well as an active music academy. Commitment to additional activities is reflective of both the cosmopolitan approach of providing students with a broad holistic education and also neoliberal developments whereby the parent community expect these opportunities to be readily available when attending an expensive private school. This approach was evident at the other schools within the study.

In conclusion, these findings highlight a mixed attitude from teachers regarding the delivery, training, and ethos of the IB. It was clear that teachers are very aware of the tensions that exist between the expectations placed on them as teachers and the aspirations and ideals of both the school and IB's mission and vision. However, there were mixed feelings regarding the effectiveness and suitability of some of the cosmopolitan aspects of the programmes, such as Service Learning and the Learner Profile. Appreciation of these tensions was understandably less evident within the student and parent groups who favoured the IB system and valued some of these additional benefits of attendance at an IB school. One aspect of an IB education which was shared among the different stakeholders was the belief that attendance at an IB schools such as the case study school is primarily tasked with providing students with the necessary tools to access elite Western higher education establishments. In the following chapter, I will discuss in detail how these findings impact international schooling and how Bourdieu's theories and concepts can be utilised to facilitate a greater understanding of this field.

Chapter 5 Discussion

Introduction

The objective of this introduction is to firstly revisit the research questions and overarching intentions of this study. The study aims to highlight some of the tensions, contradictions and

interplay between international school, the IB and its cosmopolitan values set within a neoliberal reality. This study was set within the context of a well-established K-12 International School in Thailand. The research highlighted the opinions and beliefs of teachers, students, and parents. The study contributes to a deeper understanding of this growing segment of the educational landscape and the challenges and opportunities facing both the IB and international schools moving forward. I am an employee of the school and also employed part-time as an IB workshop leader.

5.1 Key Themes

Within this section I will highlight some of the key findings identified through the undertaking of this research. As an insider researcher with a well-developed understanding of the field of international education and the IB, it was clear that the stakeholder responses supported some of the previous research in this area. However, there were some surprising and contextual results which were also evident within the responses.

The first surprise emerging from the focus group's research with the teachers was the lack of intentionality regarding selecting this school or curriculum. There was an overwhelming sense that teachers 'found' themselves at the school or as a teacher due to lifestyle instead of professional development choices. This was despite the school enjoying a reputation as the best choice for an IB education in the region. This finding is contextual given the reputation that both Chiang Mai and Thailand more broadly have for being an excellent place to live, with its pleasant climate, low cost of living and regional travel opportunities. Several teachers enjoyed the lifestyle in Chiang Mai, which led to the pursuit of teaching opportunities in the area. It would be interesting to look at patterns of international school employees concerning their length of stay in a particular place and their motivations for selecting these roles.

Bunnell & Poole (2021) highlighted that International School teaching was becoming less stable, with schools often deciding not to renew contracts and move teachers on. They identified that this 'precarious privilege' was evident in International Schooling and is often leveraged by teachers to develop 'transitional capital'.

Several teachers lamented the quality of the official IB teacher training to help teachers comprehend the framework effectively. Teachers who had attended IB workshops had varied experiences with regards to their quality and use. The view was that the experience is heavily reliant on the knowledge and understanding of the teacher leading the workshop. It was also felt that the courses are often expensive for the schools and have led to profiteering by the IB. One area all teachers were in agreement on was that face-to-face workshop provision was

much more effective than the online and virtual options. It was felt that the IB should provide some free professional training that teachers can access. The IB do offer a range of micro credentials, but these are not free and range from 300-800 USD (ibo.org, 2024).

There was a broad consensus among parents, teachers, and students that the DP programme is essentially tasked with providing graduating students access to the best possible higher education institutions worldwide. I use the term worldwide in this context to mean institutions based in the US, Canada, UK and Australia. It was believed that parents pay the large fees associated with private IB schools in Thailand to enable their children to gain access to elite Western universities. It was interesting that the teachers felt that the IB DP prepares students better for the rigours of higher education than its UK or US counterparts. Specifically, elements of the DP, such as the EE (extended essay), are essentially small research projects that require similar research methods to what is required at the undergraduate level. The IB programmes' core elements include Service Learning and the Learner Profile. There was a distinct difference regarding the effectiveness and motivation of service learning within the curriculum. The teachers were much more cynical and critical of service learning than parents and students. In line with some of the research that has been undertaken in the area, teachers felt that there were definite 'tokenistic' elements to Service Learning, which at its worst promotes 'white saviourism' within different national contexts. However, the parent focus group highlighted a more positive view of these additional opportunities. Parents seemed to value the IB ideal associated with service learning and opportunities for their children to interact with local communities.

Linking closely with the DP graduate routes to HE (Higher Education) was the belief from the parents that an IB education such as this would bestow opportunities within, HE and beyond. A view which was supported by teachers who felt that the capital gained by becoming an IB graduate was a significant incentive for parents when considering school choice. School choice links closely with studies considering neoliberalism and school choice, which will be discussed later. There was also a feeling that the school was being 'used' by many parents for their children to learn English and the benefits that this 'language capital' would allow them to achieve.

There was some annoyance with at least one parent that these parents were not buying into the spirit and intentions of the IB and were merely using their wealth to further their child's capital and prospects. Teachers and parents also had different perceptions of the importance of an IB education. Parents seemed to hold the IB in higher esteem as an educational tool than teachers who felt that effective teaching and learning had much less to do with the curriculum framework on offer and more with the teaching faculty's care, attention, and professionalism. It

was also highlighted that the case study school enjoyed an elite reputation within the region, which adds to its appeal to prospective parents. Teachers also mooted the idea that there are cultural differences between school selection motivations. For example, the observation that school prestige is a more significant driver to the Chinese community within the school than Western parents who may be more concerned with pedagogical practices and educational opportunities.

Website Analysis

As part of the data collection for this study, a website analysis was undertaken on the 6 IB schools in Thailand that offer a K-12 IB education pathway. The analysis found that the average cost of an IB education for a Gr11 DP student without factoring in any additional school costs was 805,316 (THB) –which equates to 22,476 (USD) or 17,804 (GBP). Given the low annual wages in Thailand and the fact that the IB has not partnered with any state school in Thailand, an IB education can only be accessed by the wealthiest families. The racial make-up of the SLT (Senior Leadership Teams) was also undertaken. It was clear that white, Western-trained leaders dominated the leadership of these schools. The analysis is consistent with findings in different IB and non-IB International School regions. This dominance will be discussed later in this section.

The study's findings highlighted some possibilities and opportunities for both the IB and the case study school moving forward. One of the major concerns from several teachers was the IB's accessibility to those without the financial means to attend wealthy international schools. Whilst it was mentioned that the core growth in the programmes was within state schooling, it was not lost on teachers that this growth was predominantly within countries such as the US, Canada, and Australia.

Some of the IB's core objectives should be reflected in the pedagogical practices the frameworks necessitate This is especially noticeable within the DP programme, where high-stakes final exams are used at the conclusion of the two-year programme, contrasting with the IB's emphasis of inquiry-based learning prevalent within both the PYP and MYP. Could the IB find an alternative for the DP programme that would allow students to explore project-based learning within these final two years of school? Parents also highlighted some mild skepticism regarding how well the current educational offerings genuinely prepare their offspring for an increasingly uncertain future.

It was felt by teachers that the IB should better support teachers in teaching authentic inquiry-based curricular. For most trained teachers, this approach is not catered to within university

teacher credential courses, potentially leading to teachers using their previous training, resources, and experience when teaching a system of education designed to adopt a different approach. It was also highlighted that given the increasing influence of the IB on education, could they utilise this to impact the admissions policies of Western universities. Could they use their prominent financial and reputation position to create higher education opportunities for students who would otherwise not have the required capital? I agree with participant Olivia that there seems to be an opportunity for the IB to move into creating online universities offering opportunities to all.

In this research study, I aimed to synthesise the key findings from my literature review and explore how these findings support or reject existing literature within the contextual case study of a particular school in northern Thailand. This synthesis will provide a comprehensive understanding of the research topic and contribute to the existing body of knowledge.

Firstly, our literature review identified key themes related to the IB, International Schooling, Neoliberalism and Elitism whilst utilising Bourdieu's theories to anchor the conceptual understanding. These themes include:

- Cultural Capital as Whiteness
- Cosmopolitanism, Neoliberalism and the IB
- International Schooling, the IB and Higher Education
- Strengths and Opportunities
- Bourdieu and Educational Research

In the following sections, I will use the study's findings to determine the significance and implications of the work within the context of previous research undertaken in the field. This chapter will conclude with a focus on.

- Acknowledgment of Study Limitations
- Suggestions for Future Research
- Broader Implications and Contributions of the Research
- Final Thoughts and Future Directions

Cultural Capital as Whiteness

The most glaring observation emanating from the website analysis was the dominance of white educators within leadership positions at these schools. Despite not initially being an intended focal point of the study, the trend became more apparent after each school analysis. This

supports the work by Gardner-McTaggart (2020) who found that within the field of elite international education, there is a pronounced dominance of white leaders within these schools, thus highlighting a deeply entrenched example of institutionalised 'whiteness.'

Drawing upon Bourdieu's theoretical framework, it is underscored that cultural capital, as a concept, is not inherently imbued with ethnographic-racial attributes (Wallace, 2017). Despite this, research has consistently demonstrated that individuals who belong to the white middle-class demographic are in possession of high levels of cultural capital. The field of international education is one where habitus is aligned to whiteness and the 'rules of the game' as Bourdieu would suggest are set by dominant groups, making access more difficult for racially marginalised educators. Is this accumulation of power within International Schools a reflection of the cultural capital that white educators are imbued with within international schools, or is it more concerning the parents' expectations regarding whom they would like their children to be educated? This whiteness is 'denationalised, sophisticated and in demand' (Gardner-McTaggart, 2020, p.8).

This was highlighted during the research by one of the teachers.

> they are middle class and local, and they probably want to do it because they see their kids going maybe abroad, which means students have to know English and they have to know different languages. It is a status thing. It's probably got out of these very traditional local education systems. I wonder if the local people have a certain amount of trust in seeing white faces. I don't know. It's dangerous territory to say that at the same time— (Ken)

These findings were aligned to a study by Xao, (2020, website), who highlighted that.

> There is such adulation of the Western world across the Global South; international schools need a conspicuous number of Western teachers to be deemed desirable by the local elite. Parents dream of sending their children to Ivy League schools, Oxford and Cambridge. They want their kids to internalise whiteness as a standard. The denigration of our own cultures has been going on for so long and enforces the narrative of Western superiority.

The fact that this cultural capital is highlighted by the racial make-up of senior leaders at International Schools should come as no surprise, despite the stated intentions of the IB to create 'a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect ... to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right' (IBO, 2020). One of the teachers interviewed stated that this development is evident as the whole concept of international education is a Western concept.

'You go in there with your IB, the baccalaureate, which comes from Napoleon. The whole thing is a Western concept. International schools are based on Western philosophy and pedagogy' (Ken). This sentiment is reflected in Bunnell & Gardner-McTaggart's (2024) findings which discovered there to be a disproportionate number of white males within leadership positions at international schools. 'Our survey of the websites of 247 schools belonging to 10 significant groupings reveals, from photographic evidence, that 88% of senior leaders are White, and 64% are White men' (p. 1). The study highlighted the paradoxical nature of the findings within the sphere of international schooling, given the fields 'internationalism based on the belief in diversity, equity, respect, and inclusion.' (p. 8)

Gardner-McTaggart (2020) highlights how concepts such as 'International Mindedness' and 'Global Citizenship' are being interpreted and delivered by predominantly white staff and leadership within International Schools. It is, therefore, reasonable to ask whether international schools can attain their rhetoric of being open-minded and progressive whilst having limited representation. This seemed especially stark during this study when the racial makeup of school leadership teams was analysed. Gardner-McTaggart (2018) concisely defined these phenomena when pronouncing that 'the 'winning' template for IB international schools director is simple: white, 'English native-speaker and middle class' (p. 113).

It was apparent from teachers, parents and students that access to elite Western higher education institutions was the main motivation for families when choosing to attend an IB international school. However, given that the student group was in Grade 10 and therefore beginning to think about university application and the teacher group were predominantly secondary school teachers, this element will naturally be more prominent. Would the results have altered if primary parents and students had been the focus of the study? Or would these primary school parents have a long-term view of attendance, which will culminate in attendance at an elite university? This was supported by Mackenzie et al, (2003) who found that parents of international school students are interested in the IB DP programme as a means to attend a Western university. 'It is possible to conclude that at least some of these parents value the IB Diploma more as a ticket to higher education than as a vehicle for promoting international understanding' (p. 306).

International schools, particularly those that offer the IB programmes, can be identified as a specific field with distinct boundaries and membership (Kalil, 2020). Bunnell (2014) highlighted that it was helpful to observe and analyse the field of international school within the context of Bourdieu's theories. Bourdieu (1996) pointed out that individuals within a particular field internalise the 'rules of the game'. From the research undertaken for this study, it is apparent that all three of the stakeholder groups are aware of the rules of the game as it pertains to

international schools. This was most evident with the acceptance from all three groups that university access is the main priority of attendance at the case study school, which leads the schools to focus their policies and practice to meet these aspirations. This is reflected within the school with the employment of two full-time college counsellors who are solely tasked with guiding students with university applications, guidance and transcripts. What is also apparent is the lack of guidance for those students who may wish to follow a non-university pathway. There was one outlier within the parent group who was open to their child not attending university. This relative absence of guidance for non-university pathways highlights those certain forms of capital such as vocational or entrepreneurial avenues, are less accepted within this 'field'. This reinforces the notion that the school's habitus is dominated by university aspirations.

Both the research emanating from this study and previous literature (Bunnell, 2010, Doherty, 2009, Gardner-McTaggart, 2018) have highlighted that the completing the IB DP pre-university programme enables graduates to access significant 'education capital'. It is felt that this qualification is a gateway to accessing elite Western universities. The global appeal and perceived rigour of the DP programme also denotes that it confers this capital regardless of the universities host country or the country in which the IB DP programme was completed. In Bourdeusian terms, the DP is more than a credential; it operates as a source of symbolic capital, which confers legitimacy within higher education institutions. The completion of the IB DP programme also potentially bestows a unique 'cultural capital' upon its graduates, as they are seen to be better equipped to navigate different cultural environments.

A key finding of this study was that parents primarily chose this IB international education for the purposes of their child attending a Western university. While additional elements of the IB system, such as service learning and the learner profile, were appreciated and welcomed, these elements were of a secondary concern compared to the future opportunities that this form of elite education would lead to. It was noted by a two of the parents that attendance at a school such as this, coupled with the IB ethos, would allow their child to thrive better in a diverse and globalised world.

However, the cost of attendance at an international school such as that used in this case study highlights how the IB system of intertwining cosmopolitan ideals with neoliberal realities can lead to exacerbating existing inequalities as opposed to challenging these issues. Privilege and elitism often go under the guise of global citizenship and global meritocracy. The case study school highlights this approach as it charges approximately USD 20,000 per year to attend whilst claiming it is a non-selective school.

Elitism and International Schooling

The IB has often refuted the claim that it is an elitist institution which caters for the most privileged in society. They point to the fact that state schooling makes up an increasing number of schools worldwide and that this demographic now outnumbers the private schools within the system (Resnik, 2019). There is some evidence to support these claims. In 2015, sixty percent of public schools in the United States offering International Baccalaureate diplomas in the 2012-13 school year received federal Title I money to support education for impoverished students (Sparks, 2015). This development seems to be in keeping with the IB mission and vision. However, Their and Beach (2021) found that despite this development, there was a disproportionately low number of black students completing the DP examinations. Bourdieu (1996) highlights that pure access to elite education does not lead to equitable participation. Bourdieu argues that education systems function as a method for reproducing social class distinctions and inequalities.

> …the school produces the state nobility – endowed with a universally recognized title entitling its members to a determined category of positions of power. (Bourdieu, 1996, p 117)

There was also a location disparity regarding the location of these schools, with a large majority to be found in large city metropolises. Doherty (2009) also found that public money earmarked for the DP is often viewed as serving only a small group of students at the expense of other public education services provided more broadly. Besides, students who choose, or are selected to, the DP classes in public schools and even in public schools in disadvantaged areas belong to a large extent to middle-class families.

A 2013 study commissioned by the IB found that introducing the DP into state schools in Ecuador led to improvements in school culture, results and pedagogy. In contrast, a study by Bittencourt (2023) found high dropout rates and low IB DP scores for students from a state schooling background. He continued to highlight that the IB initiative may;

> Inadvertently contribute to what it set out to address. Envisioned as a means of disrupting existing patterns of social stratification, the initiative may serve to further sanction elites' claims of their statuses by portraying low-income students as incapable or unwilling to take advantage of presumably comparable educational experiences and opportunities. (p. 624)

Certainties of Privilege

Reay (2017) described how parents who send their children to elite schools highlighted an air of certainty and confidence concerning their child's schooling. Reay (2017) found that there was an unassailable belief that their child was going to be an educational success.

> Possession of economic, cultural and social capitals, and 'a feel for the game' generated by middle-class habitus, mean their families are engaging in a range of exclusive and exclusionary practices that provide their offspring with real as opposed to illusory choices of their working-class counterparts. (p. 98)

This internalisng of the 'rules of the game' within the 'field' of international education echoes Bourdieu's (1990) belief that inherited advantages allow for students to navigate these elite educational spaces and therefore maximise future success. Through this research, it has become evident that a comparable phenomenon to that identified by Reay in her study of elite British private schools can be observed in the case study school. This conclusion was reached based on insightful discussions with both parents and students. From the parent focus groups, only one of the parents entertained the idea of their child possibly not attending a Western university immediately after completing their studies. This presumption was echoed by students who felt that university was the inevitable next step upon finishing school. This is consistent with Bourdieu (1996) who found that elite educational institutions don't only transmit knowledge but also offer students a pathway to success, thus reinforcing existing social structures.

The IB and International Schools furnish graduates with the institutionalised cultural capital required to access and flourish at elite universities. It was evident that university was the primary end goal of attendance for parents and students at the case study school. This is despite the school attaining average IB DP scores and having a philosophical approach of being rooted in holistic education and the Arts. Bourdieu (1996) described higher education as a 'sorting machine' that selects students according to implicit social classification and reproduces the same students according to an explicit academic classification. I suggest that the IB and International Schools have become an integral mechanism for this academic sorting of students based on their social classifications and academic qualifications. The IB would inevitably refute this assertion as it contradicts their claims and seems to contradict their progressive, cosmopolitan philosophy, which will be further explored in the next section.

This reproduction of privilege is not restricted to international schools' students, but also extends to leadership structures in these schools. Gardner-McTaggart & Bunnell (2022) used

Bourdieu's theories of cultural capital and doxa to uncover a closed circuit of privilege within these schools. This equated to the overrepresentation of white, Anglo-Saxon leaders within these elite schools. These findings are mirrored in my own analysis of the six IB K-12 schools in Thailand, where there was a clear overrepresentation of white western trained educators in leadership roles within the six IB K-12 schools situated in Thailand.

5.3 Cosmopolitanism, Global Citizenship, International Mindedness and the IB

International mindedness in the context of the International Baccalaureate (IB) is a fundamental concept that reflects the program's mission to develop globally aware and culturally sensitive students. It is defined as an openness to and understanding of different cultures, perspectives, and experiences, fostering a sense of interconnectedness and shared responsibility for the world. (IBO.org).

The literature review highlighted that despite being one of the IB's core tenets, there isn't a consistent understanding of International Mindedness and how this should be adopted and utilised within schools (Barratt & Hacking, 2017; Bunnell, 2020; Sriprakash et al., 2014). It has been argued that IM 'essentially claims normative universal status for a Western mindset that is particularly well-suited to neoliberal political-economic contexts' (Dvir, et al, 2018, p. 460), leading to further inequalities, whilst becoming an accepted disposition for global elite families. This was consistent with some of the opinions of the school stakeholders, where there wasn't a coherent understanding of the concept, and that IM has inadvertently led to entrenching rather than confronting elitism within international schooling. In concurrence with the study undertaken by the work of (Sprikakash, et al., 2014), the parents all seemed to believe that international mindedness was an integral part of their child's education, despite the aforementioned lack of a coherent definition of the term.

The belief that exposure of students to peers from different cultural backgrounds is more beneficial to the development of International Mindedness than the IB curriculum framework was highlighted by one of the teachers during the interview stage.

> At this school, again, it is IB independent because at this school, you have got a whole bunch of different nationalities. I mean, in theory, a lot of Chinese, a lot of Thai, but in theory, there's a lot of different nationalities. Just even being on the playground, you start to interact and play with other people from different cultures, Portuguese, Thai, whatever. Naturally, there's an international mindedness simply because we play, and we hang out with people from different backgrounds. Third-culture kids, there's a lot of them here, and that's international mindedness. Regardless of the system, there is

possibilities of international mindedness or developing awareness of other cultures and so forth. (Ken).

This belief system reflects the work undertaken by Van Oord (2007), who found that exposure to a diverse study body was singularly more influential in developing IM than studying within an IB program.

This benefit of attending an IB international school was highlighted by one of the parent contributors. 'They can have an open-door after graduating in international school to travel or go in a world, instead just staying in one country to go to the university or work because they have wider choices after graduating in international school.'

> When I speak with friends back in the UK that have stayed in the same city or even in the same country, that they were amazed that their children hoped to go to maybe universities. It's not very common for a child that's always stayed in the same city or same country to then want to go to do further education universities outside of the country that they're known. Just from my perspective, even at a tender age of 10, 11, 12, they're already thinking about, Oh, I'll go to university in the States, or I'll go to university in Germany or somewhere else. (Bree, parent)

Neoliberal Reality of International Schooling

The critical relationships of neoliberalism and education, such as commercialisation, parental choice, privatization and market drivers, have benefitted the IB in its growth worldwide. The preparation of students for elite universities and the global workplace characterises this. It was evident through discussions with all three stakeholder groups within the case study school that both the school and the IB curriculum are focused on rigorously preparing students for higher education and subsequent workplace. This was also apparent when analysing the websites of the other five IB K-12 schools in Thailand. Despite the IB's aims and objectives to provide students with a holistic, inquiry-based approach rooted in liberal values, the core motivation for families attending IB schools is the promise of university attendance and capital in the global marketplace.

There is a clear, significant tension between the IB's cosmopolitan educational philosophy and mission and the neoliberal realities that shape its implementation. On one hand, the IB's aims to foster critical thinking, intercultural understanding and personal growth, its commodification as an established pathway to Western universities and subsequent high-status careers cannot be ignored (Resnik, 2012). Giroux (2023) argues that neoliberal capitalism 'thrives on the

notion that we live in foreclosed hope' (p. 70), leading to education becoming increasingly tied to the economic outcomes and social and cultural capital rather than transformative learning. Therefore, the IB's position within this neoliberal framework inadvertently reduces its utopian ideals and values, leading to families and schools to prioritise individual success and economic mobility over collective growth, equality and justice. Despite its continued promise of an inquiry-based, holistic approach to education, the dominant narrative remains that the growth of the IB and international schools is closely aligned with the pursuit of personal gain within the context of a globalised, competitive marketplace.

These neoliberal aspects of the IB and international schooling also have a knock-on effect on pedagogical practices within the case study school. School success is closely related to the DP scores in grade 12 and their comparison to the world average scores. The school has also sought to develop standardized worldwide testing such as ISA (International Schools Assessment) MAP (Measures of Academic Progress), which measure, track and compare students' progress to worldwide norms. Whilst the IB aspires to promote international-mindedness within its member schools, its operational focus on performance, university preparation, and market-driven goals can dilute this ideal, leading to a more superficial engagement with global issues. Rather than the deep, critical, and active global citizenship that international-mindedness represents, multi-cultural events such as' International Day' highlight this.

However, these neoliberal tendencies don't necessarily negate the presence of cosmopolitan values within the school. This reflects the concept of Cosmopolitan Nationalism (Maxwell, et al, 2020), where global values are embedded within national or elite aspirations, whilst maintaining existing power structures. The development and co-existence of neoliberal realities and cosmopolitan values within international schools may not necessarily be a contradiction, but more as a defining characteristic of this rapidly evolving field. In Bourdeusian terms, this development reflects the doxa and internal belief system associated with international education.

Teacher Perceptions of Global Citizenship, International Mindedness and the IB

It was perceived by some teachers that both Global Citizenship and International Mindedness were more useful in terms of career progression than the benefits they may have to the local community. This was highlighted by Ken.

> I was attracted to having that on my CV, because then it opened doors and possibilities because of those walls. IB, I don't really care about. One thing that I am concerned

about is the fact that it is becoming incestuous IB because you just bring in IB people and then there's no other thinking, no other different ways. Then that creates sometimes a zealotry that is dangerous, I think. (Ken)

IB International School Fees

The findings highlighted that the average cost of enrolment for grade 11 students at one of Thailand's six schools offering a K-12 IB education was 805,316 (THB), equating to 22,476 (USD) or 17,804 (GBP) per annum. The average cost also does not include associated costs that are levied at these international schools. Additional fees such as development, registration, assessment, and exam have not been factored in. Some of these fees are one-off when a student joins the school, and others are annual levies.

As of 2023, the average annual wage in Thailand was 184,920 (THB) or 5,665 (USD) or 4,110 (GBP) (Roman, 2024). The sheer strength of these numbers of highlights, at the most foundational level, that an IB education is reserved for only the wealthiest of Thai families. One of the interviewees highlighted that 'If you are spending all that money, why would you spend all that money to have your kids taught by a local? Why not just send them to a local school?' This development of elite international education, spearheaded by the IB, has, according to Resnik (2009), led to a new educational structure in which two differentiated systems, a national system and an international system to emerge and redefine the terms of inequality of opportunities (p. 219). Resnik (2009) continues to highlight that international schools and the IB curriculum have been adopted by local elites at 'dizzying rates', demanding these schools prepare their children for top-notch jobs in the current cosmopolitan, multi-cultural corporate landscape.

Within Thailand, access to K-12 IB schools is limited to families with the considerable financial means to meet the high fees. As there is no IB provision within any state schools in Thailand, the branding of the IB within the 6 IB K-12 schools in the country is an exclusive one. A view echoed in the teacher's focus group research was that the case study school benefits from a 'prestigious' reputation, especially within the regional context. This is despite the school having IB DP scores marginally above the worldwide average, which currently stands at 29 points (out of a maximum of 45). (James) highlighted that the school 'is the most prestigious education they can give their kids without putting them on that treadmill to burn out at the schools that require that you are pushing for the 40s. They are only celebrating forties, anything less than that.' There was a feeling that this elitist feeling and reputation often influence school decisions. William also felt that this had happened at his previous school.

> There is an obsession at my last school in Hong Kong, directly from the school head, with getting enough students into those schools. Those Ivy League schools. It drove many decisions at the school. It drove many people mad. (Adam)

To meet the demands of the global economy, IB schools focus on developing students who possess the mindsets and skills required for effective leadership in international business. This is achieved by instilling in students the predispositions that align with the global competencies sought after by employers (Resnik, 2009).

IB Teacher Training

One of the areas that seven teachers highlighted as an issue for the IB through the focus group and individual interviews was the quality of IB training. It is worth noting that these trainings are mandatory for schools. Whilst the IB does not stipulate how much money each school needs to spend on official IB training, there is a requirement for the school to provide training to each teacher within a review cycle (four years) and for each subject department to have an IB-trained teacher. In addition, the IB makes regular cyclical updates to subject guides, requiring further IB upskilling and, subsequently, further cost. Many of these courses run for three days and can be studied in person at approved workshops (usually held at an IB school), virtual or a one-month online variation of the same material. The interviews and focus groups highlighted mixed views of the effectiveness. This also includes mixed views from single respondents who have attended more than one workshop and had vastly different experiences. One of the positives teachers associated with the training was the pedagogical approach of the workshops rather than the content covered. One of the teachers highlighted this: 'I learned more tips and tricks about teaching than I did anything about the IB.' This is something I agree with when thinking about my own experiences attending workshops and also for those that I have led.

5.4 Strengths and Opportunities of the IB

Despite the fact the teachers highlighted some skepticism regarding the IB and its effectiveness in offering a curriculum framework which meets its aims, there were a number of positive aspects of the programmes highlighted. For example, there was a belief that the PYP (Primary Years Programme) is a framework that works well for Primary students. The use of transdisciplinary units of inquiry in the PYP it was felt led to some genuine student driven inquiry-based learning to thrive. Transdisciplinary units are those which incorporate a number of subjects looking at a single statement from their individual subject's perspective. It was also felt that the IB Learner Profile was a beneficial aspect of the PYP as it lays a groundwork for expected behaviours and desired attributes. However, it was felt this was less effective in the

MYP and DP programmes. Teachers also highlighted the open nature of the MYP programme as a strength, as this can lead to teachers developing units of inquiry which are both conceptual and contextual in focus, thus potentially allowing for teachers to develop units of study which can be related to real world experiences, which may be particular to a specific location. Gardner-McTaggart et al, (2024) identified that 'the IB provides emancipatory resistance against post-soviet positivism in the educational space.' (p.560). This greater teacher autonomy and intellectual agency can lead to teachers to regain some of 'symbolic capital' in the profession. Andrzejewski, Baltodano, and Symcox (2009) proposed a collective vision for social justice that includes transformative principles for protecting teachers and their work against the pervasiveness of neoliberal policies and practices. Their recommendations included allowing teachers to 'be able to create their curriculum as long as it meets the grade-level benchmarks. No teacher should be forced to follow teacher-proof curricula or be threatened, harassed, or demoted for not implementing pre-package curriculum.' (p. 202). The current PYP and MYP frameworks have the potential to allow individual teachers to meet this aspirational goal. Gardner-McTaggart et al. (2024) highlighted that despite the IB having generated a 'social sphere linked with advantage, privilege and most of all, educational 'distinction' (p. 554), the organisation has promise as a progressive educational model. It (the IB) 'presents the affordance for a democratic global education because of the lived representational spaces and collective knowledge construction it is able to foster' (p. 557). However, despite the potential benefits of a holistic global education model students within the IB frameworks are taught to make the world a better place with a 'blindness' to their privilege and the 'negative effects this can and does have on the social and environmental world around them' (Gardner-McTaggart, et al, 2024, p. 558).

Realities of current schooling where teachers are increasingly stretched and subjected to increasingly unreasonable expectations will inevitably limit the energy and creativity required to meet the IB's aspirational goals. Mikelatou and Arvanitis (2021) argued that there is space within the neoliberal educational landscape for equity and justice to be addressed. They highlighted that there should be a resistance to 'the managerial-oriented post-professional identities of teachers and the prevalence of activist/transformative professionalism. This approach will lead teachers to become 'active agents of equality and evolve into productive pedagogues' (p. 1617). In theory, the aspirational goals of the IB match the educational approached advocated by thinkers such as Paolo Freire, Bell Hooks and Henry Giroux. Development of critical pedagogues like that championed by the IB should lead to a more just and equitable world. However, as Giroux (2003) highlighted, resistance to neoliberalism in education is often dismissed as unrealistic and utopian. However, I am in broad agreement with Lyons and Tarc (2024) that 'IB classrooms in many international schools, because of their interculturally-rich student and staff composition, and the comparative openness of the IB

curricula, can and should support planetary consciousness and social activism' (p. 611). Whilst this stance can be identified as utopian, I feel the IB's genuine curriculum openness and vision could potentially lead to a socially responsive, critical pedagogy.

The mixed nature of the feedback around official IB training for teachers highlights that there are several excellent educators who teach curriculum framework content to IB educators. The model of current teachers becoming workshop leaders and delivering these training opportunities is excellent, primarily when delivered in face-to-face settings. It was clear from the feedback from teachers that the IB's online and virtual offerings were considered to be inadequate for preparing teachers to deliver the programmes. Is there an opportunity for the IB to build on the model of peer teacher training when devising its next steps?

5.5 Study Limitations

Using both focus groups and interviews for data collection meant that only a sample of the schoolteacher population in the case study was utilised. Fifteen teachers were part of either the focus groups or individual interviews out of a teacher population of over 60. Therefore, an additional sample of the whole staff using questionnaires and forms could have added to the validity of the findings. This is also a relevant point for both the student and parent focus groups. Given the nationalities of the families in the school, the focus group research was not necessarily representative of this demographic. This was predominantly due to the language barriers that exist within our parent community. The parents used in the focus group were all bar one, fluent in English, potentially eliminating a large swathe of the parent population.

5.6 Suggestions for Future Research

Policy Analysis

As highlighted earlier, the IB has strenuously refuted the accusation that it is elitist and is working towards inclusivity. At the time of proofreading this thesis, the IB announced an initiative aimed at increasing the access to IB schools in Africa. The statement reads;

For a limited time, primary and secondary schools in Kenya, South Africa, Nigeria, Ghana, Rwanda, Senegal, Morocco, Tunisia and Democratic Republic of the Congo can participate in our unique pilot project for the globally recognized Primary Years Programme (PYP) and Middle Years Programme (MYP). The pilot offers approximately 50% discount on application, candidacy fee (phases 1+2) and associated onboarding PD. (website, IBO.org)

Whilst there has been individual analysis of this development, such as those in Ecuador and

Canada, I feel there is an opportunity to research how these policy developments from the IB have affected the opportunities for students who study within the IB framework and those who undertake state curricula. An analysis of the similarities in how these policies have affected state schooling would be beneficial. Longitudinal studies tracking the career outcomes of those students within these state schooling sectors would be enlightening.

Another area of possible future research would be the response of governments to the development of International Schooling and the IB, particularly in the global south. It is no longer possible to ignore international schooling as a niche market sector which caters for transnational workers, such as embassy staff and NGO's. An analysis of governmental response to these developments would highlight whether this development leads to a 'brain drain' whereby nations are losing talented individuals to overseas education and employment.

It would be interesting to decipher if some of the conclusions of this study could 'also be relevant within non-IB international schools that use either the British or US curriculum. However, these waters would be muddied slightly by the fact that many UK and US international schools implement their state systems up to age 16 (Gr11) before switching to the IB DP programme. It would also be interesting to look at British international schools within former colonies to see how these education systems are viewed. Having worked in both Sri Lanka and Fiji, I was struck by the reverence that the local community has for British style education and the desire for families to undertake Cambridge qualifications such as IGCSE. The growth of elite British private schools such as Rugby, Harrow and Shrewsbury highlights that this reverence may also apply in the Thai context, and that receiving a British style education is viewed favourably by wealthy families in Thailand.

Bourdieu

Despite the exponential growth of the field of International Schools and the IB predominantly occurring after Bourdieu penned his critical theories, his theoretical theories remain highly relevant when understanding the social implications of these developments. I hope this study can contribute to the enduring validity and usage of his theories in this growing field. As highlighted earlier, his theories have been used extensively within this 'field' and given the increased marketisation and stratification of international education, coupled with the empirical flexibility of his theories, there is scope for his work to be utilised in analysing how international schooling continues to develop.

I feel his work could also be broadened to examine international schooling and the IB within different cultures and contexts as his work necessitates its use in repeated empirical study. I

would also like to examine teachers within this field further using his theories. For example, how persuasive is the economic capital gained overseas for qualified teachers to leave their home countries? How much do teachers leverage social capital when pursuing new jobs? Anecdotally, I was aware that when I was working in Sri Lanka, all eight of the new staff hired one academic year had a previous working relationship with a member of school leadership, highlighting how capital can have a significant impact on career progression.

Transnational Education Corporations

One of the clearest neoliberal developments in recent years has been the meteoric rise of education corporations such as Nord Anglia, Cognita and Gems school groups. There are currently 81 Nord Anglia schools, 50 GEMS and over 100 Cognita schools worldwide. International school market growth has seen Nord Anglia go from 1 school in 1992 to 81 in 2024 (nordanglia.com). This growth has happened with little oversight or regulation and is a response to the growing parental demand for their children to attend international schools. Similar to the IB, Nord Anglia professes to develop students who 'are empowered to become change-makers who help make the world a better place.' (Schrole.com) This is despite their sole reason for existence, which is to make a profit for the company and its shareholders. This is similar to the other major profit-making players in the field, such as Gems and Cognita. There is a need for an in-depth research analysis of these transnational education corporations' development, quality, and unregulated growth. As a teacher who has worked for a Nord Anglia school (unwittingly, they bought the school after Their had arrived), I became acutely aware of their unscrupulous business practices and focus on profit margins over the quality of the education provided. Having said this, I have also worked in not-for-profit international schools with similar issues but without the transparency of corporation profit and loss accounts.

Racial Make-up of Leadership

As discussed, the leadership teams of the six international schools in Thailand, that offer a K-12 IB curriculum framework were staffed almost exclusively with white Western-trained educators. During the research for this study, teachers asserted that this was partly due to the IB being a Western pedagogical framework and that schools will feel parental pressure to employ teachers and leaders who originate from the UK, US, Canada, or Australia. It was felt that whilst these opinions are not always overtly offered by school parents, there was an assumption that this was required when paying for expensive international education. Drawing on Bourdieu's theories, most notable symbolic capital, the findings highlight that there is a perception that white-western leaders confer greater legitimacy within the field regardless of

their pedagogical expertise. This symbolic capital is reinforced by the families of both global expatriate families and local wealthy families who believe in the superiority of Western educational practices I feel that a follow-up study to focus on these assumptions is necessary. Gardner-McTaggart (2021) and Bunnell and Gardner- (2024) have written extensively regarding the 'whiteness' of international schooling and the persistent Anglo-Saxon privilege that dominates leadership roles within international schools. They highlight those studies 'who make up the people of this demographic, are indeed rare, yet point to a bias towards hiring native English speaking Anglo-Saxon white men (p. 2). This is supported by Keung and Rockinson-Szapkiew (2013) who found that in a study of 193 international schools 93.3% of school leaders were white with 77.7% being male. It would also be interesting to undertake additional research further examining parental beliefs regarding teacher backgrounds would be enlightening.

5.7 Final Thoughts and Future Directions

The idea that the field of international education and the IB is one which is inclusive and perpetuates equity is clearly not evident in the Thai context. Attendance at one of these 6 K-12 IB schools requires a level of financial means far beyond that of the average Thai family. The case study school prides itself on being an inclusive and non-selective school. However, this non-selection only applies if families are in possession of the required economic capital. International schools and in particular IB institutions are increasingly the desired option for nouveau riche families in the global south who are drawn to the promise of their children attending elite Western universities.

Seeing how this translates into a more equitable education future will be fascinating as the IB expands into new frontiers and forms partnerships with state governments. As of March 2024, the IB have partnered with 8 of South Korea's 17 provinces/metropolitan areas to offer IB curriculum programmes. Interestingly, this development has enabled these schools to teach content within the framework in Korean. Unlike other partnerships with state education departments, these agreements have also included the development of PYP and MYP curricula and not just focusing on the pre-university DP course (upinnews.kr).

The predominantly unregulated growth of international schools, particularly those that offer the IB framework, is one which government needs to look far more closely at. Is this a framework which could or should be widely adopted by more state and private schools? Or are these developments an extension of the neoliberal realities that have recently engulfed education? Without further research, discussions, and action, education may continue to sleepwalk into an era where quality educational provision is unavailable to many, and where fee-paying

schooling will be viewed as another necessary expense for average families.

Broader Implications and Contributions to Research

This research was intended to be utilised on a micro and macro level. On the micro level, it is hoped that the research will allow the school to reflect on some of the school stakeholder opinions to gain a better understanding of the people within the school community. The research will be immediately relevant to the other five K-12 IB schools in Thailand as they inevitably share similar pedagogical, philosophical, and geographical spaces. The study will contribute to the growing understanding of the 'field' of international education by utilising Pierre Bourdieu's key theories. Contributing to the extensive work undertaken by scholars such as Doherty (2009, 2012), Gardner-McTaggart, (2016, 2018, 2020) Bunnell & Gardner-McTaggart, (2022), it is hoped this study will add some empirical depth to the ongoing understanding of international schooling and the IB.

This study is the only one that focuses on case study research within the realms of international schools within Thailand, allowing the work to contribute to ongoing discussion regarding the growth and direction of international schools. Unregulated growth is especially worth further investigation in the context of the increase in for-profit global education corporations such as Nord Anglia, Cognita, and Gems. The current trend of elite British schools such as Harrow, Eton, Rugby, and Dulwich opening satellite schools worldwide, although primarily in Asia, should be further examined.

The neoliberal argument that profits will drop without quality is potentially valid, but further investigation is necessary to ascertain to what extent this is true. However, as an international teacher, I have worked for profit-making (Nord Anglia) and not-for-profit schools. It was evident that increasing student numbers was the main operational goal. It was also apparent that teacher well-being and support could have been a higher priority. This study will instigate discussion within Thai education regarding the future direction of international schools. As highlighted earlier, countries such as South Korea and China have developed policies regarding international education. Within Thailand, there are no restrictions to the required teaching of the Thai language and culture as part of the curriculum.

Numerous teachers highlighted the issue of the quality of IB teacher training. In the main, these views thought that the current provision is inadequate for preparing teachers for the pedagogical approach adopted by the IB. Future research could focus on best practices for preparing educators to teach the IB curricula effectively, support student learning, and foster a culture of continuous improvement within IB schools. Another area of teacher focus that has

yet to be fully explored is the transitory nature of employment for international school educators.

A key area of further exploration within this sphere is to examine parental perspectives and motivations for selecting an IB education for their children. This idea would ideally be developed within different contexts. This would allow researchers to examine if the motivations and opinions of the programmes are consistent worldwide. Are these parents all drawn towards the academic rigour the DP offers, or is there an appreciation for the cosmopolitan ideals of the pedagogical approach? Within this study, there was a definite belief that the elite reputations of both the IB and the case study school were influential for school choice. Will this elitist reputation remain intact if the IB continues to develop within state schooling?

Chapter 6 Conclusion

At this stage, it is worth reiterating the aim of this research and its primary research questions. This study examined the extent to which the cosmopolitan ideals of the International Baccalaureate (IB) and international schools have been subverted by neoliberalism. To create authentic findings, a case study approach was employed for the research. This case study was focused on a K-12 IB world school situated in Thailand. The findings of the research were examined through a lens of Pierre Bourdieu's work and concepts.

6.1 Summary of Findings

One of the study's main themes was the broad agreement, whether implicitly or explicitly, that the IB enables students to develop the various forms of capital required for accessing elite universities worldwide. The elite nature of the case study school highlighted a belief between students, teachers, and parents that the primary purpose of the school was to enable these forms of capital to be bestowed upon graduates. Through the lens of Bourdieu, the case study school highlights how cultural capital in the form of an IB curriculum functions as a legitimate asset in the field of international education. Teachers believed that transitioning to an IB system was beneficial for their careers, as it provided opportunities that a practitioner within an IB school allows. This highlights how the IB can bestow symbolic capital on teachers as they look to attain legitimate markers of expertise though IB training, which in turn allows them access to elite international schools and transnational career pathways. These findings directly link to the research question regarding how Bourdieu's theories and various forms of capital intersect within the IB programmes.

An unforeseen discovery of the research was the 'whiteness' of the school leadership at all 6 IB K-12 schools in Thailand. Initially, this analysis was intended to examine school mission and vision statements to answer the research question related to how IB international schools promote cosmopolitan ideals of global citizenship, cultural diversity, and interconnectedness. However, during the research, it was clear that there was a racial bias, which correlates to some of the research undertaken in other contexts of International Schools and the racial makeup of the leadership teams. This is consistent with the findings of a study by Gardner-McTaggart & Bunnell (2022) who found that international schools 'implicitly demand a person from an Anglo-Saxon nation' (p.15) when recruiting for leadership roles. This leads to a 'leadership nobility' (p.15) within the recruitment circuit, ostensibly blocking outsiders whilst reproducing the field of power. White educators are often 'blind' to their understanding of their own white status (Gardner-McTaggart, 2016) This monopoly is converted into a 'nobility' which is.

> confirmed and strengthened by the fact that each of the members of the group of the chosen people, in addition to sharing in the symbolic capital collectively held and concentrated in their title, also shares, in a logic that is truly of magical shareholding, in the symbolic capital that each member of the group holds as an individual (Bourdieu, 1996, p. 79)

This discovery relates to the research questions of whether IB schools align more closely with the neoliberal ideals of marketisation and competition or that of the founding cosmopolitan ideals of global citizenship, cultural diversity, and interconnectedness. These findings also suggest that these leaders are in possession of the requisite objectified, embodied and institutionalised capital to succeed in this distinct field of power (Gardner-McTaggart & Bunnell, 2022). This is consistent with the premise that there is a specific 'leadership nobility' within elite international schooling.

Despite the teachers interviewed voicing criticism of the IB, the school stakeholders also reflected positive elements of the programmes. There was a sense that the inquiry-based approach, which engenders students' and teachers' voice and choice in the direction of the curriculum, was beneficial, both in terms of the ability to be contextual and for engaging students.

Specific cosmopolitan areas of the IB approach drew a range of differing opinions from the respondents. This was remarkably true for Service Learning, where opinion was very divided. Some felt that service-learning opportunities failed to engage the students in meaningful experiences whilst others felt the approach was a form of 'white saviourism' where privileged students superficially interact with the local community as a form of unwanted charity. These

criticisms were especially prominent in discussions about the Diploma Programme (DP) Creativity, Activity, Service (CAS) component. Many stakeholders perceived the CAS requirements as fulfilling a 'tick box' exercise rather than fostering genuine, impactful community engagement and personal growth. I can also attest to this being evident at the school used for the study. An example would be the long-standing' food bank' service project. While well-intentioned, this project fails to engage the students in critically evaluating whether there is a need for a food bank and, if there is a necessity, what the root causes are. Instead, student/parent food donations are forwarded to various hill Tribe villages. It would be more aligned with the IB mission for schools to necessitate a critical understanding of the circumstances that led to this need if there is indeed a need. At the time of writing, the IB has announced the re-branding of Service Learning in the MYP to be 'Community Engagement' from 2025. Hopefully, this will encourage schools to look at Service Learning more equitably. However, schools will not be required to adjust practice, just the title. This analysis contributes to the research question of how the case study school promotes the IB ideals of cultural diversity, global citizenship, and interconnectedness. Despite the criticality evident in the teachers' responses, there was an overriding positive feeling about service learning from the students and parents. This highlights that teachers are more de-tuned to the marketisation of the IBO than they are. Conversely, there was more enthusiasm from the teachers regarding the benefits of the Learner Profile compared to the students, who seemed to feel the concept was repetitive and unnecessary.

Parents

The parent focus groups clarified that attending a prestigious school means parents have incredibly high expectations and expect to be part of the school's pedagogical decision-making. There was evidence that for the vast majority of parents, attending an overseas Western university is the primary goal of attending the school. These findings highlight Bourdieu's (1996) argument that elite educational institutions act as sites for social reproduction. This also aligns with his argument that schools are a vehicle for attaining symbolic power, which in the context of the case study school equates to securing social status and global competitiveness. Bourdieu also highlighted in *The State Nobility* that elite schools are often pipelines to elite universities, a trend and parental focus which is evident both within the case study school. Bourdieu also highlighted how the family culture can maintain privilege.

> What we call ease is the privilege of those who, having imperceptibly acquired their culture through a gradual familiarization in the bosom of the family, have academic culture as their native culture and can maintain a familiar rapport with it that implies the unconsciousness of its acquisition. (Bourdieu, 1996, p. 21)

Whilst undertaking research for this thesis whilst working at the case study school, I began to see parallels between some of the theories, actions, and evidence I see daily. One of Bourdieu''s theories relating to elitism was the preference for classical arts provision, which serves to reinforce social hierarchies. This was reflected in Bourdieu's (1994) book *Distinction* where he highlighted that highbrow cultural activities within education are a method to reinforcing social hierarchies. This is evident at the school, through the vibrant art programme, which invites 'Artists in Residences' throughout the year. Through a Bourdieusian lens, it is evident that both the artist invited for the programme and the student performances of art reflect elitist preferences on what is deemed to reflect the parental desires for an elite IB education.

Demands of the IB Programme

One element that was not necessarily thought of was the broad agreement that the IB DP programme is a stressful course for students. This stress has been institutionalised and accepted within IB schools as part of the process of gaining this qualification. Viewed through a Bourdieusian lens, this stress may be the cost of acquiring the necessary 'symbolic capital', whereby success is aligned to the dominant habitus. Again, this flies in the face of the IB policies, which identify students' and teachers' wellness at the centre of its 2020 re-vamped S & P's (standards and practices). There was a consensus among teachers and students that there is excessive stress and pressure in completing this programme. This observation was supported by research undertaken by Grose and Sanchez (2021), who found that 'although students identify many benefits of the IB DP, increased stress is among the drawbacks that may prevent students from enrolling or completing the program' (p. 56).

6.2 Contributions to Knowledge

Implications of the Study

This study aims to deepen the comprehensive understanding of how neoliberal policies and practice have subverted cosmopolitan ideals within international schools and the IB. The study provides a context specific analysis of a K-12 IB world school in Thailand, which also analyses the understanding of these tensions within the teaching faculty. The research highlights some of the inconsistencies, challenges and dynamics that international educators face. The study supports research by Doherty et al (2012) which found that the IB has 'resonated with discourses around neoliberalism, neoconservatism and cosmopolitanism in the current

ecological conditions of educational policy and economic change, despite ironic dissonances between these frames'. (p. 328) The themes emerging from this study highlights the ability of the IB and international schooling in the context of Thailand to thrive at this intersection of neoliberalism, neoconservatism and cosmopolitanism. The study will contribute to the growing understanding of the concept of cosmopolitan nationalism and how it relates to international schooling. This study also supports Doherty (2012) who found that student perceptions of IB's ideals continue to be overridden by the 'pragmatic motives behind the consumption of their products' (p.195).

Limitations

The use of a single school for the purposes of the study is a potential limitation, as each school has its own unique history and specific context. The school's teaching staff may also not represent the wider trends in international teaching. Whilst preparaing for this study, I was initially planning to use both focus groups and interviews with all three school stakeholders. However, after the initial set of focus groups, it became clear that the depth and nuance of understanding were far richer within the teacher group. I therefore chose to focus the interview section purely on interviewing teachers. It is possibly a limitation that there needed to be equal input from each group, but I am happy with this choice as it led to more critical engagement with the topic. However, the findings and subsequent discussion points predominantly reflect teacher views.

My position as a teacher and curriculum coordinator could be perceived as a potential limitation, as I came into the study with preconceived notions of both international schooling and the IB. This personal positioning could lead to a misrepresentation of the data, so it confers to my pre-existing beliefs. However, I maintained an open-minded and reflexive approach to the data in order to utilise my prior experiences in manner which allows the study to informed, yet objective. It was felt that the study was more effective as it was undertaken from a position of prior knowledge and understanding of the tensions that exist within this education sector.

6.3 Future Research

The continued growth of international schools worldwide will necessitate further and more detailed research. One of the major areas of further research concerning the IB would be its growing influence in state schooling, both in the global north and south. Research has highlighted that the IB state schooling projects in Ecuador and Canada (Resnik, 2020; Bittencourt, 2023) have created a two-tier system for G11/12 pre-university-aged students whilst adding financial strain to the education authorities. It would also be interesting to

discover who can access these state- sanctioned IB programs. Is this equitable, or will it be a further reward for middle- class families able to invest heavily in their children's education?

Is this also evident in other state schooling IB sectors? Independent empirical research is also needed to ascertain the success rates of students graduating with an IB diploma. Does the capital gained from an IB education equate to successful university entry, graduation, and future employment prospects? Longitudinal studies tracking IB DP graduates would help discover whether the IB system provides students with the capital they require.

As highlighted earlier, there is a growing trend of unashamedly for-profit organisations within the sphere of international schooling. These schools and organisations, financed by private equity finance and shareholders, are indicative of the neoliberal educational landscape that continues to permeate international schooling. Organisations such as GEMS and Nord Anglia proclaim to be tasked with developing holistic educational opportunities which put teacher and student welfare at the centre of their mission and vision. However, this seems to align differently with their realistic overall mission: to make as much money as possible for their shareholders and equity investors. The corporate branding and holistic approach are far from these schools' reality and need further examination. This representation of a committed, holistic educational environment within a for profit educational brand is an example of Bourdieu's theory of *misrecognition* in practice whereby profit is masked as a moral purpose. Countries need to decide whether they want their best and brightest taught in schools set up to make money for invisible investors. GEMS states that their overall aim is to 'put a quality education within the reach of every learner.' (Gemseducation.com, 2024). Given the cost of attending one of these schools, it should refer to educating every learner with the considerable financial means to afford it. In 2024 the number of International School students in Thailand grew by 10%.

This study unearthed the disproportionate number of white leadership teams which are currently working in the six IB K-12 schools in Thailand. This area would benefit from further scrutiny, within Thailand and in different contexts. This supports findings by Gardner-McTaggart (2016) within IB schools in the European context. It would be interesting to see if this trend was also evident within other regions and international schools undertaking other Western curricular such as the British Key stages/IGCSE or the US Common Core. In addition, undertaken by Bunnell and Gardner-McTaggart (2024), also highlighted the racial disparity of leadership within international schools, mainly white, western men, which is also a trend that puts into sharp focus the efficacy of (DEIJ) Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice policies, that schools are required to develop and implement. These policies could highlight symbolic gestures without creating any meaningful change. In Bourdeusian terms, they may function as

a form of 'symbolic capital' whilst not distrupting any underlying structures of power. These policies could be examined within the context of Bourdieu's concepts.

The recent work undertaken in the field of international education and the IB with regards to cosmopolitan nationalism (Maxwell, et al, 2020, Bittencourt, & Samangiengo, 2024) highlights a nuanced approach to the intersection of cosmopolitanism and neoliberalism. These studies highlighted how cosmopolitan and nationalist tendencies can work in tandem and complement one another. Further research on how this concept manifests itself within different contexts would be enlightening. This may be particularly pertinent within the US state education sector, which has been an area of huge growth for the IB. This may also prove to be a pertinent direction of research given the recent change of US government and its conservative leanings.

Educators within the international school sector are more transient in nature and move between schools at a greater rate than those who remain in their home country's education systems (Bunnell, 2016). This mobility is partly due to the short- term nature of overseas teaching contracts, typically two to three years, leading to teachers to regularly seek better roles, compensation and packages in different schools. Mancuso, Roberts and White (2010) also highlighted that poor leadership within international schools often influences this turnover. I feel that there is a need to understand teacher mobility within the international circuit better.

Whilst the PYP and MYP programmes offer some pedagogical opportunities for genuine inquiry-based learning rooted in the context of individual schools, it would be interesting to study how these seeming freedoms translate to the classroom. With many international teachers and leaders hailing from the UK/US/Canada/Australia, it would be fair to think they would forgo their previous teaching experiences at home and create classroom experiences that are decolonised, culturally connected and contextually relevant. In contrast, a teacher leaving home for an overseas international school may be more likely to teach their existing content using the framework that the IB has developed. Therefore, research which compares and contrasts content taught within a Western curriculum, such as GCSEs, to that delivered in MYP 4/5 (same age groups) would be interesting.

In truth, a multitude of studies should be undertaken to understand the implications of the growing international school market fully, which is especially true for those within governments that have seen a growing influence of international schooling within their communities.

This research process has strengthened my belief that neoliberal educational policies and approaches have subverted the cosmopolitan ideals highlighted by international schools and the IB. The research undertaken most notably with the teachers has supported these ideas to

varying degrees. I believe that teachers need to be at the forefront of educational change, and they are often aware of the tensions and hypocrisies that are evident in their day-to-day working lives. However, I, like my other colleagues, could also find some evidence of hope and potential progress within the IB frameworks. The potential for a genuinely decolonised and contextual curriculum is already structurally in place, but structural change from the IB will also be needed to help implement it. The IB will need to be more proactive if they are to realise genuine pedagogical change within their member schools as many of them likely obtain IB authorisation for the capital and subsequent marketing potential. The direction of change could however prove elusive, as the organisation struggles with its positionality as the 'apex predator' of international education, whilst attempting to realise its mission and vision.

> The IB faces a crisis of its own and it is one of representation. Rather than an option impulse by its critical, multicultural and creative characteristics, the provision of the IB is a choice led by neo-liberal education constraints such as parent choice and competition between schools or the need to improve students' performance in national and international ranking. (Gardner-McTaggart et al, 2024, p.555)

It is likely that the current growth and expansion of international schools and the IB will continue to grow in the coming years. It is therefore important that this growth is examined to determine its effect on the educational landscape, both internationally and within state schooling.

Given the IB's prominent position globally, coupled with their cosmopolitan mission and vision, they should be at the forefront of these changes. Bourdieu recognised the school as the state's most potent tool, which underscores the critical importance of addressing this growth, which has largely happened with minimal intrusion from individual governments. Gardner-McTaggart et al,(2024) highlight that 'the real IB diamond in the rough lies in the educational potentialities it evokes in its users/stakeholders to challenge the status quo and imagine a more just and sustainable potentialities' (p. 56). Despite these potential benefits of the IB, its positioning as a global behemoth, the IB has created an international education monopoly, which has been turned into a form of *nobility*. According to James (2020), Bourdieu's approach and theories were skewed towards pessimism. I personally share this pessimism, but also feel that this tendency doesn't eliminate potential for change. However, for this change to occur, the IB would need to confront its contribution to reproducing inequalities and global hierarchies, something which is currently unlikely, given its position within the systems of privilege it aspires to challenge.

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Appendix

Questions utilised for the focus group meetings. These were used to stimulate further questioning and conversations.

Teachers Focus Group Research Questions

LR - Welcome, and many thanks for agreeing to be part of this focus group research. Your participation is much appreciated. The purpose of the study as highlighted in the consent forms is to understand the motivations, opinions and perspectives of you, as experienced international educators, and how this relates to wider trends within International Schooling. The study isn't intended to be a critique of Prem or the IB but to better understand the IB and International Schooling through your experiences both here and elsewhere.

Could you now in turn please introduce yourself and state how many years of teaching experience you have, how many of these are in international schools, what curriculums have you taught eg IB, UK, US Common core etc.?

What attracted you to pursuing a career in International Schools?

How were you recruited for your current position? Did you attend a recruitment fair? If yes, what was your experience?
Why did you choose this school? What are the benefits of this choice? What are the disadvantages?
What do you see as the major benefits for students attending a school such as this? How do you feel International Schooling has changed in the time you have taught.

What do you feel families are looking for when they choose a school such as this?

Do you feel International Schooling is more advantageous to students than state schooling?

How has this varied in the different countries you have taught in? How well do you think the IB meets its desired aims and objectives?
What are your views on service learning within the IB? (white saviour complex appropriate?)

Learner Profile?

What do you feel are the benefits of an IB education? What would you like to see change in the IB?

How do you see the future of International Schooling?

Parents Focus Groups

LR - Welcome, and many thanks for agreeing to be part of this focus group research. Your participation is much appreciated. The purpose of the study as highlighted in the consent forms is to understand the motivations, opinions and perspectives of you, as parents of students at an IB school, and how this relates to wider trends within International Schooling. The study isn't intended to be a promotion or critique of this school or the IB but to better understand the IB and Int Schooling through your experiences both here and elsewhere.

LR – Could you firstly introduce yourself and say a little about how long you have had children in the school, their ages and if they have attended other International Schools in the past?

LR – What do you feel are the strengths of International Schooling?

LR – What attracted you to this particular school?

LR – What do you feel are the benefits of an IB education? What are the downsides?

LR – What do you feel are the most important aspects of an effective International School?

LR – Do you feel an IB education will improve opportunities for your child in the future?

How would this be highlighted? (e.g., Wider choice of universities to apply for) LR – What changes (if any) have you experienced during your child's schooling? LR – What would constitute a successful schooling experience for your child?

LR – What elements of the IB framework do you most like? For example Personal Project/Service Learning

LR- Which elements do you feel are less effective?

Students Focus Groups

LR - Welcome, and many thanks for agreeing to be part of this focus group research. Your participation is much appreciated. The purpose of the study as highlighted in the consent forms is to understand the motivations, opinions and perspectives of you, as students at an IB school, and how this relates to wider trends within International Schooling. The study isn't intended to be a promotion or critique of this school or the IB but to better understand the IB and International Schooling through your experiences both here and elsewhere.

LR – Could you please introduce yourself, nationality, your grade, how long you have been at Prem and any other experiences at other International Schools.

LR – What have you enjoyed most about the IB? This could be either the MYP or DP Programme

LR – What are you plans after completed you IB DP studies? How has International Schooling/IB helped realise these plans?

LR – What are your main motivations for these choices?

LR – To what extent do you think the IB DP programme will aid meeting these ambitions?

LR – What would you change about the IB programmes? LR – How much input did you have in your school choice?

LR – Do you have any experience with different Secondary School curriculums?

LR – How will you approach your decisions post Gr12? For example, university choice, country, subject etc.

LR – What are your thoughts on Service Learning within the IB? Could this be improved?

LR – How was the transition between MYP and DP/CP programmes.