

**Educational Leadership in the International
Baccalaureate: critical reflections on modern elite
formation and social differentiation**

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Doctorate in Education (Ed D)

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Dedication

In loving memory of Angela Susan Puttock (née Cleghorn) 1946-2013.

An inspirational mother, grandmother, teacher, and leader.

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Abstract

Educational Leadership in the International Baccalaureate: critical reflections on modern elite formation and social differentiation.

This thesis has focussed on the International Baccalaureate's Diploma Programme (IBDP). This thesis examines leadership, and how leaders choose to implement non-mandatory curricula choices in schools and colleges. It also addresses whether leaders believe that these choices make differences to their students' life chances through social mobility. This thesis investigates what happens when leaders can no longer afford to offer such choices to their students: how this makes them 'feel', and what they have 'experienced', through the removal of a curriculum option for educationalists and learners alike. It also addresses how leaders 'feel' when their students maintain access to curricula choices that other post-16 students are unable to access. The thesis also considers the development and extension of 'a globally mobile transnational elite' group (Savage et al, 2015: 244), and the leaders in education who deliver and extend this position.

There have been eight phases to this research process, including four strands of data collection, with post-16 students, middle tier staff, HEI students, and Senior Leadership Teams in providing institutions, but the determining focus is with the SLTs interviews ($N=28$), conducted in 2014 and 2015. These were the individuals who had taken the decisions on the implementation of this non-mandatory curriculum area. The thesis analyzes some of the current areas of 'distinction' (Bourdieu, 1986) on independent schooling, and the research process demonstrates the significant gaps that are opening up between more traditional upper middle class groups in contrast with more adept transnational students and their parents. The thesis confirms that a global transnational elite exists inside the English education system, and that it uses the IBDP extensively to establish its separate cultural identity. It identifies ways of access to HEIs that are now a critical part of that cultural entity, as discussed by Savage et al (2015).

This thesis is therefore an indicator of new and emerging forms of social differentiation, and examines how this is created using the IBDP. At a time of decreasing social mobility for the mainstream population, the thesis explores whether education environments are able to influence either their students or the wider education policy agenda, in order to actively achieve social justice.

Key words: Cultural Capital, Education Leadership, Elites, Globalization, International Baccalaureate, Social Mobility.

Glossary

ASCL – Association of School and College Leaders

CAS – Creativity, Action, Service (element of IBDP)

DL – Distributed Leadership

E-Bacc – English Baccalaureate introduced in 2011

EPQ – Extended Project Qualification

GBCS – Great British Class Survey

GULL – Global University for Lifelong Learning

HEA – Higher Education Academy

HEI – Higher Education Institution

HL – Higher Level [of IBDP]

IBDP – International Baccalaureate's Diploma Programme

IBO – International Baccalaureate Organisation

IBSCA – IB Schools and Colleges Association

KPEL – Knowledge Production in Education Leadership

LAL – Lifelong Action Learning

MAT – Multi-Academy Trust

MOOC – Massive Open Online Courses

NAGTY – National Academy of Gifted and Talented Youth

OECD – Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

PISA – Programme for International Student Assessment

SES – Socio-Economic Status

SL – Standard Level [of IBDP]

SLT – Senior Leadership Teams

ToK – Theory of Knowledge (element of IBDP)

Introduction, aims and objectives

Using the methodology of participant observation (Bruyn, 1966) and a perspective of critical realism (Blaikie, 2007), this Ed D analyzes the schools and colleges that the author has previously worked in, as areas for research. This is in order to develop an understanding concerning the issues of cultural reproduction in education, and how these are applied to current issues of access to Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), and global mobility for elite groups. This thesis is written is self-reflectively, and is committed to providing a reflexive analysis in line with the requirements of a professional doctorate. It uses frames of reference, including globalization and social mobility that allow for a conceptual coherence and explanatory power to be developed in order to discuss the differing levels of post-16 curriculum opportunities that can leave groups with very different forms of educational provision and subsequent HEI access.

This thesis originally started out looking at educational inequality and access to the International Baccalaureate's Diploma Programme (IBDP). The author had taught GCE A-Level (at Level 3) in three schools and/or colleges in England that subsequently introduced the IBDP into their curricula. When the author left specialist post-16 teaching for university teaching it seemed reasonable that the Ed D undertaken would focus on student transition to undergraduate programmes. At the time, it was thought that this would involve an analysis of *which* type of Level 3 course the students *felt* potentially better prepared them for their Higher Education. So the first strand of this research process initially piloted, focussed on which students were accessing the IBDP, and *why* this was the case; in contrast to A-Levels and BTECs. The thesis concerned how A-Levels were being replaced as the 'gold standard' in post-16 education by the IBDP: in order to analyze whether or not that access is more prevalent in certain higher socio-economic groups.

This is now a very small sub-set of the data that was generated, but remains a small dimension of the overall research, and the notion of social and cultural

capital (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990) remains a major theme. A-Levels in state schools and colleges have not been replaced by the IBDP, and what has been witnessed by this research process has been a decline of the state schools and colleges delivering the IBDP, not the rapid increase that was being sustained at the end of the 2000s. This thesis therefore highlights the reasons why this qualification is held up by so many in the education world as ‘the platinum standard’ qualification (Oakes and Seldon, 2011), and illustrates its subsequent decline in the state sector, if not in the independent sector.

In 2009, when this doctoral research process first began, the debate over the standard of the IBDP (in stark contrast to A-Levels) looked like an important contemporary area of social and educational research as the Labour Government had announced that they would enable the Learning and Skills Council (LSC, 2007) to fund one state centre to deliver the IBDP in virtually every Local Authority (LA) in England and Wales, as part of their commitment to widen the curriculum post-16 (Blair, 2005). Prior to this commitment most of the IBDP provision was delivered largely by the Independent Sector which the author had also worked in. At this beginning point, there were three intended strands of data: student, middle tier staff, and students who had progressed onto Higher Education (HE). However, as the data from the pilot study was analyzed: the student voice (Strand 1) and middle-tier (Strand 2) voice existed, and an HE group (Strand 3), but the decision making voices from inside the centre’s appeared to be absent. This important group of senior leaders in both state and independent schools have subsequently, therefore, become Strand 4 of the data collection process for this thesis.

The original interest of this professional doctorate was clearly with the middle leaders (of which the author had been one), with focus groups and questionnaires centring on the emergence of Distributed Leadership (DL); and the conditions required for it to be successfully implemented as well as the potential problems that can arise with DL. The author maintains an interest in *how* leadership capacity can be built within schools and is very interested in the issues that the middle leaders in the centres delivering the IBDP faced. If the author had not

moved into a Higher Education Institution (HEI) to teach, these surely would be the issues that she would be facing as a director of IB or as a head of sixth form.

Strand 3 of the research process was focussed on *how* university students felt they had been prepared for their study in HE. The author had taught the A-Level students and on getting to university they were reporting back to her: that they were far more un-prepared, in comparison with their peers who had sat the IBDP (which matches research in this area Curtis et al, 2008). This semi-longitudinal strand ran for four years: as the student group took part in a focus group yearly with their final (fourth) focus group session being held six months after their graduation.

By autumn 2013, it was evident in the write-up of this thesis, that the decision-making voice was absent inside this doctoral research process. Hence, a fourth strand of data was started: interviewing a range of members of the Senior Leadership Teams (SLTs). These SLT members comprised: directors of the IB, directors of academic studies, and the heads of sixth, in addition to the principals and executive principals. This, therefore, helped to illuminate the understanding of the SLT position - at least in terms of the difficulties involved in the take-up of non-mandatory policy in education. There is usually very little policy choice for SLTs, and the risks involved in choosing to implement even more change - than the change that the SLTs are already responsible for implementing - can be immense. This realisation led to the decision to contact further SLTs in other schools and colleges too, as this Strand 4 was where the significance of the thesis lay, in outlining *how* and *why* SLTs manage to make these controversial decisions. And, critically, how these SLT members can hope learn from this non-mandatory policy implementation. To this end, the author contacted other centres and interviewed more people at this most senior level, to gain a thorough understanding of this position: 28 of these interviews were conducted in total, until the autumn of 2015. Table 1 shows a summary of this empirical research data from each of these four strands of data collected, with the numbers of these questionnaires, focus groups (with students, staff and the HEI group), and subsequently, these SLT interviews.

Table 1 - Empirical research data

School/College	Questionnaires to post-16 students	Focus Groups with post-16s	Middle Tier Focus Groups	HEI Focus Group	SLT Interviews
	Strand 1*	Strand 1*	Strand 2	Strand 3	Strand 4
Centre 1	IB1 = 8, IB2=9 AS =19, A2=22	IB1 & 2 = 7 AS & A2 = 12	N=7	N/A	N=4
Centre 2	IB1 = 8, IB2=7 AS =9, A2=12	N/A	N=4	N/A	N=3
Centre 3	IB1 = 7, IB2=8 AS =18, A2=20 *These two columns taken together form Strand 1	IB1 & 2 = 5 AS & A2 = 12 *These two columns taken together form Strand 1	N=8	Provided first 3 at HEI this became 11 from their student body which then reduced to 8 over time	N=4
Centre 4	These additional five schools and colleges were approached to see if their Senior Leadership Teams would take part in the final Strand 4 of the research process, by undertaking hour long semi-structured interviews that were subsequently inductively and theoretically coded.				N=3
Centre 5					N=4
Centre 6					N=3
Centre 7					N=4
Centre 8					N=3
Total No's	N=147 students 47= IB1/IB2 100= AS/A2	N=4 focus groups with 36 16-19 students	N=3 focus groups with 19 members of staff	N=4 focus groups repeated every year with 8 students	N=28 hour long interviews with members of SLTs.

This empirical research data, tabulated above, is at the heart of this analytical study. It summarizes the doctoral research process across the critical stakeholder groups engaged in the IBDP, namely: the students, the middle-tier staff and the senior leaders. It is this latter group, however, who have enacted the policy context that this curriculum exists within, inside their own schools and colleges.

The focus of this thesis is on the ways in which we – as professionals in education - can seek to understand and analyze curriculum change: in and for itself, and in its ‘profound’ contexts of social, cultural and ‘political’ environments. It is in these

curricular relationships with connected, though sometimes opaque (Savage et al, 2015), events and social forces that we can truly grasp the significance of actions. This doctoral research project has yielded insights into why and how social classes in late modernity (or post-industrial capitalist society) continue to form and re-form on education and learning opportunities and structures. This thesis seeks – ultimately – to understand how the curriculum is not neutral, but is value-laden, as Savage et al (2015) comments:

It can certainly be argued that in old educational curricula, certain kinds of canonical knowledge - of classical literary works, music, and so forth - was prized over popular culture: Shakespeare rather than Hello! Magazine to put it crudely. This permitted those schoolchildren brought up in homes in which families went to the theatre and talked about literature to gain advantage over those who did not. However, as soon as it became apparent that these educational curricula benefitted advantaged social groups - that is to say, as soon as cultural capital became recognized as such - educational reform movements campaigned to change the curriculum.

Savage et al, 2015: 51.

Savage et al (2015) argue that this should not be taken at face value, (as educated groups are more confident and comfortable in dealing with authority). The point that is being made in this thesis is that these changes to the 'mainstream' curriculum can be enacted – as they affect the majority. This is because the elite groups move on to 'colonise' other curriculum areas to their own advantage, and this is the very contemporary process that this thesis has recorded with reference to the IBDP:

'We would be failing to recognise the power of class in contemporary Britain if we did not understand how people's engagement with forms of knowledge and expertise is implicated in class itself'.

Savage et al, 2015: 16.

What has been witnessed, therefore, inside this doctoral research process is the mechanism by which elite groups are separating themselves (and their children) out from other groups; by enabling their access to the IBDP. This, in effect, can become part of the process of guaranteeing a place in an elite university.

Savage et al comments that: 'almost two thirds of those taking the 'royal road' – coming from a senior managerial or traditional professional home, and going to an independent school, then Oxford – reach the elite' (Savage et al, 2015: 245). However, one of the processes recorded inside this thesis, is no longer the case as many individuals from these senior managerial or traditional professional homes can no longer afford both school fees and large mortgages. Whereas the developing 'globally mobile transnational elite' (Savage et al, 2015: 243), that can afford independent education for their children are paying for something that is now significantly harder to come by in the state sector than at the start of this research, back in 2009. This thesis is at least focussed partially on how elite groups operate in society today, but even more specifically, how an elite sub-group within the wider elite group itself, access the IBDP. This is part of a wider discourse which addresses social and cultural reproduction and the issues of social and educational formation (Archer, 2013).

In summary, this doctoral research project considers *how* and *why* new social forms and forces are *emerging* and *defining* their interests via *curricular concerns*. It concerns *how* SLTs - in particular institutions and at specific conjunctions - in recent times, have responded as 'professionals' and leaders in defining new ways of learning, and organising both 'learning' and its 'outcomes'. At a more specific and concrete level: this thesis is on *how* decisions on non-mandatory curricula can change in response to perceived and actual changes in life-style and in class structuration and formation. At a particular level of specificity this thesis regards the emerging transnational global political elite, that now exists and *why* it seeks to differentiate itself - within a broader elite stratum through the placement and trajectory of its children. Conceptually, therefore, this thesis concerns leadership, cultural capital and social mobility: as these SLTs make and take the decisions that enable their students to access qualifications that have both kudos and status.

Contemporary background

Before this thesis proceeds any further, It must first be noted quite how much educational change the period 2009-2016 has witnessed. Michael Gove as

Secretary of State for Education (2010-14) enforced much political decision-making that left the Department for Education (DfE) under Nicky Morgan further centralized. These changes consolidated a period of centralization with the post-1988 education reforms and the extensive New Labour education reforms of the 1990s and 2000s. The changes that form the backdrop to this study - in particular - are:

- the ideological shift that asserts that education is a consumer good, and parents and students have power to exercise choice - for the purposes of this research - particularly at 16
- the shift in power base from the traditional LEA to individual education centres – called this because very different centres have been researched inside both state and independents sectors (these were not all schools, but colleges too)
- the shift in individual institutions' power bases from the SLT to the middle tier in terms of day-to-day leadership, but explicitly not in terms of overall operational and strategic leadership
- the discussion from senior staff on how much change is open to them, not just in terms of adoption of courses (which has in fact reduced, as Linear A-Levels make a return by 2017), but in terms of the decline of the Local Authorities (LAs)
- the creation of Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs) and the nature of branding and chain building that this has recently been brought into education, some of which is 'exogenous' privatization (Ball, 2007)
- ever-increasing globalization and the lack of 'limit' on nation-state boundaries, as witnessed particularly in the London post-2007/8 crash years, with heavy foreign investment in capital such as housing, and investment in their children through independent school fees, particularly in high status public schools (HMC, 2016)
- an increasing awareness of 'cultural class analysis' that has its roots in Bourdieu, but has played out through the national media with the creation of the Great British Class Survey (GBCS, 2013) and ensuing media attention, and BBC online survey (Savage et al, 2015).

The inquiry report by the think tank Compass 'Big Education' (March, 2015) has much on these recent political debates and changes to the education system, and their Inquiry came up with some very interesting ideas, in terms of how education may be transformed and developed on many different levels. This doctoral research process therefore explores the transformative functions of education: particularly in relation to socio-economic groups; and the ways in which 'small education' can support their middle class children with the 'glass floors' (Guardian, July 29th 2015) that it helps to create and maintain through the narrative of marketization and competitiveness within the system. (These so-called 'glass floors' help maintain the 'glass ceilings' for the working classes, see Table 2). The doctoral research process, therefore, seeks to analyze and illuminate at a 'granular' level the crucial role that education plays in this process,

but within a wider and profound context which is focussed on social and cultural reproduction.

This context involves understanding how ‘big education’ can help to grow talent throughout society, by taking a more collaborative approach that puts equity and children’s needs before market-based solutions to the problems that beset educational change. The potentially more market driven approach puts these competition elements of ‘small’ education (as we have particularly witnessed in the English system since the 1980s) with many of the factors that are discussed within this doctoral research process, such as marketisation and neo-liberalism. Table 2, below, demonstrates the key characteristics of the alternative approaches:

Table 2 - The key features of Small Education and Big Education
Compass Report, March 2015, p.7.

Small Education	Big Education
Narrow	Expansive

Competitive	Collaborative
Bureaucratic	Democratic
Restricted	Lifelong
Targets	Freedom
Centralised	Localised
Elitist	Equal
Selective	Comprehensive
Imposed	Organic
Individualistic	Generous
Closed	Open
Mechanical	Professional
Directed	Creative
Fragmented	Coherent
Remote	Accountable

The implications of this approach are wide-ranging, but the specific focus of this doctoral thesis is within the post-16 English education system across both state and independent sectors. The critical elements of a learning strategy and a philosophy that underpin both the descriptive and analytical content of the research project - and the overall intention - is to critically engage with the idea and reality of educational transformation. C. Wright Mills' (1959) notion of the 'vocabulary of the motives' has relevance, the big and small vocabularies which shape different discourses and provide an access point for investigation. As such, learning has to be for a social purpose; it has to concern the transformations of 'self'; it has to consider the need for identities which accept change and transformations in personal, community and social life. These are the conceptual and critical concerns which underlie the focus that is placed on curriculum innovation within the IBDP, and the significance of cultural and professional capital(s) (Bourdieu, 1986, and Hargreaves and Fullan, 2012) and the impact of SLTs on change within institutions - all of which have deep significance for social reproduction and differentiation (Savage et al, 2015), as is explored in the literature review below.

The issue with how this ‘small education’ summary listed in Table 2, helps to support middle class children, is the ‘game playing’ (Ball, 2003) that their parents involve themselves in so that their children are able to participate in a system that has such a narrow set of rules. Our current education system (in both state and independent sectors) is competitive (small, tight catchment areas or entrance criteria) and bureaucratic (home/school agreements, and tight drop off and pick up times), mechanical (choices have to be made very early on in children’s lives that can have significant long-term impact), and fragmented, as there are now a large number of different types of schools across the education system in England. Both Green (2013) and Archer (2013) have analyzed how state education systems have emerged uniquely in England in comparison to elsewhere. The derivations of these education systems means that they can mitigate against children whose parents are not in a position to behave in such ‘game-playing’ ways for a multitude of reasons (Tomlinson, 2008, Reay, 2013).

This meant that this Ed D process has evolved into analyzing curriculum development that involved active choice and controversial choice too: for example, ring-fencing hard fought-over resources for one area to another area. This notion of choice works within the conceptual framework described above, particularly on the notion of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1992). Potentially keeping such limited resources to a curriculum area that would give further advantage to groups who already had some (potentially significant) social advantage, seemed a very interesting risk to take. As the SLT voice could not be heard in the first three strands of data, and because of the sheer amount of policy change that has occurred in education policy particularly between 2010 and 2014, this research study has further evolved into *why* SLTs choose to take decisions on implementing non-mandatory policy. In the case of this research: by implementing the IBDP, and the range of consequences that this has had for the centres concerned. SLT members are themselves busily reconfiguring the internal structures inside their institutions, as the national picture outside changes so much, partly in response to the globalised world (Ball, 2012, Earley, 2013).

Aims of the research

The original aims of the research were not at the SLT level, but were at student level, firstly with the 16-19s studying A Levels and the IBDP (Strand 1), and with middle tier staff (Strand 2); and then with a sub-group who proceeded onto Higher Education (HE) with students who had studied the IBDP (Strand 3). Briefly, Strand 1 with the 16-19 students influenced the Strand 2 with the middle-tier staff in that the focus groups discussed the funding implications that were impacting on the student's class sizes and resources. Strand 3, was influenced by Strand 2, because the middle-tier staff were interested in the 'additional' benefits that the IBDP students gained 'over' the A Level students. The IBDP, as will be discussed, is a more integrated curriculum, with a wider subject range and volunteering (CAS) and philosophical (ToK) elements integrated into it, and the Strand 3 students in their own focus groups, reported certain potential 'advantages' over themselves, as A Level, or non-IBDP students.

The pressures on the SLTs and how they cope with the amount of change that continually permeates through the system subsequently became of much interest (later becoming Strand 4). Introducing the IBDP into schools and colleges (and in the case of many state schools and colleges – introducing and withdrawing the IBDP again) has been studied at a time of much political, economic and social change and mass migration. As a former post-16 teacher it was felt important to gain the views of this age range on their interest in, and access to, the IBDP. As an ex-middle leader, it felt important to get the views of these Heads of Department and Faculty about the implications of a changing curriculum, at a time when it was (at first) taking off in larger numbers than ever before. These two strands were important, as they were – essentially – a snapshot of students and their teachers, so the questions were debated from both viewpoints in questionnaires and focus groups. But when a group of my former students proceeded to the same university and met a group of ex-IBDP students there seemed to be some interesting data to be recorded on the differing ways in which they were prepared for HE study (Strand 3) which was felt to potentially compliment the other two strands.

The IBDP had been adopted into many schools and colleges, by their SLTs with a variety of motivations, and this study explores its adoption process into eight of

those centres. However, it became clear in the Strand 2 focus group data that it is the SLTs that have to make any change they choose to implement work, in order to make their centres continually viable inside this market economy of choice and parental expectation, not the middle tier staff, and hence the significance of Strand 4 slowly emerged. Especially, considering that as Centres were visited for data collection on the IBDP they were starting to withdraw from it rather than grow it and acknowledge what Oakes and Seldon referred to as the Platinum Standard (2011).

Thus the aims that cut across the range of state and independent institutions that this research was carried out in became to determine:

- *why* these SLTs make the decision to implement non-mandatory policy?
Given that they do not have to go down this route as they do with other changes to their curriculums: linear exams, new grading structures etc...
- *how, then*, do these SLTs deal with the successes or failures that this can bring?
Why do they think it is beneficial? Why was it not? What went wrong? Why do they regard this as a learning curve for their SLT?

When interviewing these SLT members, in Strand 4, of the data, it became clear that the longer term objectives of the study were to see how these SLTs develop the professional capital of each other, and the wider staff body, but also – increasingly – the students, that the SLT were responsible for leading. As part of this leadership development process, the SLT members had to continually identify what their particular school branding (or Unique Selling Points – USPs) were, and how they advertised their school within the competitive market economy that they operate in, largely by developing their Marketing Intelligence Framework (MIF). The need for each SLT to develop USPs for each school/college held true in each centre, despite all the centres development and levels of MIFs being very different from each other, and across state and independent sectors.

The focus of the research questions

Hence, over time the focus of the final Research Questions became:

- *how and why* new social forms and forces are emerging and defining their interests via curricular concerns (in this case, by utilising the IBDP)
- *why* SLTs in particular institutions at specific conjunctions in recent times have responded as ‘professionals’ and leaders in defining new ways of learning and organising learning and its ‘outcomes’
- *why* SLTs make and take these decisions, and the choices that are genuinely left open to them, in terms organising learning and its ‘outcomes’

Having considered *why* decisions on non-mandatory curricula can change in response to perceived and actual changes in life-style and in class structuration and formation, it was felt that further research would need to be done to consider explicitly *how* a transnational global political elite exists at a particular level of specificity - that seeks to differentiate itself within a broader upper middle class stratum through the placement and trajectory of its children by studying the IBDP. The thesis therefore is an exploration and explication of this cross-sectional and imbricated picture, by highlighting an example of *why* decisions are made in education that cut across issues of equity and egalitarian concerns, social and class differentiation, social mobility, cultural capital, social closure, social and cultural reproduction, and social , political and professional capital(s). This involves a set of levels of inter-related action, agency and structure, as a ‘structure of social action’, (Parsons, 1968).

As a post-16 teacher, having worked in both state and independent sectors, globalization had become a theme to the education environments that the author had worked in ‘selling’ the nature of the IBDP to a variety of students. Issues of justice, equity, and dispossession are perceived as integral, as international education appears pitched at those with resources, and those without such levels of resources are disenfranchised, and cannot access the same level of education. Nor the same extent of opportunities that they potentially provide, as Halgarten et al (2015) argue:

Without a broader social mission, international schools may face increasing criticism for super-serving elite young people, further concentrating various forms of capital, and reinforcing national and global inequalities and social mobility.

Halgarten et al, 2015: 12.

Thus, educational transformation in its broader context is very important, as has been commented on by Ball (2012), with trends in globalization having resulted in neo-conservatism embedding itself inside the English education system. Zuber-Skerritt's and Teare's (2013) arguments on the opportunities of globalization making education more available and the opportunities for Lifelong Action Learning are part of this context, with international education taking a variety of forms and not being available just for elite groups but also for disadvantaged communities at the other end of the spectrum. Apple's (1979, 1996, and 2013) on-going observations are relevant to the ownership of education - whose culture, and whose opportunities is the education system being developed for? Similarly, Whitty's (2001) writings on inequality inside the English education system and how it is played out within a highly stratified society also come into play.

The answers found to these research questions, have been achieved by developing four strands of data collection of which the fourth strand involving analyzing 28 SLT interviews is considered to be the most revealing and significant. The research question(s) were first developed with a view to collecting data from 16-19 students; middle leaders; and HE students; but over time it was realized that the positioning of the SLTs in schools and colleges was more significant. Hence a fourth strand of data was collected from these SLTs and an appropriate methodology was sought for analyzing these data. Mayring (2000) was chosen for the analysis of this strand of data because it is qualitative but allows mixed approaches; it is inductive so allows an exploration of events, but is also deductive in that it has enabled the use of a conceptual framework. Thus, these In Vivo coding exercises, using the Mayring model were carried out on the 28 hour or so long interviews conducted with the SLT members. The results of this coding exercise (manually completed by hand not using nvivo software, as the number of interviews grew over time) were then contrasted with the questionnaire data, the focus group data, and semi-longitudinal undergraduate group data in a traditional mixed methods approach, as is discussed in the findings within Chapter 3.

The theoretical framework for this thesis comes from three key sources. Bourdieu (1986), Beck (2009) and Teare (2013) supplied the notions and concepts needed to analyze social frameworks and cultural reproduction; Ball (2002), Shor (1980; 1986) and Gunter (2001; 2012), enabled me to apply critical insights into leadership and curriculum change; and Neitzel and Welzer (2012), and Mayring (2000) supplied an insightful and ultimately usable methodological approach to the research and provided frameworks for analyzing the data.

The reflexive element: why the IBDP?

One of the author's hardest roles in post-16 teaching was writing UCAS references for students who were believed to be selling themselves short, especially when their parents were happy with their decisions. It seemed as though a chasm was opening up in students' opportunities: those who had access to good parental advice, contacts and resources, versus those who had advice from staff at school that was not reinforced through parental experience or expectation. Post-16 student opportunities appeared to be dividing into two camps: one side with a lack of social mobility versus an almost hyper-mobility for those who came from affluent, professionally educated backgrounds. This hyper-mobility is epitomised by the students who can access the IBDP, although in this research it is argued that this mobility affects what has been called the upper-middle class (Goldthorpe and Lockwood, 1968), but what Savage et al (2015) terms the 'elite' in the Great British Class Survey (GBCS).

Notions of differentiation and social class re-formation are important, as defined by Savage et al (2015) in the literature review below, which frame such notions as 'hyper-mobility'. The issue with SLTs and the IBDP qualification is whether or not they *believe* it gives their students access to other 'additional factors', such as: 'better' university access, 'higher' employment opportunities, and keeping a 'wider' range of options open to them than other qualifications that are on offer do not. And, as a consequence, are these students more 'privileged'? Do they have increased social, cultural and professional capitals? Does this, then, give them

greater social mobility? Does it enable them to become more easily transnational, by giving them a ready-developed sense of global society which is available to them?

These are not easy factors to ascertain, particularly as this is not a long-term research project on the students *per se* (although Strand 3, as a small semi-longitudinal research phase on 8 HEI students, did yield some interesting qualitative data that will be returned to in the findings in Chapter 3). Within the research project outlined in this thesis it is more a question of the views of the SLT members. Do they believe that they are advantaging social groups by buying into this curricular choice? And how does that fit with the other notions of social closure (Parkin, 1971) and social mobility (Milburn, 2009)? These are the key themes in the research strategy. As one head master's blog post recently commented:

'Last year 87 pupils in X's upper sixth achieved three or more grade As at A-Level...Grade inflation is rampant, year on year. Top universities are now looking back at AS module and GCSE results to distinguish between the masses of straight A candidates...Are three traditional, discrete old school subjects really appropriate for our children's future? ... Our children's world will be a world in which the President of the USA will probably have Spanish as a first language, where Brazil, India and Russia will be challenging China for economic supremacy and where empathetic global co-operation will be prerequisites for any nation's success...The government knows A-Levels are an anachronism and is quite rightly changing what they are, so let's keep a wary eye on what happens. For the moment, we will continue to provide A-Levels...But the default position of a typical X pupil should, increasingly, be the IB. The world has changed.'

(Bromsgrove School, 2016).

This is clearly a personal opinion from this particular head master, but the IBDP is a broader qualification, where students are expected to continue studying a range of subjects through to 18, rather than concentrate on the 3 or 4 combinations as A-Levels do. The IBO state that:

'Through the DP, schools are able to develop students who:

- have excellent breadth and depth of knowledge
- flourish physically, intellectually, emotionally and ethically
- study at least two languages
- excel in traditional academic subjects
- explore the nature of knowledge through the programme's unique theory of knowledge course'.

(IBO, 2016).

The current A-Level curriculum usually means that 3 or 4 subjects are chosen, and centres may choose to put some sport or voluntary activity with this subject range. A-Levels are currently in the process of reverting back to a linear structure (as they were when the author taught them in the 1990s) from the modular range that they have been since the introduction of Curriculum 2000. The appeal for many centres (as will be discussed in the findings in Chapter 3) of the IBDP is that it has not changed since it was first offered in 1968, with three core elements and six subjects groups, so that:

‘Over the course of the two-year IB Diploma Programme, students study six subjects chosen from the six subject groups, complete an extended essay, follow a theory of knowledge (TOK) course, and participate in creativity, action, service (CAS).

(IBO, 2016).

It is this breadth of available subjects combined with the expectation of extra-curricular activities, and amount of taught lesson time (no ‘free’ periods, an extended day) that gives the IBDP its reputation of rigour. In addition, it is not possible to ‘just become’ an IBO school. The application process involves vetting, sending teachers on IBO training courses, putting in place ‘the core’ in all three areas. Enough staff needs to be trained to deliver the IBDP to enable the student body to have a sufficient curriculum choice available to them, in each of the six subject groups. It is what numerous senior staff that have been interviewed for this research process repeatedly referred to as ‘resource intensive’.

The results for the IBDP then range from 24 (for the standard level (SL) diploma to 45 points for a higher level (HL) maximum score across the board. Universities like Oxford and LSE often ask students to gain at least 7, 6, 6 in their three Higher Level IB DP scores (where a 7 is the maximum available mark), so a total score of 43 points or more can be required (LSE, 2017). A full 45 point score is deemed equivalent to four and a half A-Levels according to The Russell Group think tank (russellgroup.ac.uk). Whereas the vast majority of state schools offer students four AS choices in lower sixth and just three A2s in the upper sixth (ASCL, 2016). But the debate is more important than that, as the IBDP keeps open a full range of subject choices to 18, whereas state schools often are allowing students to take the subjects that their students are interested in studying, rather than

'facilitating' subjects as defined by The Russell Group, that genuinely keep open a range of subject choices at degree level, and maintain social mobility opportunities later on in life, as students have an already well-developed knowledge of maths, English, arts, sciences, and social sciences.

The theoretical approach using Bourdieu's analysis on the cultural reproduction of education (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990), and Beck's (1997) and Giddens' (1991) writings of personal reflexivity are particularly appropriate, as this method of data analysis marries aptly with the use of literature in these arenas. The SLT members may not have been sociologists understanding overtly that they were trying to redress the failures of 'small education' (Table 2: above) by attempting to 'buck the trend' of cultural reproduction and give students from different socio-economic groups the opportunity to study an elite qualification, but that is what the data shows that they were trying to implement: for they '*felt*' that it was the *right thing* to do for their student body. Other researchers have used the 'felt' experience as a tool in social science, including Williams (1981) in cultural studies, and Mayring and Glaser-Ziduka (2003) using 'affective' factors in classroom learning, which is the origin of the methodological approach for analyzing the interview data in this research process.

There is a link between this 'felt' experience and the 'standpoint' developed by Smith (2005). Smith, a Feminist, developed a constructivist method for analyzing institutional ethnography (returned to in the methodology chapter below), which is useful: as it acknowledges not only the importance of the micro positions that individuals hold, but also how whole systems reflect dominant positions. Smith's 'concept of relations of ruling...illustrate[s] that the multidimensionality of the concept of institutional ethnography is a function of its incorporation of the more individualistic concept of standpoint and the more collectivistic concept of ruling relations' (Appelrouth and Desfor Edles, 2007: 381).

The SLT interviewees hold a particular 'standpoint' (as of course does this researcher), but also the structures of schools and colleges constrain the SLT actions, and it is noticeable that having visited eight schools and colleges in this research process, the researcher is drawing on observations made during these

visits, as well as the author's own previous careers in these schools and colleges. Bruyn (1966) developed a convincing argument for the use of participant observation to develop rigorous social scientific research:

In my observations of social processes I realized that what I was studying was not human behaviour so much as the inner collective of people who were deeply involved personally in changing their community and in being changed by it....The evidence of this life generally appeared in equivocal terms not very conducive to the methods of a scientist aiming for prediction, precision, and control...And yet I realized that the social scientist *must* apprehend the original meanings of these terms with all their subtleties, for they were clearly an essential part of what was determining the course of social action.

Bruyn, 1966: Preface X, italics in original.

In this way, this research process must acknowledge the impact and the active role that the researcher herself has played in constructing the meaning and actions (Temple and Young, 2004). Bruyn (1966) is one of many social researchers who acknowledge their own position in their work. It is recognised in current understandings of research that there is no need for the researcher to be invisible (Holliday, 2007). Both Spicer (2004) and Saldana (2013) recommend acknowledging the researchers impact on the research process because of the subjective epistemological perspective associated with phenomenological paradigms. This reflexive tool has been adopted throughout, and aims to increase the validity of the research undertaken and reported.

The theoretical basis of the reflexive nature of this professional doctorate is an important dimension of this overall research strategy. The concepts of reflexivity and how it is interpreted are significant strands in the research process undertaken. Thus from this reflexive position, analyzing the IBDP in some form seemed the best place to start the research. The following diagram, Figure 1, explains each of these research phases, with a commentary on each stage, on the pages below:

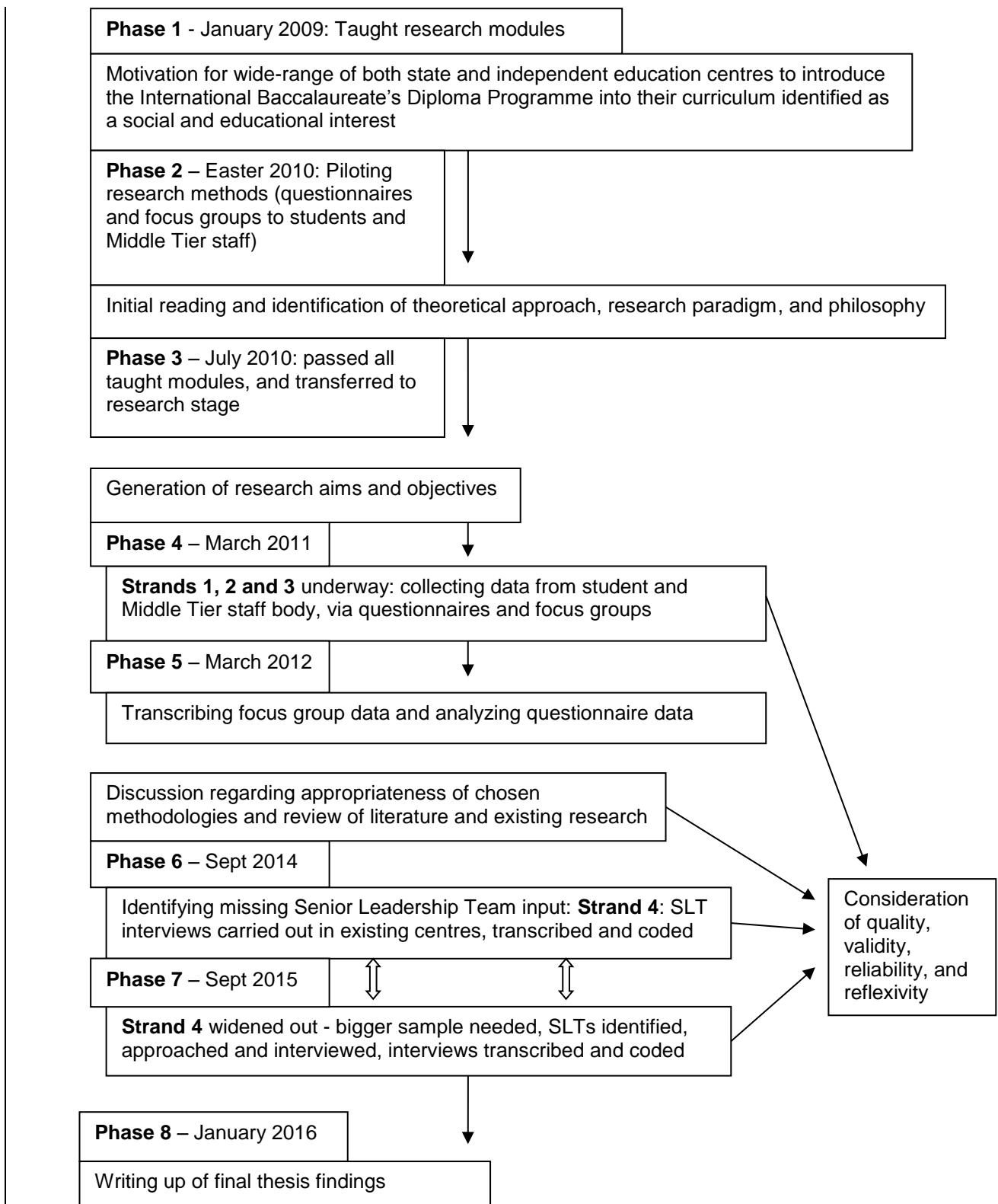


Figure 1 - Ed D Research Process, adapted from Bhatt (2004)

Phase 1 identified the motivation for the wide-range of both state and independent schools and colleges that introduced the International Baccalaureate's Diploma Programme into their curriculum, as a social issue of considerable educational interest and significance. This was thought to be relevant not just to the higher social groups who have access to the IBDP, but to wider society through the discussions of social mobility, that had played out across education and the media with the publication of Milburn's report in 2009. This specific area of academic interest was identified as a result of having taught in three places that later went on and introduced the IBDP. Initial research assessed up-to-date knowledge of the IBDP and where the wider research community's interests were in the qualification.

Phase 2 involved initial reading and identification of the theoretical approach, research paradigm and philosophy, and the generation of research aims and objectives. At this stage, the research was focussed down to a manageable research problem that was a spin-off from an HEA funded research project that the author had been involved with. Extensive research of available methodologies was undertaken to identify the most suitable approaches which would allow me to gain knowledge from those who experience it via the focus groups. Initially formed research objectives (particularly the collection of data on socio-economic status (SES) data) were adapted after the pilot had taken place. Primary research identified 16-19 students being unwilling or unable to identify parental occupation accurately, so the focus of research shifted to school/college adoption of the IBDP as a centre (at this stage just from the viewpoint of the middle tier of staff) and away from the individual reasons for take-up.

Phase 3 involved the preparation and assessments for all three of the taught modules of the Ed D programme which the author passed, and then the subsequent transfer to the research stage.

Phase 4 revised the focus for the collection of the research (for what became Strands 1, 2 and 3), and then organised appointments for access to the two groups of students: IB and A-Level cohorts, in the first three centres. It first went through institutional approval from the head or principal. Once this had been

received, the head of social sciences and IB programme directors were contacted, explaining the research topic and required student and staff access. The questionnaires and focus groups were then carried out whilst the researcher was careful to adhere to the University of Derby's ethical processes, as outlined in Chapter 2 below.

Phase 5 comprised the transcribing of the focus group data, and analyzing the questionnaire responses. Although the focus groups provided some very interesting 'ethnographic vignettes' (Savage et al, 2015:17) it was at this point that it was realized that the questionnaires and the focus groups really needed to have a fourth strand of interviews of the Senior Leadership Teams in these schools/colleges, in order to better understand and appreciate their positioning.

Phase 6 involved contacting the SLT members and asking for interview permission, dates and times. These interviews were conducted, transcribed and then coded, but two matters were of concern. First, the two state centres in the sample had both removed the IBDP, so the SLT interviews in the state centres had become 'why was it removed' (and what can we learn from that). Second, depending on how the data from the centres was reported they remained potentially identifiable as such a small sample. Through the subsequent thorough anonymisation of the data sets and the introduction of other centres in the following strands, this risk was substantially reduced.

Mayring's (2000) method was chosen to analyze this qualitative data. This coding method has its origins in the German social science community (Flick, 2009), so it is a less common method of analysis in the English and American research worlds. There are several advantages of utilising this Mayring method: this included its ability to qualitatively analyze the relatively large amounts of data that the transcriptions of the 28 SLT interviews had generated, and being able to grapple with how the leadership group *feel* about the decisions that they have taken. Although whenever working with anything new, it obviously takes time to absorb, understand, and apply the method. Transcribing all the data by hand (instead of sending out to a transcription service) had the benefit of the author knowing the detail of the interviews, although it was very time consuming.

During Phases 4 to 7, an on-going consideration was given to the issues of quality, reliability, validity, and reflexivity, in order to ensure transparency, and justification of the chosen research methods, as Figure 1 above demonstrates (adapted from Bhatt, 2004). This was so that the knowledge generated by the processes that the research was subjected to, was credible and of a high standard. Every stage of the research process was subject to a reflective process (Giddens, 1990, 1991) which informed and help shape the quality of the analysis that was generated. The key areas of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, were also considered throughout this process, as are evidenced in Table 7 below, in the methodology chapter, as adapted from Lincoln and Guba (2005) on page 84.

Phase 7 involved contacting some more schools/colleges to generate a wider purposive sample, in particular the author was looking for state centres that had managed to maintain their delivery of the IBDP, and contact with further independent schools that delivered the programme, so that the purposive sample involved was relatively even. This involved a total of 28 interviews: 13 from the independent sector, and 15 from the state sector; this was largely because state school/colleges tend to have larger SLTs (as they are usually bigger in terms of both staff and student numbers).

Phase 8 writing up of the final thesis findings took place towards the end of the process. This phase consisted of regular interaction between the findings and the literature review. It also highlighted the contribution to knowledge, unresolved areas, and implications for future research contained in the thesis including the matter of what was learned both empirically and in respect of the data and with regard to the ‘big issues’ outlined in the introduction to the thesis itself. These phases are returned to, and expanded on in detail below in the methodology, following the literature review in the next chapter.

Chapter 1 – Literature Review: leading change

1.1 Introduction

The purpose of this literature review chapter is to outline the foundations for the research area, which involves the overlap of the academic disciplines surrounding education leadership. This is namely the current economic context and the recent political debate on education policy - particularly with regard to the ideologies of neo-liberalism versus concepts of social justice. Specifically, this approach addresses the educational contexts of inequality, political sociology, the links into Life-Long Learning (LLL), and differing Capitals (Bourdieu, 1986) that impact on our capacity for such LLL: these include social, economic, material and cultural, and finally - but importantly, in relation to teacher identity - professional capital(s). Professional capital (Hargreaves and Fullan, 2012) is also being developed, as this thesis will go on to show, by students and/or their parents, who have a developing (or well developed) understanding of the competitive nature of the market place that they find themselves in, within the globalised society in which we live.

The overall research questions that guided the approach to explaining these particular contexts were to do with *how* SLTs conceptualise and manage curriculum innovation and seek to both *create* and *understand* the meanings of this. The active research subjects (students, middle tier staff and their leaders) become, then, the prism through which these contexts are explored. The research process undertaken is essentially eliciting a range of meanings and raising critical and questioning insights concerning social and cultural matters. This process took place reflexively via an interrogation of the SLTs' perceptions, experiences, and 'feelings' in considering their reasons and motivations for adopting non-mandatory curricula change (Dorey, 2014).

The world of education leadership is a rapidly changing one: the demands from national governments upon schools, colleges and other education organizations to 'raise standards' is ever present. National governments though, feel the pressure from the supra-national Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)

compiling league tables, such as the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) data. Talk of school leadership has become highly significant in the context of current education policy developments. Discourses in England, as in many parts of the world, have centred on leadership (Barber, 2007) and the adoption of the International Baccalaureate has been a particular feature of this (Crossley, 2014).

The IBO itself makes a feature now of the leadership capital that can be gained by being involved with its training and development programme; and it can be seen that this adds to staff's professional capital (IBO, 2015). Furthermore, when a student takes the IBDP rather than A-Levels, (even when some of these A-Levels are sat in a Cambridge Pre U context, for the detail of which see Appendix 14) the students themselves are exhibiting 'choices' away from the norm for their age range. They are, in effect, starting their own professional capital and displaying leadership skills that they learn to develop and signify as they move through their sixth form studies. As Khan (2011) has commented, this exercising of 'choices' is something that all adds to teenage elite groups' sense of 'ease', as their leadership skills are already – relatively – honed.

The development of leadership inside England's educational institutions, and the leaders' place in bringing in 'change' and 'improvement' in education, is well recognised and documented (see Gunter, 2012, and Bush and Glover, 2012). School leaders now encompass a wider range of roles in educational centres; as there has been an expansion in both the numbers of people now involved and the variety of roles that they undertake. This is particularly true of the changes in educational markets that have been created since the 1988 Education Reform Act, but arguably intensified from 1997, when at least one Act of legislation on education was passed every year until 2010, as the author has written about elsewhere (Outhwaite, 2011). This created another layer that has been added to yet again with the significant educational changes that have been witnessed between 2010 and 2014, whilst this research process has been underway as noted above. As Davies (1990), noted The 1998 Education Reform Act introduced 'a new era' for educational reform and the processes of change, de-

construction and re-construction of the forms of schooling has been constant, and contested, ever since.

1.2 The context: why the IBDP?

The International Baccalaureate Organisation (IBO) organize what is an ever-growing educational experiment: 1.25 million students are IB-educated yearly, with a planned 10% growth target for the next five years (IBO, 2014). In terms of English education policy in the last decade, there are a number of factors that have led to interest in the IB's Diploma Programme for 16-19s:

- increasing worry considering standards of A-levels and other Level-3 qualifications
- pressure of entry into Russell Group universities
- institutional funding made available by the last Labour Government
- the favourable UCAS tariff allocated to the IB (making it worth the equivalent of four and a half A-Levels)
- increasing parental power and student choice in the post-16 sector, which tie into the wider marketization strategies.

The IBDP appears on an ever-growing trajectory, despite both the lack of new state school/college take-up since 2010, and the marked decline in delivery from the state centres that took up the qualification in the 2000s. Even more significantly in an English context, over 135 centres offer the IBDP (IBO, 2014), and some now offer only the Diploma (Sevenoaks, Kent, as an example) having axed A-Levels and other forms of Level 3 study (such as BTECs), demonstrating huge confidence in an internationally-recognized, externally-validated examination system, and little confidence in the national system that remains in place for the majority. Such high levels of confidence in the IBDP means that more than a centre a day request to become part of the IB 'family' internationally (IBO, 2014).

An apparent crisis of A-Level qualifications took place between 2002 and 2014. Successive secretaries of state for education attempted to deal with this in a number of ways. Most recently, these have included 'raising standards' by

including the curriculum changes that started from September 2015, including: the (re)introduction of numerical, 9-1 grading (as opposed to alphabetical, A*-G) grading for public examinations, the reduction in opportunities to re-sit, the (re)introduction of linear exams for A-Level, and the return to a more traditional curricula content, and substantial reduction in coursework percentages (DfE, 2016). The independent sector have voted with their feet through these crises, by many centres opting instead for the consistency and the international recognition of the IB's Diploma Programme as opposed to A-Levels, and indeed, have adopted the same approach for GCSEs: by choosing international GCSEs (iGCSEs) or the Middle Years Baccalaureate programme being adopted in place.

In addition, as in one of the independent schools in this doctoral research process, where A-Levels do remain, they are often buffeted by the Cambridge Pre-U qualification, and an additional over-arching certificate. In the case of this particular centre this certificate comprised many extra-curricular activities: art, drama, film, sport, music, and an extended 4,000 word theoretical essay. The essay is similar to the Theory of Knowledge (ToK) element of the IBDP, and students are usually taught in joint classes (with the IBDP) for this element. This adds an additional dimension to the A-Level students - that is similar to the IB DP students - so they are not 'missing out' on the perceived strengths of the IB's Diploma Programme. By studying for a combination of Pre U courses with selected A-Levels (that are not as yet available as Pre U's), the wider curriculum framework has been strengthened to include these other factors as an over-arching certificate, this is particularly noticeable in institutions where as part of their 'package' to students and parents these schools and colleges are selling prestigious qualifications, and advertising their excellent access to Russell Group universities and beyond, as is discussed in Chapter 3's findings.

In the centres that have been visited for this research process where the IBDP is on offer, the expansive curriculum that the IBO discuss in their publicity materials (IBO, 2016) has been very evident: wider options for students to keep a full range of academic subjects open, and matching wide arts, sports, drama, music and volunteering opportunities. Whilst in state centres where the IBDP was introduced but subsequently withdrawn, the schools appear to have returned to

a minimal curriculum design that involves A-Levels or BTECs, and some 'Wednesday afternoon' sport or voluntary activity, with a mention of the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ). The differences between these curriculum offerings are one of the items under scrutiny in this research process. The differences are not always as clear cut as state sector versus independent sector: but here it has been evident (as is discussed in 4.6) that it is less of a leap for the independent schools to deliver the IBDP. For the state schools it is more resource intensive, and therefore, more expensive, whereas for the independent schools they already have a longer school day; more sporting activity; wider use of the Arts; combined with organisational use of volunteering like the Combined Cadet Force (CCF). It is this combination of curriculum which creates greater cultural capital (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990).

In recent years, the notion of cultural capital has been reinforced by additional outside ratings from publications such as The Good Schools Guide, or The Tatler Guide to State Education, for those centres that are on the radar of the middle-class parents, with their drive for usage of state sector provision as opposed to the independent sector, which happens for a multitude of reasons. Interestingly, the use of independent education nationally fell during the start of this research process and then over the last few years has started to climb again, so that it is now at an all-time high (HMC, 2015), despite dealing with less than a quarter of a million children, but it is currently educating 9% of the 16-19 age group under investigation, largely as it provides a well trodden route through to top universities (Savage et al, 2015).

1.3 Understanding education policy

In view of this rapid growth in the IB, and also the significant changes that have occurred in the education sector in England so far this decade, the role of non-mandatory policy change is clearly of interest in social policy terms. Particularly considering how English education policy has changed in the last decade or so, and how momentous that change may be. The focus of analysis requires a multi-disciplinary approach from social policy to political sociology through comparative education and from an historical to a sociological perspective inside education

studies. There are a range of relevant concepts under discussion: emotional, social, and cultural capital; marketization; social reproduction; risk society; widening participation; and how globalization affects our knowledge economy, with particular reference to the creation of a transnational elite class. These concepts are contextualized below, but they appear to be wide-ranging and random unless they are examined under the lens of leadership development and change, as this is the crucial unique selling point, for how schools are led, and the decisions that are taken by school and college leaders are clearly critical. We currently face a crisis in educational leadership, where few headship vacancies are filled on first advert (Boffey, 2014), and this thesis examines the context in which this situation plays out.

There are a range of authors whose seminal works can be addressed as guiding frameworks for this professional doctorate. One such contributor is Tawney (1920), who was an early analyst and critic of acquisitiveness and inequality. His family links with the Beveridge (who wrote the 'Five III's Report' that in effect led to the formalized nature of the Welfare State in the 1940s) may have helped in shaping the nature of the Welfare State when it was established. Certainly his perceptive critique of the nature and causes of inequality helped shape thinking on this issue for generations. This thinking impacted on Halsey (1965) whose early research really established the concept of class in the sociology of education along with the works of Simon (also in 1965) who helped establish the Forum journal and secure the case for the national policy on comprehensive education. Goldthorpe's work on class schema and social mobility, and his academic disagreements with the work of Bourdieu, whose concepts such as cultural capital and 'habitus' Goldthorpe argues are ill-informed, are significant both empirically and theoretically (2007), and have helped to shape this thesis in terms of the scope and reach of the research it embodies.

Bernstein (1971) made a significant contribution to this debate through his research on restricted and elaborated codes, and the impact that this research still has on those he taught at Essex, such as Young and the arguments of 'knowledge turn' - where the curriculum returns to being more content heavy, rather than a skills based approach (Husbands, 2015). The curriculum of the

IBDP clearly has a part to play, as it is content-heavy and needs no ‘about-turn’, as it has not veered from this style of curriculum and pedagogy since it was established in the 1960s, unlike A-Levels that have been subjected to differing amounts of government-inspired change.

Similarly Parkin’s (1971) research on ‘social closure’ is very important as the term is now used without further definition inside the sociology of education. As the entrenchment of middle class positioning occurs, there is a closing down of the access to some of these routes for students from alternative backgrounds, and as society has become more complex there are fewer opportunities for social mobility for some class groups. For example, previously BTECs led on to HEI entry, but now tend to do so less (Smith and White, 2015). Beck’s concept of ‘Risk’ is a more contemporary discussion of Parkin’s idea, as Beck shows how risk is everywhere in today’s global society with its interconnectedness (Beck, 2009). The implications of this concept of Risk for this thesis is that a group (inside the wider elite group) understand that by studying the IBDP and its six subject groups: maintaining their foreign languages, sciences, maths, English, humanities and social sciences, rather than 3 or 4 A-Levels or Pre U’s, means that their elite sub-group stay a step ahead of their wider elite group. This potentially means that this elite sub-group are more likely to access US universities and Russell Group universities than the remainder of their group, and it keeps them a step ahead of their wider elite group.

Ball describes how hard middle class families strive to achieve what he describes as ‘narrative coherence’ (Ball, 2003: 173) in order for their children’s families to resemble their own, where there is the enormity of the risk that children will not achieve as much as their parents have - let alone the more that is generationally expected – so this narrative coherence remains an over-riding theme of this thesis. It should be noted that Ball uses a Foucauldian theoretical framework that has been discounted here because Bourdieu’s twin concepts of cultural capital and social reproduction inside education seem to fit the nature of the IBDP, as a form of symbolic “goods” (Swartz, 1997:42). However, the influences on Ball from Foucault, and the influences of Ball’s writings on this doctoral work particularly the concept of power and knowledge, and how education is used as

a form of societal control among other societal institutions, must be accounted for. In particular, Foucault's concept of 'other' (1991) is useful, as it accounts for the separate nature of some social groupings (Ball, 2013).

Arguably, at the level of specificity, the analysis presented concerns the changing processes within an elite group, and how they have a significant sense of 'other' in that they are apart from the mainstream education processes, and taking different qualifications, in the form of the IBDP. This experience can be seen to reinforce this sense of separateness; they could be said to inhabit a different discourse of learning (Ball et al, 2000). For Foucault power is everywhere, so in this sense it is neither an agency nor a structure (Foucault, 1998:63), but knowledge/power, as an integrated concept. How this might lead to different outcomes, different experiences and perceptions by learners, teachers and parents is part of the narrative of this thesis.

Ball's (2002, 2003, 2006, and 2007) middle class analysis from the last decade, although extensive, tends to treat the middle classes as one relatively homogenous group. In fact the distinctions inside those middle class groups are often based on their use of schooling and curriculum choice. In this doctoral research process one of the state centres visited had approximately one third of its entry at aged 16 from the independent sector: the decisions that are made intra-class are often more signifiers of social grouping than their inter-class differences. In some geographical areas there is little difference in education between the local state and independent provision. If students can pursue the same curriculum choices, have a peer group that increases their social capital, and an educational establishment that adds to their cultural and economic capital, why would they need to study elsewhere? And the Tatler State Schools Guide bizarrely reinforces this phenomenon. But if that local state choice does not have the same curriculum offering, and parents and students are conscious of what may be 'better' in a different educational context, then by choosing something else – either in another part of the state sector or the independent sector – is an act of choice and is often distinctive of a particular class group or sub-group. It is the workings of this latter sub-group, an internationally differentiated elite, that

is of interest, and where the ‘cultural-class analysis’ of Savage et al (2015) is also critical.

Archer’s writings (2013) on the social origins of educational systems are pertinent here. She states that:

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

Archer, 2013: 89

This relates precisely to the space in the education system where traditional middle class group interests (or as Savage et al, 2015 describes, elite group interests) can be seen to be intersecting with a globally mobile group, in order to access a curriculum that potentially confers social advantage, and access to HEIs through the positional good of the IBDP.

Bunnell (2011) argues that it is access to the IBDP that gives it its potential as a positional good:

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

Bunnell, 2011: 167.

So intrinsic costs, such as school fees, become a value significantly worth paying; especially, by elite groups, for the access that the IBDP gives to social groups and educational institutions, for example, for HEI access. Research conducted by Doherty et al (2009) in Australia showed that the choices that IBDP students take are often access to HE and global mobility opportunities, even if they originally came from the native community, or if they were not wealthy in comparison to their peers. The greater opportunities for scholarships at universities abroad come in to play, through having access to routes into other countries’ HEIs, that are unavailable (at a similar level of cost) within their own nation state. This is echoed in the more recent research on university significance, in ‘the tale of two campuses’ from the GBCS by Savage et al (2015:

219). This is similar to the study by Ball et al, 2002, in terms of analyzing the ‘cognitive structures’ of choice of HE.

Groups of students have become mobile either because their parents are transnational for work, or because their parents have deliberately become geographically mobile for better opportunities for their children’s education, as detailed by Doherty et al, 2009. Such groups experience a need for specialisation or special treatment and for ‘differentiation’ from competing groups, as Archer comments:

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

Archer, 2013: 255.

The ‘deficiencies’ to which Archer refers regarding elite groups accessing education, are based on the industrial model of schooling (Marshak, 2003): schooling on a mass scale does not suit their viewpoint or expectations. It is not so much that it does not suit their aims and aspirations this is not explicitly concerning the actual grades that enable access to HEI environments. It is, as Bourdieu described almost ‘prereflexive’ (knowing where the ball is going to land in a tennis match), small public schools suit elite groups as they create what Devine refers to as ‘nice children with great soft skills’ (2016), it is the networks they develop with the confidence that they exude, or ‘Ease’ as Khan (2011) described it.

The bulk of the narrative of the fourth strand of interview data collected from the Senior Leadership Teams concerned a particular intra-class interface between the upper middle and the middle middle classes. It is this interface, or intersection that is mainly under discussion, as the research undertaken in schools and colleges has shown that it is the fee-paying centres that can maintain the IBDP whereas the bulk of state maintained centres have subsequently withdrawn from

it. If only one type of curriculum exists in the independent sector, then the ‘choice’ over schooling that is left to all parents is therefore one of fee-paying. Even then, it has to be remembered that this still needs to be both a financial possibility and a moral inclination. Paul Luxmoore, executive head of Dane Court Grammar in Kent, has argued that ‘no state schools will be doing the IB [‘s DP] and the only way to access it will be if your parents have got enough money to send you to an independent school’ (Stewart, 2011).

Exley and Suissa (2013) have discussed this concept in the context of parents making the decision to ‘go private’ (2013: 349), but also contributing to what Cribb and Ball (2005) determine as an ‘ethical audit’ of the wider trends towards privatisation in education. In examining the choices made in education, Hatcher’s (1998) article that draws on the work of Boudon (1974) is useful, as it notes that:

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

Hatcher (1998:7) Italics in original.

This returns us to the work of Savage et al, on the different class-based choices that are made, for example on the ‘growing power of elite universities’ (2015:5), even when there is no difference in the level of attainment between groups. But Savage et al’s GBCS data showed that these differences in class position apply to a huge range of our social tastes and lifestyle choices.

What type of curriculum to choose at the age of 16, depends on what is available and affordable, and whether or not the student, parents, and staff involved in the choices are aware of what the differences in transition can make to subsequent higher levels of education. So as state centres have withdrawn their opportunity to offer the IBDP, often the only opportunity left for most is to study the IBDP inside a fee paying centre; this is a far cry from what the Blair government had envisaged back in 2005. In addition, from the IBO’s (2016) list of schools and colleges that currently deliver the IBDP, the type of schools that appear to be

successfully maintaining this course seems to be the elite public boarding schools, rather than independent day schools. This in itself highlights a usage of the English education system by groups/elites, using certain types of school to signify their own internal class differentiation inside their own social grouping. These social groups are often international in background and have an international outlook, they are transnational with regard to the world and the global roles they envisage (or imagine Ball, 2012) playing out across their lifetimes.

In John Beck's (2007) criticisms of Ball's (2003) seminal research, he discusses how the moral dimension has crept into the work on class choice and education. The discussion analyzes the homogenous 'singular usage: the middle class(es) – and sometimes this is extended internationally' (2007: 40), so that Ball can critique school choice policies in a range of national contexts. The moral dimension is interesting as middle class parents are criticised in Ball's research for their 'culture of self-interest' in taking places for their children (Ball, 2003: 21). The international dimension is also interesting for the purposes of this thesis though, as the IBDP is an international commodity.

This moral dimension theme is returned to throughout this doctoral thesis as the interwoven issues of cultural capital, social closure, and narrative coherence (Ball, 2003: 173) are all central themes. But it must be noted that the concept of social closure is itself potentially subject to change over time. Brown has argued that elites have previously used social closure to 'define the rules of the game to their own advantage' (Brown, 2013: 695). However, when looking at stratification and relative position in global society, although the traditional focus of social closure is 'primarily exclusionary tactics, it can also include consideration of inclusionary tactics to usurp the power base of privileged classes or social groups' (Brown, 2013: 695). As argued by C. Wright Mills (1959) on power elites, and as Bunnell (2011: 166) has commented on more recently, 'the IBDP is rapidly gaining access to elite private schooling and de facto to the future 'power elite': those 'in a position to make decisions having major consequences' (Wright Mills, 1959:3)'.

This can be seen in many areas of this doctoral research process as is detailed in the findings in Chapter 3, but particularly in the role which some English public schools play for example with their students from the ‘Near East’. Here, some educational centres have gone further than others, with Wellington College, for example, opening its own version (Wellington College International Shanghai) with a ‘structure of the school that closely resembles that of the [Wellington] College in England...The College welcomed its first Year 12 cohort in August 2015, when it introduced the prestigious IB Diploma Programme’ (Wellington-Shanghai, 2015). Wellington are not alone in this venture, Bromsgrove International School Thailand (BIST) and Repton International, Dubai, are yet other examples. As Bunnell (2011: 166) has commented: ‘One in six of the ‘IB World Schools’ was a member of the HMC in late-2010’, and this number continues to increase.

Indeed new companies have been established to deal with this rise in demand, such as Global Education Management Systems (GEMS) whose strategies for delivering the IBDP globally have been discussed in the academic literature on the IBDP (Bunnell, 2011). The CEO of GEMS, Tabberer (former CEO of the Teacher Training Agency, and then the Training and Development Agency) has stated that these changes in the use of the English curriculum on an international stage offer staggering opportunities for English education, as Wellington College and others have themselves evidenced. Tabberer believes that the value of the English curriculum internationally, currently valued at approximately £240 billion is allegedly set to double again over the next decade, which affords those providers already in the market place significant educational investment opportunities and gives the UK’s Trade and Industry (UKTI) further opportunities in this market place (Tabberer, 2015).

1.4 Mobility studies and elite groups

The economic backdrop to this research has been the denouement of the banking crisis of autumn 2007, and the ensuing policies of ‘austerity’ involving public

sector cuts in expenditure. Arguably at a time of economic and political insecurities such ‘narrative coherence’ (Ball, 2003: 173) is intensified, as parents become concerned that their children will not reach (let alone better) their own living standards. Demographically, as generations out-do each other, there becomes an expectation that this is a trajectory that will continue. Whilst Beck’s (2009) and Giddens’s (1991) work on environmental change shows us that this pace cannot continue (without vast global consequences, at least) the development of a narrative coherence becomes ever-more intensified. Parents worry about their children’s ever-more competitive environments and seek curriculum options that potentially give their own children an edge inside a competitive market. The political rhetoric of choice adds credence to such decisions.

Society has come to expect and demand intergenerational mobility – irrespective of cost. Increasing Merit Selection (IMS) (Jonsson, 1992, Marshall, Swift, and Roberts 1997) provides a hypothesis for how this intergenerational mobility works. However, as Brown has documented ‘there is a vast literature on social inequalities in origins, education and destinations, based on social class, gender, race and ethnicity’ (Brown, 2013: 680).

Neo-liberal theory argues that fairness involves allowing those from disadvantaged backgrounds to compete in both the education market place and beyond (Brown, 2013, Peters, 2011, Ball, 2012). The ‘neo-liberal imaginary’ (Ball, 2012) sees this as being perfectly acceptable, not as creating a deficit model where positional competition and ‘what you lack in comparison to your peers is what you are judged by’ (Brown, 2013: 682). Inside this doctoral research process the students questioned in Strand 1, have lacked all sorts of things depending on their position or social location, but this can be seen even within the four very affluent settings that were researched. This includes situations where ‘inter-positionality’, or relativity, could be regarded as the difference between being a part of the national elite group, or being a part of the (arguably, more significant) transnational, or global elite group that attends their school. For example, students might have an excellent education, be quadrilingual, and have attended high status institutions. But, when coming from the

national grouping they can be restricted in terms of lack of experience of living in other environments, and be restricted in terms of aspiration - wanting to settle in one place - not wanting to permanently move around the globe as is discussed in relation to Sennett's (1999) arguments in this area, below.

The contribution to these discussions from the area of Mobility Studies must also be acknowledged. This debate comes in from sociology's stratification theory, and is often not discussed in the wider remit that it plays in English society. Several generations after John Major's assertion that he wanted a meritocracy further developed and extended within a 'Class-less society' (Major, 1992) and yet in the 2010-2015 Cabinet there were 19 millionaires out of the available 29 portfolios. The role that education plays in this is not necessarily significant: politicians such as David Cameron, who have had an elite education themselves, have not chosen such for their own children, as recent public opinion has urged them to use the State sector. Yet we assume that 'narrative coherence' (Ball, 2003: 173) will be achieved by these elite children, as the re-creation of those social and elite group ties will come from forms of social and cultural capital reproduction instead as they attend state schools.

Neo-liberal education through such policies as competition and marketization have considerable amounts of risk attached to them, but such risk is potentially circumvented if a child is educated independently. The justification of using the private sector is also clear, if it enables parents to buy for their children courses that are not widely available in the state sector. Parkin's (1971) notion of 'social closure' features heavily in this thesis, through the analysis of the amount of effort that parents go to in order to obtain school places that will reproduce social (and economic, cultural and material) advantage. But the world we are in today where a previous Labour Government (arguably) adopted neo-liberal policies, and a Conservative Prime Minister has children educated in state schools is far more complex than has previously been the case. There is a mis-match between the rhetoric that the politicians, such as Blair, Gove, Cameron, Morgan, have put forward and the actuality of their positions (Bower, 2016). Potentially the embedded nature of cultural capital is that for parents with 'good' or 'significant' connections the place of their children's education is irrelevant as the parental

social networks will transcend the lack of potential education reproduction that has been under-achieved through their schooling, the ‘prereflexive’ being the most important (Bourdieu, 1986).

The current performativity culture (Ball, 2009) is utilised by governments, staff, SLTs, parents, and students themselves to measure how schools are performing. ‘Performativity’ can be defined as the number of performance-based criteria the education system (or individuals from certain organisations within the education system - such as Ofsted) use to judge both individual professionals and institutions by exam results, league tables and so on. But the relative nature of schools’ performativity culture is often less explored (Gunter, 2012).

Schools often opt for changes to their curriculum because neighbouring schools have made similar changes. In areas of the country where the independent sector is very visible as was the case in some of the centres in this research process, then the SLTs in state schools often face considerable pressure on resourcing, in trying to match certain expectations on curriculum choice and extra-curricula activities. So the questions on curriculum change become: Is it a good idea for our catchment? Will parents buy into it, enough to justify the resource allocation that will be needed to be changed? As will come through in the analysis and discussion chapter, the answers to this then become: Yes, it did, well, but parents did not buy into it in large enough numbers to make it a viable continued curriculum change. So one of the critical questions, using the performativity culture literature, is why not?

As Performocracy information from both Ball (2007) and Brown (2013) shows, parents will look at how schools perform, and SLTs are judged on this data, but they are also judged on the comparators with other schools (inside or outside of the state sector). However, with the positional competition of globalization (Brown, 2013) it becomes more likely that the variant middle class groups use their knowledge base (or what Savage et al, 2015:16 referred to as ‘engagement with forms of knowledge and expertise’) to access a higher position for their children through the co-modification of qualifications, and this is what the IBDP then becomes a good example of. So it is not which school starts to do the IBDP

- in a jumping on the bandwagon type way - but which school can we trust to educate our child in this way? This is where the performocracy data becomes useful, as many of the schools and colleges visited in this research process were newer centres to delivering the IB (post 2000), whereas the respondents from one centre pointed out that schools that they compete with, like Sevenoaks, have delivered the IBDP since 1977.

Brown and Lauder (2011) also argue that accessing elite qualifications (or qualifications that have been allowed to now become elite, as this thesis argues) potentially creates a form of social congestion. Not all students can attend Russell Group Universities. The current Conservative government's view that HE places can be deregulated, as Dorling (2010: 3) has argued, still means that 'exclusion is necessary'. However, the nature of the positional competition (Brown, 2013, and Bunnell, 2011 in relation to the IBDP) is that students from certain centres, such as elite students, having accessed an elite qualification, will increasingly not look at Russell Group universities but instead look at the US Ivy League universities, as is evidenced in the narrative detail on Centre 2 in Appendix 12. As Ball has argued, this means that 'a complex tangle of initiatives and strategies of post-neo-liberal policy making is particularly significant in education with the general orientation to competitiveness' (Ball, 2007:10). This process produces hierarchical integration but with a substantive differentiation which is commensurate with the granular and graded hierarchies both within countries and now across them, with globalization. This globalization is aided and abetted by an overtly international qualification as the IBDP is, having been designed deliberately for this purpose back in the 1960s. Although, as it is argued here, it now serves a modified function to the one that it was established for as elite groups have become more transnational within the last fifty years.

Where this level of increasing competitiveness involves curriculum changes there are certain social groups who are pushing the boundaries and expectations. Arguably, because of its very international nature and co-modification, currently the IBDP helps push this towards a global transnational group, and this leaves behind other groups whose educational experiences are less global: more Anglo-centric arguably reducing their own competitive edge in the labour market when

compared to these more ‘globally mobile transnational elite’ groups (Savage et al, 2015: 244). Interestingly although Savage et al (2015) argues that a new elite class has been created - and that certain elite universities play a determining role in people accessing this elite group - the GBCS research neither covered the IBDP, nor comments on the increasing access of the elite to international, particularly, US universities. The Savage et al research does comment that ‘British students [have a] reluctance to study overseas’ and argues that ‘Over half of these elite graduates of non-UK universities are based in London, suggesting that they may be part of the globally mobile transnational elite which is a characteristic of the city.’ (Savage et al, 2015: 243-244). It is conceivable that, as Sennett (1999) has discussed, we may have a displaced social and economic elite looking for a grounding in a world where all is shifting and uncertain for their children’s futures - an elite generation who are geographically mobile, shifting to where changes in the structures that deal with capital require them to be located at various points in their careers. This means that their lives can be uncertain and involve regular relocation of their families.

1.5 Historic parallels

There are some interesting comparative historical parallels with the recent past, particularly between the American and the English systems in terms of education policy. Shor (1986) argued that phases of the Conservative Restoration included Nixon’s ‘career education’ programme, this ‘careerism was followed in the mid-1970s by a ‘Literacy Crisis’ and a ‘back-to-basics’ movement’ (Shor, 1986:4). The careerism policy was mirrored by the Thatcher government’s TVEI and YTS schemes of the 1980s in England (Forrester et al, 1995), the Literacy Crisis by the Blair government and introduction of the phonics hour for primary and the boys underachievement crisis at the end of the 90s (Kim, 2008). The recent campaign by Gove (2010-14) has been led by the back-to-basics cry with the return to traditional subjects and linear exams (or ‘knowledge-turn’ as Husbands, 2016 describes it). As Apple has argued:

Thus, we should always ask a series of questions about the knowledge that schools teach and the ways they go about teaching it. ‘Whose culture?’ ‘What social group’s

knowledge?' 'In whose interest is certain knowledge being taught in our educational institutions?'

Apple, 1979: 14-15.

'Culture Wars' is the dramatic term that Shor used in the 1980s (and Bunnell 2009, has used in relation to the use of the IBDP curriculum deployed in the US) that summarizes the struggle that is still apparent and active in our education system today, of which the IBDP is an exemplar. If this qualification is allowed - or actively encouraged by the inaction of a neoliberal government - to become the elite commodity that it looks as though it now is potentially becoming, and schools are able to badge it as a prestigious qualification: but with little access to it in the state sector, then it raises many questions on 'whose social group's knowledge' the IBDP then becomes. This doctoral research strategy is thus designed to elicit understanding and 'questioning insight' into why and how such decisions are made and thus how educational change may be incorporated into the evolving wider themes of globalization, social differentiation, and class formation (Lauder et al, 2006).

1.6 Education, leadership, and change

Tensions between agency and structure are often discussed in educational change and state formation and re-formation (Green, 2013). These tensions have very well-developed roots in previous literature on organizational theory and educational structures (Archer, 2013) often demonstrating that the context of school leadership has been neglected in this area, particularly concerning the isolation of school leaders created by the internal and external pressures that they face (Townsend, 2015). These pressures were a factor that was repeatedly mentioned in the fourth strand of data collection, within the 28 leadership team interviews, with internal pressures from students and parents, but external pressures from government changes enacted to both curricula and funding. When these are seen as competing demands on the SLT members, the ways round some of these external pressures, such as to offer a curriculum without national government interference, clearly becomes a very attractive offer, as was discussed by the SLT respondents in Strand 4 of this research process.

There is also a need to acknowledge the literature emanating from the discussion on education leadership, without which the system undergoing such rapid change would be even more chaotic and anarchic. Inside this overlapping debate is Gunter's work on Knowledge Production in Education Leadership (KPEL, 2012), the development of Professional Capital as analyzed by Hargreaves and Fullan (2012), and the adoption (both pre and post the 2010 election) of what Ball refers to as 'Global Education Inc.' (2012). This is further developed by the networks that are established as the systems that affect our day-to-day existence in the education sector are developed and mutate (Kadushin, 2012; Townsend, 2015).

It is argued that a new paradigm has evolved in educational leadership by those who are prepared to take risks with their leadership. This risk-taking is varied depending on the socio-political and socio-economic context that these leaders (all variously defined: heads, principals, executive heads, CEOs, and so on) find themselves in. Ironically, one of the noticeable factors of the independent sector is that the teachers are invariably the head master or mistress, rather than any other term, even though it is their sector that is often running the biggest 'company' formats. These are all registered charities though not private companies - something that the last Labour government did start to tackle with co-operation agreements being encouraged (Ball et al, 2012) being encouraged to enable links between private and state provision.

Many criticisms have been made of the current neo-liberal political context. Gunter (2012) has particularly highlighted how the leadership rhetoric has become dominant and homogenised, rather than pluralistic and divergent. The echoes back to the Compass Report (2015) mentioned earlier are clear, as the arguments are between the democratic versus the bureaucratic elements of the education system, and the elitist versus the egalitarian areas of the system. Systems Leadership itself, playing out through the education system under the instruction of both the DfE and the NCTL is very evident (Seddon, 2008, and Gunter, 2012). With the creation of the independent National Leadership Foundation (2016) the government direction of policy travel is very much towards

increased school-to-school being delivered within a marketised system (Senge et al, 2014).

1.7 Equity, learning, and the global context

As Bunnell (2011) has argued the IBDP has expanded in areas of essentially white Western culture, but can be accused of not having been adequately encouraged into other areas of the world to the same extent:

Alongside the accusation of elitism, this could be accused of [being] a form of 'imperialism', it was seemingly okay for substantial growth to occur in Australia, Canada, England and the USA (where 64% of all schools are located) but not now okay for growth of the IB in, say, India or Dubai (where less than 2% of schools are located).

Bunnell, 2011: 164.

This links into the Lifelong Action Learning (LAL), developed and argued by Zuber-Skerritt and Teare (2013), where professionals come together to share their resourcing and knowledge base effectively. The IBO have long been criticised for developing a white mono-cultural homogenistic base for their view of the global citizen (Van Oord, 2007, Walker, 2002). It is this debate that has brought the IBDP in particular into controversy in the US, where various state legislatures, such as Ohio and Chicago have withdrawn funding for it. Despite the take-up of the IBDP shrinking in the state sector in England, the take-up of it in the Asian Tiger countries and South America continues to climb to new heights. From the IBO's 'three global centres': The Hague, Singapore, and Bethesda in the US (where its take-up is still by far the most prolific), the IBO has maintained an Assessment Centre in Cardiff, a Foundation Office in Geneva, and added an office in Buenos Aires.

Teare, Davies, and Sandelands (1998) argued that the creation of emergent technologies would mean that new ways of teaching and learning would be encouraged in the coming decades. Their writings on The Virtual University have mostly been shown to be accurate but with the introduction of HE fees by the last Labour government, and the expansion of them under the last Coalition government, is far from the ideals that Zuber-Skerritt and Teare (2013) have visualized where they have aspirationally hoped for free, wider access to HE in

particular to help the underdeveloped world. Where we have seen emergent technologies increasing ‘free’ knowledge, ironically, has been on the MOOC culture that has originated from Ivy League universities like Harvard. Again, although freely available and accessible (providing there is access to the technology!) such knowledge is being used to add to social groups already ‘in the know’, as one respondent commented, when it transpired that his centre regularly used Harvard’s MOOC’s in the ToK classes studied for the IBDP.

Significantly, also located here is the discussion on LAL the overlap between Beck’s commentary on the ‘World at Risk’ (2009) and Zuber-Skerritt and Teare’s (2013) analysis:

The acceleration and increasing complexity of problems associated with disasters...inflict great destruction upon people and places. Despite great advancements in scientific knowledge and global economic partnerships, most people in the world are still exploited and trapped in extreme poverty, as wealth concentrates in the hands of a tiny circle.

Zuber-Skerritt and Teare, 2013: 4

The point is that the global context of the ‘IB World Schools’, and the elite university access (in the West) that the IBDP gives to students, is one in which hierarchical differentiation of a global elite class co-exists with increasing relative poverty and dispossession. The parallel also exists within English society with the contrasting lives of elite versus ‘precariat’ according to the Savage et al (2015) research. Effectively, the IBDP helps to replicate this disparity inside a global context.

The context of the empirical research has been post-16 schools and colleges in England, but all of these have exhibited a global or international dimension, sometimes across a very wide range of socio-economic groups; although the collecting and recording of socio-economic status (SES) data is difficult to utilise effectively and reliably inside educational research, as noted above. But when the IBDP is analyzed in a global context, because of its predomination in the international schools context, it clearly becomes part of the entrenchment of the wider global inequalities and deficiencies – that are exhibited by the international school system. Walker (2012), as the ex-CEO of the IBO, has summarized the major challenges on international schooling:

Table 3 - The major challenges on international schooling

	Challenge	Potential Impact
Diversity	There are no longer neat lines between nationality, culture and ethnicity. Growing diversity has led to radical changes in our self-perceptions, leading some to react with national and religious extremism.	Increasing diversity is seen by many as a threat to their way of life. Is there a moral responsibility for education to help us adapt to diversity?
Complexity	Technology has vastly increased our capacity to communicate and share information. This has led to a proliferation of ideas and opinions from the world.	How do we ensure access to divergent ideas, the skills to make sense of them, and challenge orthodox positions in our schools?
Sustainability	Science is unanimous (almost) in its support of anthropogenic climate change. We will be facing a situation in which governments and their societies will have to make do with less.	The implications are stark, schools have to do more with less resources. What do schools need to do to prepare students for this and change and help find creative solutions to these problems?
Inequality	The gap between those with and those without has widened. The OECD has demonstrated how inequality is inefficient stating, had it not risen over the last thirty years our GDP would be 8.5% higher and almost everybody in society would be better off.	What impact will inequality have on access to education? How can education compensate for growing inequalities in resources between families?
Accessibility	Traditional hierarchies have broken down, opening up agency and people's perceived rights to access knowledge and information.	In what ways is accessibility undermining conventional ethical values?
Eastern-centrism	Economic and political influence is shifting eastwards with the strong Chinese and Indian economies rapidly gaining ground on their Western counterparts. Their increasing Eastern dominance is opening us to new values which are not based in the Enlightenment.	How can we take a positive view of the decline of Western influence?

Walker, G., 2012: 15.

Zuber-Skerritt and Teare (2013) highlight ways in which a range of academics and practitioners have shared knowledge and can use this education to improve global education for wider community benefit rather than the continued concentration of economic and political power through the elite circles of international schooling. It is ironic that despite some of the over-lapping rhetoric on this from the IBO the centres that now deliver the IBDP's belong to this 'tiny circle' (2013: 4) rather than NGOs or state funded organisations, that could perhaps ensure wider access to its participation. But as Halgarten et al (2015) have convincingly argued, the third sector (international schooling) challenges are about providing consistent 'quality, the route to a top university, and teaching in the medium of English' (2015:7). The Chief Inspector of Ofsted has recently stated his frustrations at the brain drain of teachers from England to the growing international sector, to help them meet these challenges (Wilshaw, February, 2016). Those students educated in a 'third culture' are often those who have spent significant amounts of time away from their national culture, and therefore may have developed the capacity to become adept at facing multifaceted issues by experiencing education that blurs social and cultural divides:

they are able to break down silos and make links between worlds that would otherwise remain separate. Applying this concept to an institutional level, we can begin to perceive international schools as Third Culture Schools. They operate in a zone of inherent ambiguity. They are global institutions operating in national and local contexts but with ambiguity about how they relate to all levels (the global, national, and local). They are more likely to wrestle with issues of cultural ambiguity and governance. They may have a built-in capacity for the reflexivity that other schools, so need, and lack.

Halgarten et al, 2015: 12.

In September 2010 Gove said that he was "determined to support wider take-up" of the IBDP (Stewart, 2011):

Despite this, the number of state schools offering the IB Diploma has fallen from 137 in 2010 to 86 in 2013. The number of private schools running the programme has risen by two to 80 in the same time frame, leading to fears that it will become the preserve of the wealthy few.

(Barker, 2013).

According to the IBO (2016) this number of 86 has now dropped further still, currently standing at just 53, and continues to be in decline. Whereas take-up in

the independent sector continues to grow, yet of the current top 40 schools delivering the IBDP in the whole of England, not one of these is currently a state school. Disappointingly for those involved in the global education movements, such as LAL, the rapid expansion of the IBDP is now occurring in the new ‘Near’ East (IBO, 2016), with the rising take-up in the economies of China and India, rather than the more complicated geo-political areas - such as parts of the African continent that could potentially benefit tremendously from a significant rise in post-16 standards of education. The nature of the IB is that it has to go where the educational infrastructure is already established (Bunnell, 2011). Whereas, those behind initiatives such as LAL, are attempting to take it into areas like the Sudan where as yet no established infrastructure exists (Zuber-Skerritt and Teare, 2013).

1.8 Achieving social justice

Social justice and whether or not an education system manages to achieve equity, in any context, cannot really be discussed without looking at the seminal text by Halsey and his associates (1965) detailing the waste of working class talent in England, due to the nature of the selective grammar school system. This subsequently led to his appointment as an education advisor to two Labour Governments (1964-66, and 1966-70). In this role, Halsey was instrumental in the drafting and instigating of Circular 10/65 which abolished grammar schools in England and Wales. Halsey’s main drive was to create a less divisive and more socially fair system in which all talents could thrive. It is argued that despite the post-97 Labour Government’s overt intentions to create a less divisive and more socially fair system, their tenure saw the expansion of faith schools, specialist schools, and increased diversity particularly with regard to post-16 education (Chitty, 2009). However, it is arguable that these measures and changes actually saw a diminishing of social inequality or a growth in social and economic opportunity which was comparable with earlier social and educational reforms intended to produce more social equity. Halsey’s later research on education, globalization, and social change with reference to elite groups is also important (Lauder et al, 2006).

This increased post-16 diversity has led to a more, not less, divisive education system (Tomlinson, 2008). Milburn's Social Mobility Report, 2009 documented that unpaid internships as now common practice for cementing (upper?) middle class connections (elite groups, Savage et al, 2015). These reports demonstrated that at the end of the Labour Government in 2010, students were seven times more likely to enter a professional career if from professional parents than if not (Milburn, 2009) - social closure epitomized.

This is the backdrop to this neo-conservative era, and what has been so noticeable has been the clear recourse to the market, for solutions that are ostensibly – if not to restore a sense social justice - then at least to develop a sense of equality. In this spirit, the Coalition Government in 2010 agreed the pupil premium policy, and effectively passed an additional budget strand from central government directly to head teachers. Now known as a policy for 'the disadvantaged' (DfE, 2014) the impact of decision-making that this gives to individual school/college leaders for how they can begin to challenge individual inequity is really yet to be determined, as will be returned to when analyzing the leadership data from Strand 4 in the analysis and discussion chapter below.

But what links the pupil premium policy is the post-2007 economic depression, and the lack of Capital in the system. This has been heavily documented by Piketty (2013) in his tome that demonstrates how wealth inequality is set to continue rising unless addressed by redistributive tax processes. This leaves a situation in England where even Debrett's Chief Executive, Joanne Milner has commented that '...Britain is becoming less meritocratic. As a young person growing up in Britain today, you have a far greater chance of succeeding if you come from a privileged background and have inherited a rich social capital' (Milner, 2015). It is argued that IB DP students (and potentially staff, too) are achieving more than social capital, they are achieving cultural, economic, political, and professional capitals.

1.9 Cultural capital

Piketty (2013) draws on some of Bourdieu's (1986) analysis in this area. This concentrated on the development of terms such as 'cultural capital', and much of that is drawn on for the purposes of this thesis. Bourdieu and Passeron (1900) arguably began the debate on how networks are developed in order to entrench middle-class positions of cultural advantage. Groups with high levels of capital thus maintain parts of the education system for themselves. Such use of cultural capital has continued virtually unrestricted, even after the Labour government made some policy in-roads to address it, such as the development of the Excellence-in-Cities programme (2001) and the creation of NAGTY (2003), and the London Challenge (2003).

These New Labour policies were criticised by those such as Tomlinson (2008), for effectively pandering to the middle classes. In particular, these policies gave the upper middle class (or Savage et al's 2015 elite group) a reason to stay inside the state sector and capitalise on educational opportunities that were considered appropriate to them. As a government strategy, in the 2000s, it was argued by the Blairites that keeping the middle classes inside the system was essential, and that inclusivity was the answer to not only a majority Labour government but also an on-going attempt at social equity (Adonis, 2012).

This social equity theme has been much echoed in the light of the poor 2015 general election result for Labour by key individuals (Bowyer, 2016). An example of policies that attempted to tackle lack of economic capital, which is Piketty's main point, from the last Labour government was the Baby Bond (2000), held up by many social justice campaigners as an example of what can be achieved to redress the balance if political will exists (JRF, 2010). It was phased out by the Coalition government in 2010, but if the individual sums (of £64,000) involved in this policy were compared with two years' boarding fees to do the IBDP in England (average for best 40 schools in the League Table) then the gap in lack of equity within the education system can clearly be seen.

Some of the analysis and discussion that is returned to within Chapter 4 concerns whether or not this form of entrenchment happens with the IBDP: do groups with high levels of capital successfully maintain the IBDP for themselves? It is hard to collect data on specifically on this issue, as was found in this research process

- and is commented on in Chapter 2 – because of the difficulties of collecting Socio Economic Status (SES) statistics. However, if we use Savage et al's (2015) term for all the higher earners as an 'elite' group (but understand that there are many differing groups inside this top 1% group, as Dorling (2014) has commented), then we can clearly see that the decline of opportunity for students in the state sector to take-up the IBDP, does lead to a direct correlation. This suggests that it is only the 'elite' in society that are able to access the IBDP: either through independent school fees or by accessing one of the few remaining, declining, places that this research process has visited in England where the IBDP remains on offer in the state sector.

1.10 Why distributed and then senior leadership?

One of the key aims of this thesis is to examine the context of how Leadership has worked with the implementation of the IBDP into a range of education centres. It is the contention put forward here, that with an ever-changing system, and new demands on Senior Leadership Teams almost daily, Distributed Leadership (DL) has placed the 'Middle Tier' in secondary schools potentially where the SLTs were a decade before (Gronn, 2008; Torrance, 2013). Middle Leaders are now often responsible for both running and staffing big departments, whilst their Senior Leaders are looking towards the future of their schools (Earley, 2013): setting up academy chains, and establishing links with schools, such as Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs) that may help the survival of their own institution. Critically, with regard to this doctoral research process, this involves choosing which changes to make (or not to make) to their curriculum, as will be described in the findings.

As Local Authorities retreat, and more 'democratic' forms of schooling such as Free Schools are on the increase (Chitty, 2009), educational leadership has developed far more than in the 1980s, when large-scale decentralization of educational management and an increase in local management of schools (LMS) first occurred (Davies, 1998). This has resulted from changes to government

policy on education and the introduction and subsequent increase in ‘popularity’ of free schools and academies. Arguably, the DfE’s policy change to make all new schools free schools means that:

“free school” is the department’s policy term for a new provision academy. “Academy is a legal term for state-funded schools that are independent of LA control and receive their funding directly from the government. Schools established through this process are not required to use the term “free school” in their name; this follows practice within the department’s centrally administered free school programme.

Free School Presumption, DfE, 2015:3.

The importance of effective leadership and management of schools has increased in significance and as such there has been much research conducted into the effectiveness of school leadership and its associated impact on school improvement; this has also discussed curriculum choices (Barber, 2007). The academisation process has now been formalized with all schools expected to become academies by 2022 (HM Treasury, 2016). Bush (2015) has also commented that England is the only country in the world to have introduced a mandatory national qualification for headship and then dispensed of it again. Partly, this shows the political interference and rhetoric between the two main political parties on education. But it is also an illustration of the extent of the anomalies inside the neo-liberal ideology inside the system, as can be witnessed by the Government’s wanting to ‘free up’ head teachers, in the same way that Free Schools are allowed to employ unqualified teachers, even though they are part of the same state funded system that ensures teacher qualifications are adhered to elsewhere.

Bush argues that there are three dimensions of leadership that assist in defining its concept: influence; values; and vision (Bush, 2011:5). Most leaders work towards influencing individuals or groups in order to achieve a desired outcome. The concept of values however, characterizes a leader’s self-awareness and personal values together with their moral and emotional capability. It is these characteristics that a leader is required to communicate effectively in order to represent the ethos of their school. Leithwood et al (1999) analyzed literature based on leadership and management, and identified six models of management: formal; collegial; political; subjective; ambiguity; and cultural. Bush and Glover (2002) identified nine leadership models: managerial; participative;

transformational; interpersonal; transactional; post-modern; contingency; moral; and instructional. The focus is which of these leadership models become relevant when there is a significant risk-taking decision to be made that affects the centre's curriculum in this case but clearly has an associated impact on the school's local reputation. In some of the centres that are discussed their reputations extend well below their locality as their catchments of international students demonstrate, and as with the Wellington, Repton, and Bromsgrove examples above.

Whilst theories and models of leadership and management are well established, the emergence of Distributed Leadership in more recent years has removed the idea of leadership being the sole responsibility of one leader and instead recognises the influence of various sources of power and leadership capability (Harris 2010; Torrance, 2013). It was clear (as is reported on in section 3.4) that middle leaders from the centres felt trapped, and responsible, but perhaps did not fully appreciate the wider social, political and economic backdrop of their context, as they were not exposed to the policy-making decisions at this level. Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) have developed their ideas of professional capital, in this context, where teachers are allowed to develop their own reflexive ability to change and adapt, because of their need and want to engage in a profession that they are leading and developing themselves.

1.11 Towards a reflexive modernity

Perpetual inter-generational improvement is a key part of Beck's, Giddens' and Lash's reflexive modernity thesis (1994) that centres on the environmental changes that we are experiencing as a planet and the inter-connectedness that occurs, which is now far more widely appreciated than it was when he was first writing this more than forty years ago. Education is not like the environment. Education is an example of social wealth: a consumer good – 'that can be experienced by the individual, the existence of and distribution of risks and hazards are *mediated on principle through argument*' (Beck, 2012: 27, italics in original). But what this research project shows is that there is a new transnational global political elite that can monopolize places on a curriculum entirely suited to

their class group and need, that is – in a English context at least – now largely only available within the independent sector, as the state has failed to make this accessible to the wider education sector.

In this sense the IBDP is not ‘just’ a consumer or positional good: it is part of that wider reflexive modernity. The manner in which part of the English upper middle class appears to be co-opting (or co-apting?) this qualification is part of a ‘detraditionalization happen[ing] in a social surge of individualization’ (Beck, 2012: 87). As it enables the students who take the DP very much to be able to look to themselves, and their connections, in order to construct their ‘individual labor market biographies’ (Beck, 2012: 87). The reflexive biography that is started by choosing a different, arguably ‘higher status’ qualification at 16 potentially determines a biographical trajectory, which is why the SLTs members interviewed for this research process were prepared to *risk* introducing a non-mandatory policy. If students are able to access this different qualification then their future biography is potentially very different from that which it would otherwise be.

The environmental analysis of Beck’s ‘Risk Society’ has, over time, been shown to have been absolutely correct. Risk itself has many elements as Lash and Wynne have written:

Risk has become an intellectual and political web across which thread many strands of discourse relating to the slow crisis of modernity and industrial society.

Lash and Wynne in Beck, 2012:3

The issue is that (apart from the fact that risk has been described differently by many sociologists including Giddens, 1991 and Castells, 1996), the discourse itself mutates over time because it is social (and political and economic) analysis. In this case, the risks from the 1980s may still exist, but more than likely will have morphed in a range of different ways, as was highlighted by Beck (2009) in ‘World at Risk’. In this case the growth of the IBDP as a growing global phenomenon is many things: it is reflexive modernization that comes from the knowledge of the group(s) who are claiming access to it:

a new moral climate of politics develops in which cultural...evaluations play a central role and arguments for and against real or possible consequences of technical and economic decisions are publicly conducted.

Beck, 2006: 6

Education policy is considered to be one of the areas that bear the critical consequences of these economic decisions that are publicly conducted; these figures and the differential spending allocations across these sectors highlight the extent of the inequalities in provision that are currently available for the IBDP in England. There is more on this in the findings chapter, as the state centre heads interviewed were working on an £2,300 average 16-19 qualification cost. Whereas a recent TES article put the IBDP average cost at £5,500 (TES, 2015), although the independent sector interviews placed their curriculum spend pretty uniformly is around the £12,500 mark, indistinguishable inside their centre between the IBDP and the comprehensive Pre-U qualification.

The IBO regarded the upsurge in centres delivering the DP in the 2000s as a mark of its success as a potential international qualification. Although the IBO is a non-profit organisation, clearly its market share is an important sales issue, in terms of its overall brand. There is an on-going argument for parents who want their children to study the IBDP: in addition to the maintenance of narrative coherence (Ball, 2003: 173); their children can benefit from the programme through the combination of increased social and cultural capital that it potentially provides. This then simultaneously delivers a qualification that is regarded with international standing as opposed to national qualifications that are being perpetually being tinkered with.

Table 4 - Matrix of Educational and Analytical Key Themes

Theories/ Literature Sources	Educational and analytical key themes	Empirical methods and data	Professional insights and reflection	Place in thesis	Outcomes in research and learning
Bourdieu, P. (1986)	Social and cultural reproduction/ Educational inequality	Documentation from independent schools around the 'elite' nature of IBDP: "prestigious", participant observation	Policy analysis – more resource intensive as a qualification (costs more to implement) than A-Levels or Pre-U. Curriculum policy – heavier on-going costs than alternatives, higher timetabling/staffing demands.	Introduction 1.4/1.9 2.6/2.9 3.3.3/3.3.6/ 3.6.5 4.2/4.3/4.4 5.4	The IBDP is used as a "prestigious" qualification to enable status to be conferred to students (whose parents can afford to buy places on it), the restricted number of places where it can now be studied. With less than half of these centres now left in the state sector, it therefore acts as a form of social and cultural reproduction for elite groups, for the access it gives 16-19 students to a peer group with a global outlook.
Giddens, A. (1991)	Reflexivity	Methodology Literature Review HEI Focus group (Strand 3) and SLT Interviews (Strand 4)	Roles of SLTs in making/taking policy - decisions and the constraints that abound them.	Introduction 1.6/1.10/1.11 2.12/3.5/3.6 4.X/5.2/5.10	Staff in SLTs having a good idea of how structures prevent their students from achieving and being able to influence the choice of curriculum so that appropriate levels of status are conferred or restricted.
Gunter, H. (2001, 2012)	Knowledge Production in Education Leadership	Literature Review – critical education policy and leadership studies SLT Interviews (Strand 4) Analysis & Discussion	Policy-decisions being dominated by the structures that exist and the system constraints that result in a lack of individual agency being accorded to SLTs.	Introduction 1.6/1.8/1.10/2.9/ 4.4 5.1/5.5/5.8	Discussion on levels of 'choice': SLTs are tied in state sector by financial restrictions, which means that genuine choice does not exist even if the professionals believe it is the most appropriate pedagogical programme for their student body.
Milburn, A. (2009)	(Lack of) Social Mobility	Middle Tier Focus Groups (Strand 2) HEI Focus group (Strand 3) SLT Interview (Strand 4)	IBDP actively chosen by some state school SLT members in the 2000s to help their students gain access into more prestigious (elite) HEIs.	Introduction 1.8/1.9/2.6/2.12 3.3/3.4/3.5/3.6 4.2/4.3/4.4/5.2	When the IBDP has been adopted in the state sector, there seems to have been a conscious mantra around the development of equity issues: some centres experienced first ever Oxbridge success.
Savage, M. et al, (2015)	Development of new global transnational political elite	Secondary data from GBCS Participant Observation SLT Interviews(Strand 4)	Changing role of HEIs in international education policy; role of 'precariat', links into 'tales of two campuses'	Introduction 1.4/1.5/1.6/2.4/2.6// 2.9/3.5/3.6/4.2/5.4	The IBDP gives access to elite HEIs, also prepares students well for rigours that are expected of them. Concepts of globalism and internationalism.
Zuber-Skerritt, O. and Teare, R. (2013)	Lifelong Action Learning and Globalization/ Personal Viability	Literature Review HEI Focus group (Strand 3) and SLT Interviews (Strand 4)	Education and globalization; contrast between 'precariat' and elite groups; distribution of global resources	Introduction 1.7/1.12/2.4/2.12 3.3/3.6/ 4.2/4.7 5.2/5.10	The IBDP is 'sold' as a genuinely international qualification, but has not made in-roads into the poorer areas of the world, and exists only where there is an already established and developed education system.

1.12 Summary

This chapter has given the social context and theoretical framework for this study. It hopes to have provided a descriptive account which is concurrently and deliberately an explanatory and conceptual account. It has located the research process documented firmly in the theoretical works of Bourdieu and Passeron (1990), Giddens (1991), Gunter (2001; 2012), Savage et al (2015), Zuber-Skerritt and Teare (2013). The educational and analytical key themes, and impact of this group of author's was explained in Table 4. This Literature Review has explored the role that globalization now plays in education and the creation of a global transnational elite, and suggested a range of analytical concepts that can be used to promote our understanding of the phenomenon. This wide ranging literature base has critiqued the role of neo-liberal policies in education and how that leaves the possibilities of intergenerational mobility both significantly reduced and having created a deficit model. It has also engaged with the wider and even 'moral' issues of educational differentiation, and its significance for the most dispossessed - in a world where the focus is often exclusively on the rich and powerful elites, who are emerging as the benefitting "subjects" of the IB discourse.

It is argued that the creation of this deficit model focuses on providing good quality education to the mainstream population, whilst always being a step or two ahead of the game, so it is perfectly safe to let the next group in, as realistically they cannot feasibly catch up. It will be demonstrated that 'staying one step ahead of the game' has become the role and the function of the IBDP, particularly in the independent sector. The rapid take-up of the IB in England in the 2000s particularly meant that the IBO started to 'sell' the other factors involved in the IBDP of which 'leadership' is portrayed as a critical dimension of this (IBO, 2016).

Chapter 2 – The Methodology

The previous chapter reviewed and assessed relevant literature which has provided the theoretical background to this research process. This chapter introduces a range of concepts and approaches to research which are relevant to the topic of educational leadership and what has been identified as inequality in access to the IBDP. It includes the following themes and issues:

- the methodology used to approach the research – the way of thinking about studying the area under investigation
- the research methods adopted – the techniques used to gather and analyze the data
- the philosophical underpinning – the world view which guides the choice of research methodologies (see for example Matthews and Ross, 2010:7).

This chapter explains the connections between the chosen methodological approach (critical realism) the methods adopted (questionnaires, focus groups and most importantly interviews) and how they were applied for the purposes of this research process. It introduces and provides a justification of these chosen methodologies and corresponding methods: highlighting their potential shortcomings – which have also been addressed. Also important is how the nature of the subject matter has shaped and determined the chosen Research Strategies (RS) and their corresponding Research Questions (RQs), and how this has impacted on the overall research approach adopted. It is important in any piece of social research that an appropriate and rigorous theoretical stance has been adopted, and this is justified below, in relation to this thesis (Gubrium et al, 2012).

2.1 Background

As Blaikie (2007) contends, methodological choices first have to deal with RQs, followed by RSs, and these then have to make a subsequent choice on Research Paradigms (RPs). Scientific areas differ vastly, and in many ways, to the social sciences. This thesis discusses qualitative information on how senior leaders, in schools and colleges, in particular, *think* and *feel*. This research process is trying to measure or gauge something that cannot be looked at again in exactly the same way, as it was a response given by leaders to a particular choice of non-

mandatory policy implementation, during a specific time frame from 2010-2015. It is significant because it has opened up a difference between the curricula choices on offer to class groups that continues to permeate through the education system.

These curriculum differences have a bearing on access to university provision and access to courses often marketed as ‘prestigious’ (Savage et al, 2015), as the data in the findings chapter below, will demonstrate. In terms of generalisability (Silverman, 2011), although only four state centres and four independent centres have been visited for the purposes of this research process, the viewpoints in both sectors were so markedly different to one another that this different sector viewpoint, is generalisable to their wider sectors. However, given the research strategy used, and the paradigm chosen this would clearly need to be replicated on a larger scale for this viewpoint to be confirmed. As Miles et al (2014) argue:

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

Miles et al, 2014: 33-34.

An extensive number of trawls of independent schools’ websites (N=30) has taken place for this research, and how they ‘view’ the IBDP and portray it, to current and future parents and students. The schools seem to hold a very consistent position. They are after all in a market place and in competition with each other to ‘sell’ the same positional good (Ball, 2003, Bunnell 2011).

In an independent sector which deals with just over 215,000 pupils a year from ages 3 through to 19, there are currently 78 places that deliver the IBDP (HMC, 2016). By comparison the figure for state schools/colleges that deal with some 3.8 million 16-19 year olds is just 53 (DfE, 2015). This is in comparison to the 131 state schools and colleges that did deliver the IBDP, at the start of this research study in 2009 (IBO, 2009). To maintain the same ratio as in the independent

sector, the state would need to provide over 1,300 places for IBDP study! From the league tables, the top forty places to study the IBDP are all in the independent sector, but these are often highly selective schools, so this in itself, is unsurprising. The IBO does not publish league tables, so these are constructed by private organisations (such as best-schools.co.uk) with the data that individual centres release.

The focus in this research study has been on the ways in which we can seek to understand and analyze curriculum change in and for itself and in its ‘profound’ contexts of social, cultural and ‘political’ environments. It is in their relationships with connected, though sometimes opaque, events and social forces that we can truly grasp the significance of actions (Savage et al, 2015). This research project has yielded insights into *why* and *how* social classes in late modernity (post-industrial capitalist society) continue to form and re-form around education and learning opportunities and structures. This doctoral research process seeks to understand how the curriculum is not neutral (as Savage et al 2015: 15) details, but is value laden and pregnant with possibility. If one type of curriculum is offered only in one particular sector it can seek to act as a form of social closure for other groups, and therefore actively prevent social mobility from happening.

This is where the themes of education, globalization, and social change (Lauder et al, 2006) are important, as it is argued that ‘Certain occupations at the ‘top end’ seem clearly to have pulled away from other occupations of supposedly equivalent skill, expertise and authority in terms of their relative economic reward’, (Savage et al, 2015: 72) this leaves even the upper middle classes without the access to these elite qualifications unless they come from these particular sectors, which are also sectors that follow global capital around the world. It would appear that the school fees levied (particularly by the elite boarding schools) have matched the incomes of these break-away professions, rather than the salaries of the usual upper middle class occupations. So there are a particular set of sub-groups who can afford to join the ‘globally mobile transnational elite group’ (Savage et al, 2015: 244) that these processes have helped to create.

Doctoral researchers often want to uncover or explain trends in their own working environment (Drake and Heath, 2011), and with 40% of undergraduates in this author's own Russell Group university coming from China, access and globalization are clearly relevant themes (Warwick, 2016). But there are many differences in the RQs that can be taken, as was outlined in the Aims at the beginning of this thesis: the RQs concern *why* the centres introduced the IBDP, when it is a non-mandatory policy and they did not *have* to implement it into their curriculum. This is as true for the independent sector, as for the state sector; the centres have adopted the IBDP through choice and it is examining the *motivations* and *interests* of the leaders who have taken this decision that is of most interest here, though it must be stated that this form of methodological individualism does not preclude the use of explanations based on ideas of structure and culture and statements concerning groups and institutions (Archer, 2013:14).

2.2 Research paradigm and philosophy

Research paradigms are in themselves:

Broad philosophical and theoretical traditions within which attempts to understand the world are conducted.

(Blaikie, 2007:3).

As Blaikie (2007) argues: the decline of structural functionalism in American social theory has meant that it has become the business of all social researchers 'to face up to and deal with, a range of choices and dilemmas that lead to the use of fundamentally different research strategies and have the possibility of producing different research outcomes' (Blaikie: 2007: 1). Hence, the research paradigm chosen (with its underlying philosophical traditions) is fundamental, given that no approach is perfect; most social researchers use a combination of approaches, the key to which is being able to justify what has been used and why.

The research methodologies undertaken are interpretivist, but for the chosen Research Paradigm (RP) a critical realist approach was adopted, as is evident from the literature range chosen in this first chapter, and is justified by the ontological and epistemological approaches taken, as outlined below. This thesis presents both a critical view of non-mandatory education policy and how it is implemented within the system, and the wider structures that exist in our society. Critical realism comes from a middle way between positivism and hermeneutics (Blaikie, 2007). Bhaskar (1978) argued that using an interpretivist (or hermeneutic) foundation for critical realism, it is necessary to distinguish between meanings and motives, as was discussed above:

‘Bhaskar is committed to the reality of social structures, viewed as the relations between social agents in social positions. These structures have an influence on social activity, in that they both enable and constrain actions’.

Blaikie, 2007:148.

It is this discussion on the nature of social structures, using critical realism, (Harre, 1986) which enables a research strategy to be developed on the key theoretical and analytical educational themes. This is described in Table 4 above: it demonstrates the links between the authors used in the literature review and the key educational and analytical themes dealt with throughout this doctoral thesis. It is this evidencing – of these meanings and motives – that are analyzed throughout this research process on the educational leadership of the IBDP that are of precise interest.

2.3 Theoretical and analytical framework

The theoretical and analytical framework has been developed using the work of Bourdieu (1986), Giddens (1990, 1991) and Gunter (2012), in addition to some more contemporary politicians such as Milburn (2009) and the influential sociologist Savage et al (2015), as was mapped out in Table 4 above, at the end of the last chapter on the literature review. This needs to be referenced again at this juncture, because it shapes and helps to frame both the research strategy and the research questions. It is in particular, the key educational and analytical

themes (as were addressed in the literature review above) which are of importance:

- social and cultural reproduction
- reflexivity (both 'reflexive elites' (Beck/Giddens) and personal reflexivity)
- knowledge production and education leadership
- development of new global transnational political elite
- social mobility.

These concepts link into two other themes on social closure (Parkin, 1971) and the development of professional capital (Hargreaves and Fullan, 2012) which are also addressed and considered important. What is critical though is how these key educational and analytical themes are followed through this thesis, in terms of what empirical methods have been used to capture these data, where the professional insights and reflections impact (Giddens, 1990; Zuber-Skerritt and Teare 2013) and these are highlighted within the thesis.

2.4 Research strategy

In common with much practitioner-based research at doctoral level in the social sciences, the Research Strategy (RS) chosen was an Abductive Research Strategy (Burgess et al, 2006), given the number of positive and relevant points for it:

- Abduction, a strategy that is implicit in a number of research paradigms, has been advocated as either the only suitable 1 for the social sciences, or as an essential adjunct to other research strategies.
- Abduction characterizes those research paradigms concerned with deriving expert accounts of social life from the everyday accounts that social actors can provide.
- In view of the fact that much social life is routine and habitual, and takes place in an unreflective, taken-for-granted manner, the accounts of social actors do not usually reveal the largely tacit meanings that underpin their interactions.

Blaikie, 2007: 107.

Abduction, the process of re-visiting material but retaining the authenticity of the voices that it contains (as has taken place with the coding of the interviews), is explained below:

The main access a researcher has to these constructions is through the knowledge that social actors use in the production, reproduction, and interpretation of the phenomenon under investigation. Their reality, the way they have constructed and interpreted their activities together, is embedded in their everyday language. Hence, the researcher has to enter their world in order to discover the motives and reasons that accompany social activities.

Blaikie, 2007: 10

Researchers using this RS often undertake observation and live and breathe their research. Participant observation can take many forms, and this doctoral research process (with the researcher having worked inside these environments) clearly embodies this process. As, the following Table 5 – The Human Perspective: Methodological Dimensions, recreated from Bruyn (1963), demonstrates the role of this inner perspective, or the Participant Observer, that has been applied in this research strategy:

Table 5 – The Human Perspective: Methodological Dimensions, (Basic Research Orientations), Bruyn, 1963:231

	Inner Perspective (Participant Observer)	Outer Perspective (Traditional Empiricist)
Philosophical foundation	Idealism	Naturalism
Mode of:		
Interpretation	Concrete procedures	Operational procedures
Conceptualization	Sensitizing concepts	Formal concepts
Description	Synthesis	Analysis
Explanation		
Principles	Telic	Causal
Models	Voluntarism	Deterministic
Aims	Sensitively accurate interpretation and	Accurate measurement and prediction of man's behaviour

	explanation of man's social and cultural life	
--	--	--

It was felt that the SLTs' views themselves need to be heard in this research process, after the student and middle tier staff views had been explored. So relatively long interviews were undertaken; the interview material was subsequently subjected to rigorous reduction, which maintains the authenticity of the interviewees' responses (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009). This process, which draws on a version of Weber's idea of ideal types as a methodological construct, then enables the researcher then to:

Re-describe these actions and motives, and the situations in which they occur, in the technical language of social scientific discourse. Individual motives and actions have to be abstracted into typical motives for typical situations. These social scientific typifications provide an *understanding* of the activities, and may then become ingredients in more systematic explanatory accounts.

Blaikie, 2007:10 (italics in original).

Bhaskar (1978) describes the abductive strategy in terms of layers, where the members of the group under scrutiny have their insider understanding scrutinized by the researcher, and made available for the wider 'outside' world. Blaikie also explains this in terms of layers. The following columns demonstrate the adaptation of the Bhaskar original, as identified by Blaikie, which has the explanation of this doctoral research process alongside:

Table 6 - Research strategy: Adapted from Bhaskar by Blaikie, 2007: 90

Everyday concepts and meanings	SO: Students have opportunity to take IBDP
Provide the basis for	
Social action/interaction	<i>Choice (or lack of choice) over curricula options</i>
About which	
Social actors can give accounts	<i>SLT accounts of decisions on IBDP implementation</i>
From which	
Social scientific description can be made	<i>In vivo coding of these accounts provide the opportunity to give the detail of the micro positioning of leaders in the system</i>
From which	
Social theories can be generated	<i>A macro social scientific position can be generated from social inequality</i>
Or which can be understood in terms of existing	
Social theories or perspectives	<i>Theories and perspectives on social justice.</i>

One of the basic differences in RSs is whether a researcher is choosing to use a *top-down* or *bottom-up* approach. This doctoral research process was conducted inside schools and colleges that delivered the IBDP, in order to find out what respondents in centres thought. Hence, a *bottom-up* approach was adopted, as the participants' voices being heard were an important part of this process. If a *top-down* approach had been taken, using quantitative data, such as online questionnaires: asking *what* and *when* questions, rather than open-ended interviews encouraging SLTs to explain their positioning that were asked here, then such a *top-down* approach would have resulted in a very different form of practise-based enquiry, where statistics could have been generated on the numbers of those *who* adopted the qualification (Cohen et al, 2007), rather than the RQs that were asked on the reasons as to *why* the IBDP was adopted. It is what has been learnt from the IBDP's adoption process which is of importance - for this results' directly from the qualitative motivations of senior staff: who change such a curriculum, when such a change is not mandated. We are therefore concerned with concepts of choice, decision-making, and distribution of resources. The same applies to cases where the IBDP has been removed from the curriculum.

2.4.1 Insider learner stance

Regarding the researcher stance of this author, this was inherently that of an insider. In common with many doctoral practitioners (Drake and Heath, 2011) undertaking a professional doctorate in their own work environment, this study considered the 16-19 environment that the author had just finished teaching in, and the overlap of it within an HEI context that the author's work had progressed into. The teaching and leading both courses and people has stayed broadly similar, but the context had changed. Blaikie (2007) terms the difference between 'outsider or insider' stance as a choice between:

maintaining a ‘professional’ distance from the research participants or becoming thoroughly immersed in their social world. In the former, the researcher remains aloof and separate, while in the latter, the researcher is engaged in close relationships with the research participants, even to the point of being an accepted member of that group or community. The researcher allows himself or herself not only to be influenced by those researched, but may also have influence on them.

Blaikie, 2007:11.

This is an interesting definition, as the author has worked at the level of education of academic programmes for those aged 16-19: delivering, managing, and staffing some of these courses; and is an accepted member of this group, and therefore the research position adopted is clearly that of an *insider*.

Although no longer teaching at secondary level, the author is still regarded as a potential SLT member. This has been discussed on many occasions both inside the governing body that the author sits on, and within the focus groups and interviews that were conducted for this research process, - schools are currently very short of senior staff (Boffey, 2014), and independent schools in particular are always keen to employ staff who have worked in higher status institutions, such as universities. As a potential SLT member, the author is – de facto – ‘*not only influenced by those researched, but also may also have an influence on them*’[those in SLT roles]. This is of particular importance for the author, working with SLTs all the time. This exhibits an example of the reflexivity that has been deployed in the methodology, one being the self-reflective, essentially participant observation that has been deployed here, as demonstrated in Table 5 above.

In terms of Blaikie’s (2007) definitions this makes the author an ‘inside learner’ as the answers to the RQs emerge through the processes, rather than from a body of existing social scientific knowledge. There is a continuum between ‘outside expert’ and ‘inside learner’ and clearly one cannot set aside all existing social scientific knowledge in order to be immersed in one extreme. But neither has an intermediate position been taken between these two extremes, as with an ethno-methodological study, the position taken is far closer to that of an ‘inside learner’, as the above examples demonstrate, than it is to the ‘outside expert’.

There is an additional factor to discuss here: at times, particularly when writing up the findings, the author has felt that she has played a role of being a *reflective partner* or what Blaikie terms a *conscientizer*. For example, if writing a piece of

feminist research it would be acting as a *conscientizer* if it was enabling the research participants to ‘understand better their oppressed situation’ (Blaikie, 2007:12). In this research process though, given the use of critical literature sources, the author has wondered if the interview process enables the senior leaders to talk freely and individually concerning what motivates them. It was noticeable, that terms such as ‘social justice’, and ‘ability to achieve’ came up time and again – particularly from the state sector interviews. It is believed that the act of talking about issues and motivations, particularly for busy leaders (who often get little time to reflect on their actions) can be both helpful and cathartic (Miles et al, 2014), and that therefore this doctoral research process has potentially helped members of the SLTs involved who have taken part in it to understand their own positions better.

There is a link between the role of interviewer and therapist or counsellor - the role of the interviewer is not to be either of these latter occupations; but respondents did not take part in the research for therapeutic reasons (Mason, 2002). However, Rosenblatt (1995) claimed that for respondents, taking part in research might become a therapeutic experience. Indeed, one individual (respondent C) in this research stated that taking part had had a therapeutic effect on him, in particular he found talking and being listened to during the interview both ‘useful, and energising’. The questions asked made him consider his own experiences in a way he had not done for a while; and ‘had reminded him of the reasons he had come in to teaching and leadership’. Rosenblatt (1995) pointed out that although researchers are not therapists, a researcher has to have similar skills to those of a therapist which constitute good research practice. These include listening, acknowledging, managing reactions and feelings, empathy and exhibiting human warmth (Rosenblatt, 1995: 150).

The senior school and college leaders who participated in this doctoral research process are busy people, and it is not expected that all of them will look at this final write-up, but some have expressed an interest in doing so. However, seeing their responses extrapolated might potentially help to give them an additional, contextual, understanding to their positions. It also adds an additional layer of

authenticity and validity to the research process if the respondents can recognise their role in the process when completed (Fox et al, 2007).

2.5 Ontology

This section describes the chosen ontological approach. Given the sources chosen for the literature review, there is a belief that society is socially constructed, as has been argued over the last century by Lefebvre (1961), Simmel (1950), Goffman (1959), and the Feminist theorist Smith (2005), whose writings have been particularly drawn on for this work. Dorothy Smith's view was that social experience refers to the individual conduct, social relationships and cultural practices in everyday life. As was mentioned in the introduction, her concept of 'standpoint' has led to the use of institutional ethnography as deployed here, where the micro details recorded in everyday life are then linked back into the institutional structures from which they derive (Smith, 2005: 104). There are layers of interpretations and everyday meanings associated with these: social reality refers to the material and socially constructed world within which everyday life occurs, which can have an impact on people's lives, in terms of both providing opportunities and imposing restrictions, and one of the factors being analyzed is whether or not these constructions are reducing life chances and choices for those who do not have access to the IBDP by effectively reducing their social mobility (Milburn, 2009). The decision making processes that have taken place inside schools and colleges impact on people's lives, and absolutely make a difference in terms of enabling them to reach their full potential, by attending university, keeping open a wider range of subject choices, and so on. These are critical areas affecting life opportunities, which SLTs involved in this doctoral research process, have taken decisions on.

According to Blaikie (2007: 15), the nature of social reality exists, it can be argued, on three levels: the empirical, the actual, and the real. The ontological position of *realist* is selected, as developed by Bhaskar, where 'Social reality is viewed either as social arrangements that are the products of material but unobservable structures of relations' (Blaikie, 2007:16). We operate within existing social realities but at the same time we have agency whereby we can not

only reproduce existing meanings, but also produce new ones. It is at this intersection in which new realities (that are produced by changes in the structures) which are of interest, and whether or not our structures reproduce social inequalities, as with Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) education becomes merely a form of cultural reproduction. Bowles and Gintis (1976) also analyzed this question and developed their ‘correspondence principle’ from it, arguing that the structures in school education mimicked the relationship with work processes that children would encounter in the workplace. Therefore, the educational system functioned in order to meet the demands of wider capitalist society rather than for individual educational purposes. There is always of course the danger that ‘correspondence theories’ may over-estimate the linkage between factors that determine outcomes or that which are reproduced in one sphere from realities said to exist in another. It is in the actual relations of social and psychological forces that we can find meanings and explanations. These relations of forces are complex, imbricated and sometimes opaque; they also operate in the context of ideological determinations and unrecognised but powerful pre-suppositions which can over-determine social results.

2.6 Educational inequality

The issue of educational inequality is important: whilst constructing the thesis, several references to studies of educational stratification were utilized, as discussed in the literature review, above. These references - now almost classical - derived mainly from macro-sociological perspectives. See Table 4 on Educational and Analytical Key Themes on page 66. These include:

- Bourdieu (1986): and his capitals being a critical area of analysis
- A.H.Halsey (1965) for his role in introducing comprehensive schooling
- Goldthorpe and Lockwood (1978) for their work on class and social mobility (and the role that education plays in that)
- Apple (1970) for his critical education stance that questions the quality of mainstream education, and work to democratize education policy.
- Simon (1988) for the role he played in campaigning for state education and in running Forum: the journal for 3-19 comprehensive education
- Dorling (2014) for his recent work on the ‘Inequality and the 1%’

- Wilkinson and Pickett (2009) for the role they have played in highlighting the rising trends of educational inequality in England today
- Benn (2011) and how this feeds in to the campaigning work that she has done through her books and articles advocating comprehensive education, and for higher spending levels on education, a factor that is considered a significant issue here when discussing the resource intensive nature of the IBDP.

These authors are stated because they help to provide the conceptual frame for the research - in terms of concepts with empirical scope and reach. They are different, therefore, from the intellectual sources assessed in the literature review chapter, above.

2.7 Epistemology

Since the realist ontology has been chosen, the accompanying epistemology is that of *neo-realism*, whereby:

Neo-realism rejects *empiricism*'s pattern model of explanation: that explanation can be achieved by establishing regularities, or constant conjunctions, within phenomena or between events. According to *neo-realism*, establishing such regularities is only the beginning of the process. What is then required is to locate the structures or mechanisms that have produced the pattern or the relationship.

Blaikie, 2007: 22.

The epistemological position here concerns causality, and is one of discovering the inter-dependence of events. This is relevant in similar ethnographic studies with phenomenological elements, such as elucidated well by Shor (1980, 1986), as mentioned in the literature review above: where his students' experiences of studying in New York in the 1970s were vastly different to HE experiences of other social class groups. Furthermore, the working class group's first time experience through HE was vastly different also for the tutors, as their realities comprised both being altered by their shared experiences:

...a researcher's biography, culture, professional training, and membership in a scientific community influence the ontological and epistemological assumptions adopted. This, in turn, influences what is seen, and how it is understood.

Blaikie, 2007: 43.

It is the author's role of having worked in these schools and colleges, and having membership of these professional groups, but wanting to understand the events

that have led to this particular decision change on the implementation of the IBDP, and what it generated and denied access to for different social groups, that is influencing what is seen and how it is understood. In order to understand the rapid take-up of the IBDP and the changes that it led to in the post-16 English system, the epistemic subjects were first selected, but have subsequently changed over time. The first group were the students studying (Strand 1) and middle tier staff (Strand 2) delivering this programme. But this evolved into a tangential study of how a group of HEI students viewed the IBDP over a longer period of time (Strand 3), and latterly, as the decisions were being made to withdraw the IBs DP (in the state sector schools and colleges) the main epistemic subject has become the leaders in these centres (Strand 4).

This is because the main epistemic subject which has generated knowledge in this area are those leaders who make the decisions on changing policy, and curriculum choice for their students – such as adopting or withdrawing the IBDP. This epistemic knowledge has been validated in a variety of different ways throughout this doctoral research process. For example: by recording and transcribing of all 28 of the interviews with these senior leaders, and then returning the transcripts to these interviewees to check the interview transcripts for accuracy.

According to neo-realist epistemology, this form of the validation of knowledge by establishing such regularities is only the beginning of the process:

What is then required is to locate the structures or mechanisms of the structures that have produced the pattern or relationship. Mechanisms are nothing more than the tendencies or powers of things to act in a particular way. The capacity of a thing to exercise its powers, or the likelihood that it will, depends on whether or not the circumstances are favourable.

Blaikie, 2007: 22.

The methodology was then chosen to ensure that the object of knowledge was handled appropriately: the data set was interpreted through a coding process that could allow for both the epistemic subject's own voice to be heard in the data (Gibbs, 2007), and for an aspect of reflective knowing to be utilised within this fourth strand of the data collected. Hence, this became the most important

strand, as it was the senior leaders' opportunity to comment on *why* they had implemented the IBDP, and what they now *felt* about that experience.

2.8 The research process

Figure 1 on page 30, summarizes the eight stage research process, and Table 1 on page 15 summarizes the empirical data collection process. To clarify, the actual research process involved:

- two groups of students: IB and A-Level cohorts through semi-structured questionnaire and focus groups (in three centres)
- middle tier staff: Heads of Department in focus groups (in three centres)
- a four year semi-longitudinal study of an IB and A2 group of undergraduate students transitioning to HE and beyond: focus group every Autumn Term of study and a final focus group on completion of their BA (Hons)
- Senior Leadership Team members (Heads of Sixth, Directors of IB and Directors of Academic Studies, and Head Teachers/Principals, Executive Principals) through individual interviews of around an hour, from eight centres: four state and four independent.

For the diagram that explains an overview of this research process, see Figure 1 on page 30. The pages that describe this process are between 31 and 35. There are a number of key factors that have to be considered throughout all eight of these phases of the research process, namely the key areas of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, as described by Lincoln and Guba, 2005:159. Table 7 is adapted from Lincoln and Guba, and shows how the chapters and areas of this thesis correspond with these important research process principles:

Table 7 - Adapted table from Lincoln and Guba (2005) criteria

Lincoln and Guba Criteria	Type of evidence
----------------------------------	-------------------------

Credibility	<p>Sustained involvement in the research setting, having taught for 20 years, having used a purposive sample of schools and colleges where the author had been a known professional, from teaching at this Level.</p> <p>Figure 1: Ed D Research Process on page 30.</p> <p>Process of checking transcripts, and developing coding criteria – Chapter 2. Interview findings - Chapter 3.</p>
Transferability	<p>This study contains descriptions of the research (on all four strands of the research process) over 8 phases as presented in Chapter 2 (See Figure 1: Ed D Research Process diagram).</p> <p>Using a combination of questionnaires, focus groups and interviews (Chapter 2), first-order data comes largely from coded interview process, but second-order data from the DfE, ISC/HMC, and the IBO, as well as Chapter 1: The Literature Review that demonstrates the theoretical underpinning of the thesis.</p>
Dependability	<p>Methodology discussion within Chapter 2, on rigour and application of methodology applied with integrity.</p> <p>Interviewees share feelings and experiences on the successes and failures of introducing the IBDP into their centre, during Strand 4, at phases 6 and 7 of the research process as discussed in the findings (Chapter 3), and The Analysis & Discussion (Chapter 4), these findings were correctly verified and authenticated, and derived from the evidence.</p>
Confirmability	<p>The findings are shaped by different perspectives other than just the researcher (this brings more objectivity to the study):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Student semi-structured questionnaires and focus groups - Middle Tier staff focus groups - 28 SLT member interviews - Wider literature base <p>(as evidenced across Chapters 1, 2, 3, and 4).</p>

2.8.1 Critical realism

All of the above factors have resulted in the adoption in this thesis of what Blaikie (2007) refers to as a critical realist approach to social enquiry. This is the concept used by Archer, in her wide analysis of the ‘Social Origins of Educational Systems’ (2013). By adopting this critical realist perspective, in addition to the phenomenological perspective, the validity and utility of a mixed method approach has been successfully maintained, as is evidenced in Table 8: Research Methods – mapping, approaches, and data sources, below. Critical realism in this case means adopting and arguing for their relevance, a set of related ‘sociological’ or ‘socio-psychological’ concepts which have in terms of the RS and RQs here demonstrated real analytical power, as was depicted above in Table 4 on page 66: Educational and Analytical Key Themes.

This framework of concepts, as a diagram, which indicate where in the thesis the relevant empirical data is vis-à-vis each of the linked concepts, and also where the key themes and theoretical insights are to be found, is depicted below in Table 8: Research Methods: mapping, approach and data sources. However, it is necessary to also justify this positioning of use of a critical realist stance because of the number of alternative research paradigms that are available to the social researcher, as opposed to the scientific researcher. As Scott (2005) argues:

Education researchers have in general a more difficult task: the objects with which they are dealing - individual behaviour, relations between individuals and structural properties of systems - are more likely to change across time and be different in different settings, and those external conditions that allow those powers and capabilities to be manifested do not remain constant.

Scott, 2005: 643.

This difference between open and closed systems is therefore important to the critical realist as social relations take place in open systems. Researching in such open systems is fraught with difficulty because of the nature of the variables that can occur. This research process has been meticulous to ensure that codes were followed: consent forms were written and distributed before every interaction, information letters were written and given out, interviews recorded and

transcribed before coding processes took place, sent back to staff for checking and verification, debrief information given out and access to final study given and explained (Mason, 2002: 44). But that does not mean that the interviews were ‘truthful’ or ‘accurate’ (in any absolute sense), if they had been done in a different week, or month, or financial cycle, they would have potentially elicited different responses, as they are a product of a changing education system (and a fluid ‘phenomenological’ and situational context). As Scott argues:

Our constructs and categories are, therefore, implicated in the nature of that social world. Any descriptions we make about the way social life is constructed refer to a world that has been constructed in part by other descriptions that have been made of that social world in the past and are presently being made. Furthermore, any statements we make, including statements about the relationship between ontology and epistemology, fall into this category and are, therefore, to some extent relative to previous attempts to make sense of the world.

Scott, 2005: 644.

So, bearing this critical realist perspective in mind, a critical realist position accepts a number of foundational principles:

- a) that philosophical concerns need to be addressed prior to making decisions about strategies and methods; b) that it is not possible to describe the world in an infinite number of ways because reality acts as a constraint to how it can be described; c) that there are objects in the world that exist whether they are known by anyone or not; d) that there is a need to focus on social practices that are not predetermined by social structures since human beings are knowledgeable agents with powers to make a difference and thus have the capacity to monitor their actions and change the practical setting of action (cf. Giddens, 1984); and e) that a notion of error is accepted in relation to the possibility of providing a correct view of reality.’

Scott, 2005:645.

Critical realism, then, is believed to be the most appropriate RP for this study as it takes the elements of the background of hermeneutics, and places emphasis on the ability of social science to use some of the methods of science to give rigour to social objects and patterns (Outhwaite, 1978). Bhaskar (1978) paid close attention to the views of causal laws (in positivism) as constant conjunctions. Blaikie (2007) has described Bhaskar’s argument that distinction exists between a causal law and a pattern of events:

A constant conjunction must be backed up by a theory that provides an explanation of the link between the two events, a theory that provides a conception or picture of the mechanisms or structure at work. These structures and mechanisms are nothing more than the tendencies or powers that things have to act in particular way in particular

circumstances. Therefore, critical realism is ultimately a search for generative structures and mechanisms.

Blaikie, 2007:147.

In similarity with Giddens (1990), then, Bhaskar (1978) thought that the generative structures (as developed in this research study through coding systems), ‘considered it important to distinguish the knowledge (meanings) used in action, from the beliefs (motives) that prompt or rationalize it’ (Blaikie, 2007:148). So in terms of the research process carried out, the critical realist research paradigm adopted has developed a theory showing that the declining use of the IBDP in the state sector both adds to the decline of social mobility in the wider society and acts as a form of social closure for state school students attempting to access more elite HE institutions in England. Effectively, the leadership in the independent sector are able to increasingly ‘colonise’ this qualification in order to develop a ‘globally mobile transnational political elite’ (Savage et al, 2015:243) who have greater accumulated capitals and thus form part of a new structure in society. The accumulation aspect of capitals (or what sociologists term the CARs approach: capitals, assets, and resources (Savage et al, 2005) is particularly important, as the ability of a social group to be a ‘class for itself’ (i.e. class as composed of people who are class conscious), (Savage et al, 2015:3) means that they share similar tastes and social networks, and – arguably – choice of educational qualifications for their children.

The nature of reality for what social networks can exist, is addressed through a *realist* ontology, and an accompanying epistemology of knowing why these networks have developed , leads to the *neo-realistic* epistemology (Blaikie: 146), both of which are compatible with a critical realist perspective. Bhaskar himself gave priority to ontology over epistemology: he was ‘committed to the reality of social structures, viewed as the relations between social agents in social positions. These structures have an influence on social activity, in that they both enable and constrain actions’ (Blaikie, 2007:148). However, Benton and Craib (2001) have taken this idea further, arguing that it is only by the behaviours of social agents that social structures are not only reproduced but transformed, even if the empirical transformation is in a regressive direction (Benton and Craib, 2001:132). The ontological issue is concerned with uncovering the attitudes,

feelings, and insights of the active agents in the process under scrutiny. These have been given validity in the structure of the empirical research programme undertaken in the thesis, as evidenced in the Empirical Research Data, Table 1, on page 15.

The argument put forward is that the education system facilitated access to the IBDP by introducing a policy that made access fairer, but following the financial collapse of 2008 withdrew that additional access, and as a result the state sector centres that are currently managing to maintain the IBDP at the expense of other forms of provision, as it is more expensive to deliver and now draws down no additional funding. The SLTs who choose to keep this curriculum choice going in their centres are making this decision based on access of groups to it, and the additional social mobility (or lack of social closure) that they can see gives to their student body. The debate is on *who* produces this knowledge of the IBDP, and who therefore makes it an epistemic subject (Blaikie, 2007: 181).

As Mason (2002) argues, flexibility is the key when trying to research qualitative data of this nature, as decision-making needs to take place as the research proceeds:

when working with an ontological and epistemological model where theory is generated from empirical data, and data generation and sampling decisions are made in the light of the evolving theoretical analysis, then you cannot – and will not want to – specify in advance all the details of your research design, numbers,...

Mason, 2002:45.

The fact that these SLT interviews have come later on in the research design is not particularly unusual in this type of research process, particularly a longer term piece of doctoral research. The following Table 8 explains where the research methods are mapped out throughout the thesis, alongside their corresponding relevant approaches and data sources.

Table 8 - Research Methods – mapping, approaches, and data sources

Research Paradigm/ Approach	Research Method	Rationale for data source	Activity and action	Key themes and focus	Location in thesis
Reflexive Constructionist Qualitative	Research notes Semi-Structured Questionnaires Focus groups Interviews	semi-longitudinal focus group	concept development piloting data collection of data, coding and condensation of data analysis and interpretation	- why have leadership teams made the decision to implement the IBDP? -what have SLT's learnt from implementing non-mandatory policy? - has the IBDP led to any social mobility or social closure? - how are 'capitals' deployed in those who access the IBDP?	Intro, aims and objectives Sections: 2.1/ 2.4/ 2.8/2.9 and 2.12 Sections 3.5 and 3.6 Sections 4.2 and 4.3
Inductive content analysis	SLT interviews	feelings and experiences captured as data	inductive category development	Challenge/Curriculum/Learning Curve/Beliefs	Section 3.6
Critical Realist concepts	SLT interviews	meanings versus motives	Critical insight applied to findings	Learning processes	Sections 2.12 /3.6/and 4.3
External textual evidence	IBO and government documentation School/College visits & websites	externally verifiable evidence textual objectivity	collection of documents assessment of relevance analysis	verification of research context(s): 8 centres Validity tests: themes in context	Sections 1.2/1.4/1.6/1.7/ 1.10./2.10 and Appendix 12 (pages 18-36) Tables 5 and 9 Section 4.2
Critical reflexivity	Reflective accounts	professional judgments on achieving implementation processes evaluated self-reflection	Self-evaluation and critique	social and educational reasoning transformation and changes	Table 4 Sections 5.1/5.2/5.3/5.4/ 5.5/5.6/5.7 and 5.10.
<i>This shows the supporting theories and perspectives which drove the research itself...</i>					

2.9 Four strands of research: processes and procedures

The original thinking behind the use of these methodologies in the first three strands of the research process (phases 2 to 5), was to determine the student and middle tier staff perspective of how their programmes were preparing them for Higher Education, and whether or not students or staff ‘felt’ that the IBDP better prepared them than AS/A2 courses, or Pre-U if in the independent sector. This concept of ‘feelings’ was considered important as there were some strong views on how the IBDP groups were small in comparison to very large A-Level groups and resources were therefore being ‘unfairly’ distributed between the two groups, particularly in state schools. The IBDP was already in the process of being removed in two of these centres when the focus groups with staff were undertaken, and they showed real anger at the decisions of the SLTs, when staff had invested so much time and attention into establishing the IBDP into their centre. But equally, the staff whose A-Level group class sizes had carried on increasing, in order to accommodate the funding of the IBDP in their centre were also angry, and considered it unfair.

The research procedures involved in each of these methods, were applied rigorously at every stage of the process. After having gained individual written consent from the head/principal of each school/college, contact was made with the Middle Tier staff to send home letters with the students for their parents (as they were under 18), on the research study, and the opt-out nature of the research process. The information letter (see Appendix 1) explained that a doctoral researcher was coming in to the centres to revise methodology to the students; and highlight this research process as part of the session. If they did not want their children to complete the questionnaires or attend the focus groups there would be no element of the students having to complete the questionnaire or attend a focus group, because of the “voluntariness” of the research process (University of Derby, Ethics Code, 2011).

Then dates were organised for the appropriate teaching slots with the relevant staff, these had been chosen near Easter to fit in with revision sessions in Research Methods. Then, on attending the centres in person, the author first went through the research process with the students, then the information letters, then consent forms, with information on how to sort out a unique code for anonymised data retrieval (Cohen et al, 2007). Finally, the semi-structured questionnaires were given out, collected and stored separately from the consent forms. Then debrief information, right to withdraw from topic, and access to final study information was given out. After the questionnaire process was completed, a group were asked to self-select to participate in a focus group if they were interested in taking part in the lunch-time. The processes of consent were reproduced in relation to the focus groups in each centre that provided this purposive sample, (Miles et al, 2014:32), and these processes were subsequently replicated for Middle tier staff: Heads of Department to take part in the focus groups, again in all three centres.

The questionnaires were completed from nearly 150 students across all three of the initial educational centres concerned in the research process (N=147). The response rate was really good (virtually 100%) because the questionnaires were completed as part of the A-Level and IB taught sessions on Methodology inside both their Sociology and Psychology classes. These classes were all studying Research Methods as part of their programmes, and the first three centres involved in this doctoral research process asked me to explain this doctoral research as part of the revision process for those units. The timings were very good, near Easter when that area of the specification has been reached. Therefore, the social science department staff body were keen to have what is often considered as a 'dry' topic made more interesting and relevant for the students - by seeing a doctoral research process taking place 'for real'. These sessions were all co-taught with the relevant member of staff, and the description of what the research hoped to achieve was left deliberately non-specific, so as not to lead any of the semi-structured answers given (Cohen et al, 2007).

This meant that an entire research process was outlined within a session:

- initial ideas
- research design and discussion of relevant methodology
- gaining of ethical consent
- illustrating importance of institution, centre, and individual consent
- giving an individual copy of invitation to participate (this had also been sent to parents beforehand, on an ability to 'opt-out' basis, as the students were under 18)
- showing how the consent process works (and collecting their own consent forms in, separately from the questionnaires, and explaining the logic and ethical positioning of that)
- explaining the process of identification for removing their information from the study, if they changed their minds (showing the students how to generate a unique identification process for data retrieval)
- actively encouraging individuals not to participate (ironically!) to show how questionnaire response rates can be variable, and discussing alternative mediums for them (online, postal etc), and how the response rate differs with these as a consequence
- discussing the ethical considerations of filling in questionnaires together (such as peer pressure, copying responses and so on)
- running through the debriefing document, and its importance, explaining contact details (and how important it is to keep these up-to-date)
- reminding the individuals of their right to withdraw (and illustrating this process through the construction of a mock e-mail)
- showing how the unique identification code used on the consent information and the questionnaire forms – and held separately from each other – is used to identify the correct papers (and how they would then be removed from the pile collected in)
- reminding the groups of their right to see a completed copy of the completed research at the end of the project (explaining current web based access, we looked one up online – that the author had provided the details for)
- explaining timescales of research projects: these were 16/17 year olds and 17/18 year olds (some of whom had heard of PhDs, but none had heard of the concept of a professional doctorate, Ed D, DBA or otherwise), and they were genuinely horrified at the 6-8 year timescale of my part-time research study.

This was a useful exercise in many ways, and feedback e-mails were received from the staff group involved, who were grateful for the sessions and reported back that they had generated useful discussion for the subsequent revision sessions. This, in part, helped to gain access to the SLTs in these first three centres, given the demands on their time, and this is clearly an argument that comes back to the insider-outsider nature of the research process as discussed above.

These sessions then involved highlighting how any research study proceeds, and how this doctoral research process is no different to that. We had classroom based discussions at the same time on the funding of these processes and how this works with larger (and smaller) scale projects. Some students had elder siblings engaged in final year undergraduate or Master's theses, some staff had

engaged in subject-based masters or MA Eds. One member of staff had a subject-based PhD, so explained the differences to the class between that and the Professional Doctorate route.

The findings were then verified and authenticated in a number of different ways (Savin-Baden and Howell Major, 2013). Firstly, by having members of staff in the sessions with the author, she was able to type up notes on the questionnaire findings and share the provisional data with the staff concerned, which resulted in a few interesting conversations. Secondly, from the focus groups: the author was the moderator with the question list - but she had individuals in the rooms with me who had acted as assistant moderators - these individuals were able to run the digital tape recorder, and keep the sessions to time. On the day they were able to sign the paperwork and later on the transcripts for further data authentication.

Strands 1 and 2 are discussed further in the findings, but the information from them was very useful in some ways for background information on how the students had considered access to HEIs and very much struck a chord with Savage et al's (2015) chapter on 'The Tale of Two Campuses', in two of the three centres, but not the third. This was reflective of differing levels of understanding centring on HEI access and cultural capital, in particular. These strands were also interesting in how they had informed the subsequent strands, for example, Strand 1 was the views of students at 16-19, who in many ways were either reflecting the environments they were in, but were focussed on that stage, ie in getting to university, and their teachers were the middle tier researched for Strand 2, and these views were diverse as is commented on in the findings.

Strand 3 was a four year semi-longitudinal study of an IB and A2 group of undergraduate students transitioning to HE and beyond. There was a focus group every Autumn Term of study and a final focus group on completion of their BA (Hons) degree. The HEI student group has - in some ways – been considered an additional piece of research, as it became a small group of eight students, but it does shed some light on the cultural capital expectations of some

schools in relation their IB cohorts, as is demonstrated in the next chapter. It also served an interesting purpose professionally, watching a group of students over a four year process, being part of a Red-brick university environment whilst the author was teaching in a Million+ university. The difference in their 'ease' (Khan, 2011) and view on entitlement about where they expected to go after graduating was very illuminating, as they exhibited huge confidence in their abilities to move forward and achieve in the areas that they wanted to operate in, and used phrases in the focus group such as 'taking charge', 'owning the environment', 'displaying the leadership skills', whereas former students were far more cautious and hesitant, and talked about being 'unsure, but maybe doing...' and 'if lucky enough, could...'. This strand was in many ways considered additional because the interest of the group, particularly in their post-university focus group (Appendix 19), their focus had shifted to the world of work and their professional occupations.

The differences exhibited in the professional choices made by these students is very much tied in with Savage et al's (2015) research. These findings cannot be considered concrete because of the size of the cohort of 8. However, it is not clear from the data provided and the examples given in the focus groups, whether the advantage of the ex-IBDP students is from the curriculum studied or the type of university attended. The two topics have conflated, and are so intertwined that they seem impossible to separate as the students allude to both elements in the focus groups, as is discussed in 3.5 Strand 3 HEI focus group findings. The information from these transcripts though, very much helped to shape the research process going into the school senior leadership teams, to see if senior school staff recognised a particular degree of agency that was being given to IBDP students.

Strand 4 was the final strand of this doctoral research process (phases six and seven in thesis overview): the interviews with the Senior Leadership Team members. This strand was the most recent - and most important - as these are the staff making/taking the current decisions considering whether or not the IBDP should stay in their centre, even if it currently making a loss, for example. These

appointments ranged from meeting heads of sixth, directors of IB, and directors of academic studies, and head teachers/principals, and executive principals. The individual interviews approximately lasted an hour each. The SLTs were from eight centres: four state and four independent. As with the other elements of the research process this involved making pre-agreed appointment times, and trying to see if multiple members of the SLT could be met on each visit, as all the schools/colleges involved were significant distances away.

Originally, the determining factors from staff (which were responsible for managing the Diploma Programme in their centre), were believed to be what their motivations for introducing the IBDP into their centre were. However, as the fourth and final strand of the research interviewed all members of the SLTs, these areas were covered within those interviews. In particular, the analysis concentrated on:

- the increased UCAS tariff given to the IBDP
- any pressure felt from particular groups of parents to introduce the IBDP
- their general views of what the IBDP were
- if they were aware of the negative academic press regarding issues of social closure, and mono-culturalism regarding the IBDP
- any strong feelings on what the IBDP could ‘do’ for their student body
- if so, why had these views arisen?

Table 9 – Breakdown of SLT interview details.

Table removed to ensure anonymity of participants and centres.

The focus of this data was also to ensure that the research process was as up-to-date as possible with the policy landscape, given how fast it has moved during the duration of this thesis. These interviews were also the most time-consuming part of this doctoral research process: having completed 28 of them lasting

approximately an hour each, transcribing them, confirming their authentication of the record with the SLT member and then coding them by hand, to see what they contain (Creswell, 2009). A form of software such as Computer Aided Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) could have been utilised to help with this process (Silverman, 2014), but as the data had been transcribed by hand, it was felt that the author knew it well enough. Also, the number of interviews gradually crept up, as different reasons from the interview process kept being generated by the individual SLT members, so a particular set number was not in mind at the start of the process. The use of the Mayring (2000) categorization process to the SLT interviews in the fourth strand was therefore considered to be very significant, as it meant that an appropriately rigorous and theoretical stance was being applied to the transcripts once they had been typed up, and verified.

Mayring's (2000) step by step procedure is a key part of the justification of the critical realist ethno-methodological research strategy and it stresses that SLTs were more important to this research process as the work evolved because they understood and engaged with the level of policy-making. Concepts and categories were identified, based on the material obtained. The interview questions and the given answers served as a framework to which expressions of emotions involving feelings and experiences were explored. This again allowed a general overview of the research questions. The aim of the enquiry was to gather information from the SLTs concerning the aims of the research questions 'Why do SLTs make the decision to implement non-mandatory policy?', and 'How, then, do these SLTs deal with the successes or failures that this can bring?'. This research process explores the challenges that come with introducing a policy such as the IBDP, which is widely considered to be 'prestigious', but it is not mandatory and has not been awarded any additional funding since 2009 (DCFS, 2009), despite the rhetoric from senior politicians espousing favour of it, as was detailed back in Chapter 1.

Qualitative content analysis allows descriptions of the interview content to be systematically evaluated. According to Mayring (2000), the qualitative content analysis is a methodically controlled proceeding that is theory and standard

conducted. However, Silverman (2014) argues that qualitative content analysis is a process of bringing order and structure to a mass of data. It is, essentially, a search for statements about relationships among relevant categories of data. The categories developed in this study are defined as all expressions of feelings and experiences in regard to leading; which refer to the introduction of a new choice of curriculum. The step by step procedure of inductive category formation was utilised.

Summarizing the data involved paraphrasing expressions of feelings and experiences. It involved selection, grouping and abstractions of expressions. This is a combination of reducing the material by skipping statements included in a generalization in the sense of summarizing it on a higher level of abstraction. A systematic procedure of content analysis is applied in order to reduce the inevitable presence of the subjective influence of the leader's own opinion. Contrary to deductive, the inductive category development used in this research study is formulated directly out of the material (content), without pre-formulated theoretical concepts. The conceptual material from the 'framework' shaped the RQs and RS, so that the resulting thesis was theoretically structured but not 'determined'.

Within the institutional ethnography of the eight centres that provided the SLT sample(s) the school and college leaders played a determining role at a given level of 'action and agency' and this is in contrast to the role played by both students and middle tier leaders. The IBDP research focus changed through the time frame, as is explained in Figure 1 above (on page 30), with moving through the phases 1 to 8. But the particular focus that enabled the move from students and middle tier staff to the senior leaders related to the policy changes that they were both responsible and accountable for.

This reformulation was triggered in Centre 1, when the first pilot of the questionnaires and focus groups was being conducted, on the same day that the SLT were announcing that they were withdrawing the IBDP and everyone in the

IB1 class was in tears, as no other group, coming up at Centre 1, would be given the same opportunities that they were. This was after six years of excellent results; the IB Director was furious! That day showed me that the students and staff were keen, and the SLT may well have been keen but for a range of reasons they were now withdrawing the IBDP from their centre. Figure 2 is a diagrammatic explanation of how the four strands inside this doctoral research process therefore evolved:

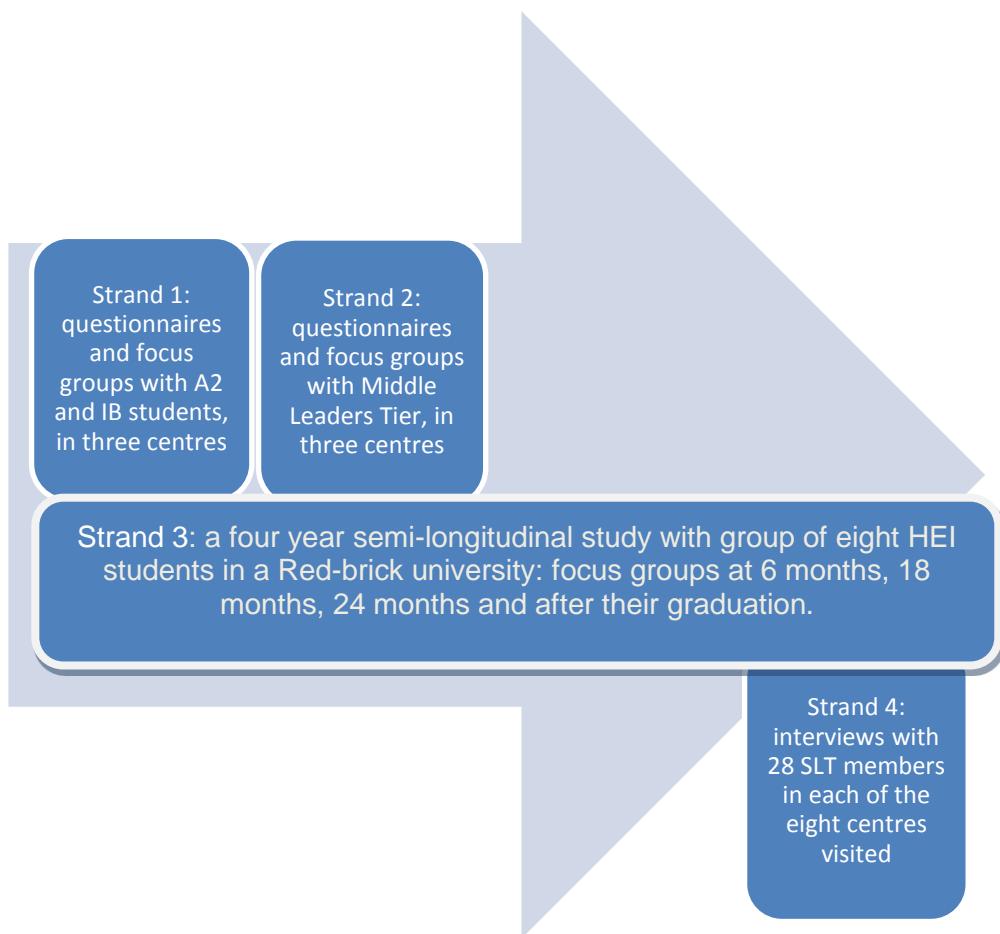


Figure 2 - The strands involved in this doctoral research process

2.10 The question of characterization

The centres that generously gave me access to their staff and students for this research process are disparate in some significant respects, but have some shared characteristics which made them credible and appropriate partners for the research. Naturally, one feature was the fact that the author's own professional knowledge base and experience was based in the first three centres, having taught in them, and thus they all had some significant commonality for the purposes for which they were selected, other than the fact that they were all prepared to be involved in this doctoral research process. Work and professional impact within these institutions was a significant factor as it gave me insights, understanding and a professional standing, with which they were able to respond and engage with me, and in this way they form a purposive sample. (Mason, 2002: 124).

All of the schools and colleges themselves are geographically disparate, ranging from the South-East to the South, to the South West, the West and East Midlands and East Anglia. They all had SLTs which had implemented the IBDP but two of the four state centres involved subsequently withdrew from it. The two centres that still maintain it do so in challenging circumstances. The original intention was to use just three centres, but when it was realized that the anonymity of these centres (in a document that would eventually have public access through the web) could not be guaranteed, and the nature of the research was at risk of being out-of-date given that the state centre take-up of the IBDP was in decline, the number of centres involved in the SLT interviews was increased, in an attempt to gain a fuller picture of the policy-decisions that were being taken.

The additional centres, approached for the SLT interviews, were also ones which incorporated contacts, and so made an approach to their SLT members for interviews seem reasonable, and not particularly out of the blue. Indeed on each occasion a member of the staff was known to me in a professional capacity. Due to the inductive nature of the coding, it was felt that more individual senior responses needed to be listened to, as it was strongly felt that the point had not

been reached, where all potential categories had been uncovered (Mason, 2002:138). Whereas, by the time all 28 interviews had been conducted the research process had got to the point where it was felt that all angles had been covered (Spradley, 1979), on a reasonable number of occasions, and no new areas or reasons (either to adopt the IBDP or pull the plug on the programme) seemed to be arising in conversation.

It was an original intention to précis information on the centres involved, but as these had been guaranteed anonymity, and the centre sample size has widened from 3 to 8 involved in total, there seems little sense writing about centres that the author has actively chosen not to characterize. A characterisation of the centres, (as in the research of Ball et al, 2003) which depicted the schools in their research process by invented names, as other pieces of research have also commonly done, was deliberately rejected here. It was interesting that a session of the BELMAS annual conference in 2015 discussed the merits of this characterization process, with contributors who both had and had not characterized their centres. Social researchers have to be very careful when anonymity is promised. Identifying centres through their web and social media profiles can be very easy – especially when they have been allocated a name that also invokes something of the character and the ethos of their institutions. For these reasons the centres in this research process are referred to by numbers and the individual SLT respondents by letters, only.

2.11 Ethical considerations

Some of the ethical dimensions of this research study have already been discussed, but the research process thoroughly implemented and utilised the ethics policies and procedures of the University of Derby, in a document entitled ‘University Research Ethics Committee: Policy and Code of Practice on Research Ethics’. The standard ethical processes were worked through firstly for institutional consent, as part of the taught Ed D process, and then with all four strands involved in the research process. Having completed and passed all three

taught Ed D units, and having completed a Learning Proposal for Independent Study, the formal transfer to the research phase took place in July 2010.

On a basic level, through all four strands of research, all individuals received an 'Invitation to participate in the study' letter containing: information on the study, giving the process of their consent, the process of withdrawal of this consent, debriefing information and how to access to the full research project (see Appendix 1). Everyone who took part in this research process was required to sign individual consent forms, to confirm their consent to take part in the project, after having received their information letter. This was after developing a unique code, so that these ethical consent forms could be stored separately to the information that they have given – irrespective of format (questionnaires, focus groups or interviews: Kamberelis and Dimitriadis, 2013). This process enabled participants to be able to withdraw from the study, without their anonymity being breached. As would be expected in such a process, the confidentiality and security of this data is to be safeguarded for the duration of seven years after the completion of the thesis, and the academic authority of the university is paramount. It should be noted, though, that no requests for the withdrawal of any participant's information have been received during this study.

There are a large range of potential ethical issues raised with collating data from both quantitative methods such as questionnaires, and qualitative methods such as focus groups and interviews (Cohen et al, 2007), which will be further discussed below. But the principle concerns relate to consent and sensitivity. As the original intended research process was to be conducted on the areas of SES, with potential discussion turning to ethnicity and gender, there is - self-evidently - a degree of sensitivity involved (Matthews and Ross, 2010: 84). Although these areas of stratification are often used in sociological research, it was decided that this would not be studied: the centres were too disparate in too many ways to gain any concrete benefit from recording the gender or Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) differences in their experiences of the qualification involved.

There are considerable ethical considerations for this doctoral research process though. The University of Derby ethical guidelines rightly argue that to engage participants in detailed research processes that may not lead to being used in the eventual research process, engages ethical questions, this is also raised by Mason (2002). However, in a project of this duration - as has been described above - professional research interests can morph into something slightly different as professional interests shift over time. The roles held by the author have shifted considerably during the duration of the Ed D research process, as the phases 1 to 8 of the research process diagram in Figure 1 above on page 30 highlighted, but still leaves the position adopted very much that of insider researcher (Blaikie, 2007).

As with the questionnaires and the focus groups detailed above, the same ethical processes were followed for the interviews. This process started with the access to the study information (that had been e-mailed beforehand in all these cases). At the start of that day's interview the SLT member was then talked through the information - to check that it had been read and processed – as they are busy people. Subsequently, the SLT member was then asked to work out their unique code, and sign the consent form, so that the interview could then be recorded for transcription purposes. The interviews were very open-ended, as can be seen in Table 8 below, but were merely used as triggers for discussion content (Silverman, 2014).

What is interesting is that most colleagues referred to the content on a very personal basis, talking to me about how the success and failure made them 'feel' and what they had 'experienced' despite the questions not being put to them like this. This is the connection with Mayring's (2000) methodology on experience and feeling, as utilised through this research process. Only one particular independent head maintained the use of very formal and formalized language, referring to the decisions from the school's perspective rather than from his own perspective. However, this was in a very thriving IB school, and they were clearly successful, so the author put this down to him not wanting to come across as

arrogant, rather than anything that the author thought had been done particularly differently in this interview.

Table 10 - Open ended interview schedule (generic for all SLT members)

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

However, on reflection in Centre 8 the SLT responses were also slightly shorter than they had been everywhere else, so the interview lengths were between 51 and 55 minutes long in this school, as opposed to the 55 to 69 minutes seen elsewhere. This was interesting, as Centre 8 was the only single sex boy's school (including sixth form) that had been visited during this research process: everywhere else had been co-educational. The author's role as a participant

observer may have been relevant, as in all centre's visited some of the informal discussions with senior staff (small-talk on school tours and so on) had discussed her own children's educational positions, and as her secondary age children are both girls it is thought - with hindsight – this might have had an impact on the wider circumstances surrounding the particular responses from that one group of SLT members.

2.12 *The Mayring (2000, 2003, and 2007) model*

This final strand of this doctoral research study is considered to be the most significant. It is based on a qualitative research method that relies on an adapted version of Mayring's (2000) inductive category formation model. Essentially, this involves a mixed approach to collecting and handling data. A framework of concepts and ideas drove this initial work on collecting research data on transition for students from the post-16 sector into HE. Learning and social contexts are very closely entwined, and the impact of 'globalization', 'transition' to HE, how 'prepared' students were, how Middle Leaders 'felt' delivering different types of Level 3 courses, and - critical for this research process – how the onset of mass policy changes in the education system (as described in The Introduction), meant that Senior Leadership Teams 'experienced' very tough choices on curriculum development and the introduction of non-mandatory policy (Dorey, 2014).

Mayring's (2003, 2007) system of coding produces an augmentative generalisation process of the data collection that takes place, where the interview material is analyzed by coding. This method used a semi-structured, open-ended interview study eventually involving all 28 respondents from eight schools and colleges, centring on eight open questions, as listed above in Table 10. This is a type of inductive theory development where coding of statements leads to considerations of clustering and categorising of views and experiences in order to allow further iterative analysis and interpretation. In this application of the Mayring model, the content analysis is via successive coding which enables the qualitative data collected by the SLT interviews to generate valid generalisations

on their experiences of the introduction of non-mandatory policy. In this case: their reasoning to implement the IBDP, and how they felt when (in two cases) it was subsequently withdrawn, as is shown in Figure 3, below.

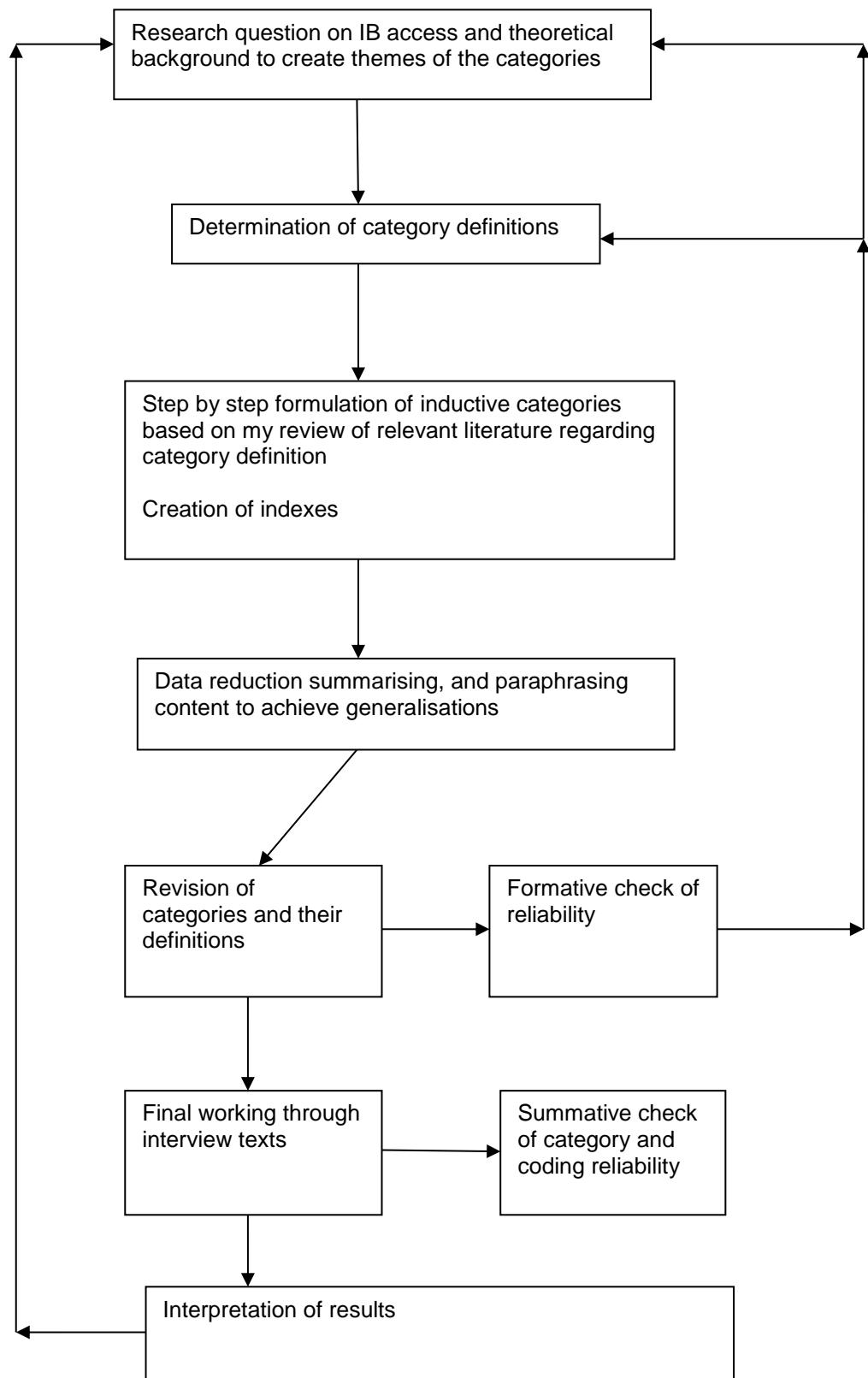


Figure 3 - Step Model of inductive category development

A tentative theoretical position was reached which allowed research questions to be formed. See Table 10: Interview Schedule, above on page 105. A Key Words In Context (KWIC) approach was adopted, so as to allow events and experiences – and the conditions under which they occurred – to be first described, and then subsequently transcribed. See Table 12 on page 113 for some paraphrasing and condensing examples. Limited but valid generalisations were therefore sought. The fourth strand of this research process sought to clarify how some of the decisions on the introduction of non-mandatory education policy were taken, and why these SLTs had taken such decisions and why/how members had learnt from these experiences – even in the centres where the IBDP had been withdrawn. These latter centres were regarded as being especially important.

In other words the research wanted to clarify some of the rules and relationships between variables in a real and existing environments and where there are clearly different variables, with four state and four independent schools/colleges, as all eight of the centres now involved moved into their intended futures in an era of uncertainty, challenge and change adapting their curriculum. As Chitty (2009) argues education policy in Britain is often uncertain.

2.12.1 Coding

A descriptive coding method was adapted to the theoretical framework, in order to identify the basic topic(s) within the passages of qualitative data (i.e. material taken from the Senior Leadership Team's interview statements). Overall topics could be identified from the 28 SLT interviews, rather than their content being identified at this point. The topic is essentially what is discussed in response to the general questions asked, whilst the content is the substance of the message that is received as part of the interview process taking place. The topics are viewed as grounded in the perceptual framework of the SLT respondents themselves. These topics are shaped and encouraged by the more structural and 'meta-level' approach derived from the analytical framework deployed, in a critical realist research paradigm.

This is derived from a range of literature discussed in chapter 1 above, but was in part taken from the data in Table 2: ‘The key features of Small Education and Big Education’, Compass Report, March 2015 (Compass, 2015), as summarized in The Introduction. In this case, as was discussed in the Literature review above, as neo-liberalism dominates the world in which we live and the education system in which we are operating, our approach has become dominated by the ‘small education’ ideas put forward in this particular inquiry by Compass.

Descriptive coding at the start of the research process enables ‘topics’ to be identified and coded using additional survey data. In this particular case, the additional survey data included field notes, research memos, and documentation from the schools and colleges themselves (often from their websites), the DfE, and the IBO (Kenway and Fahey, 2014). The result of this phase of descriptive coding led to a categorised inventory of the data in terms of its scope and topic range, whilst maintaining the possibility of using the participants’ own words, and own terms in order to capture key elements of their description (Given, 2013).

Having been given such generous time allowances from busy SLTs, with ample opportunity for multiple visits, the findings are there for them to see now that this doctoral research process has been completed. Despite the use of anonymised data it is still believed to be very important that the SLT views are heard, for if they had not given me access, this research project would have been significantly different. Despite the use of anonymised data, it is expected that participants would recognise their own words and circumstances, and this is to be welcomed. Whilst the faults in the research all belong to the author, as Silverman (2011) notes, the data is generated with the assistance of all involved.

The use of this In Vivo coding process has enabled me to check what issues are potentially significant for the SLT members: ‘In Vivo coding uses words or short phrases from the participant’s own language in the data record as codes’ (Miles et al 2013: 74). However, in order to test out the SLT member’s own interview responses, an awareness was developed of partial coding their own responses

and interpretations which were derived from a set of conceptual and theoretical propositions which are potentially shared by the author as an insider-researcher (as described above) who is also currently on a centre management team, albeit in a slightly different (HE) context. To attempt to guard against insider researcher status the categories at the end of every transcription/allocation were re-read and checked, and the category given was amended if necessary. A thematic analysis of the results was then developed partly through what Saldana (2013: 49) refers to as ‘analytic memo writing’, and this has formed a significant part of the analysis in the last post-research collection phase.

It is important to return to the nature of the adopted coding process, as this comes from both an inductive and theoretical positioning. The last set of categories centring on ‘beliefs’ (see Tables 9 and 10 below), are clearly theoretical, and these are critical to the partly ethnographic nature, and partly phenomenological nature of this doctoral research process. As Hoey (2008) argues ethnography enables the construction of meanings through such research engagement. In this particular case with the author’s own professional experience and SLTs’ expressed views in the interviews. Over the last few decades:

[I]nterest has grown for considering the close relationship between personal history, motivation, and the particulars of ethnographic fieldwork. Specifically, how do these factors have bearing on the construction of theory and conduct of a scholarly life? Personal and professional experiences, together with historical context, lead individual researchers to their own particular methodological and theoretical approaches.

Hoey, 2008:135

It has been demonstrated that the theoretical and inductive categories developed have constructed meanings through their research engagement. This type of on-going participant observation, first substantially recognised in the anthropological works of Malinowski (1922), was realized for sociologists through the work of Bruyn (1966), which recognises the role that participant observation plays in this process, as Smith (2005) argues:

Institutional ethnography relies on people’s capacities to tell their experience. It is the essential resource for a project that proposes to return inquiry to the everyday world that is shared by both the researcher and by the informant he or she consults, and it preserves in its data the diversity of perspectives from which they came.

Smith, 2005: 123.

Bruyn (1966) argues that the human perspective as a method has to explain itself in the process of making itself, and the philosophical study of the structures of experience and consciousness link to phenomenology; defined as the study of subjective experience (Husserl, 1964), clearly overlap with the participant observation under discussion, and how it has been deployed in the coding process.

In Vivo coding, as deployed here, is followed by structural coding relying on content and concepts which have framed the interviews. The creation of second cycle coding allows the emergence of themes and content, and 'axial' coding identified categories on which other areas revolve. Axial coding allows for the data which has been 'split' during initial coding to be re-assembled so that dominant codes and data can be identified. Synonymous codes can be removed and redundant codes deleted at this stage. A procedure of detailed paraphrasing and condensing of interview material was required, which is extremely time-consuming, but as the cycles proceed the requisite themes emerge (Mayring, 2003).

In this way categories and sub-categories are created, and then contrasted; and the properties of categories can be tested against concepts and the 'spoken realities' of the interviewees. The research process requires a synthesis to emerge where issues can be analyzed and explained. This highlights how education policy - in relation to the IBDP - has been deployed in the last decade. This builds a picture that enables learning to take place from the successes and failures that happen from within the senior leadership teams. Such SLT positions and decisions are critical to their environments (Hargreaves and Fullan, 2012). As Bruyn (1966) explained, when interpreting, the participant observer attempts to be concrete: he carefully describes how he - personally - has come to understand the particular meaning that he presents. Whereas an empirical approach would proceed by operationalising and giving the external conditions under which the study was conducted, a participant observer turns inward instead.

Similarly, the coding process conducted - and explained in the following pages - is where the research process has turned inward and indexes are developed and used as part of the coding procedure for the purpose of data analysis using Mayring's (2000) methodologically controlled, systematic inductive qualitative content analysis. Colours are used to indicate to the reader examples of how codes were derived, which codes were used and which codes were rejected during the process of ongoing data analysis. Numbers in brackets are used to indicate the number of initial incidences occurring in all the interview transcripts, this is an aggregate summary, and does not claim to be all of the evidence of the data.

Table 11 - Main Categories (MCs) for In Vivo coding

- | |
|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. <u>Challenge</u>: real learning/knowledge – the SLT and the centre beyond.2. <u>Curriculum</u>: a changing knowledge base – shifting political time frames.3. <u>Learning curve</u>: the individual and self-understanding – identity and personal viability.4. <u>Beliefs</u>: work and life-long learning – social justice, developing professional capital, and including professional experience. |
|---|

These In Vivo 'thick descriptions' (Geertz, 1973) are then followed by a couple of examples of statements being reduced allocated and coded, to demonstrate how they fit in the Figure 3 on the Mayring (2000) method above on page 105, see the paraphrasing examples in Table 11 below. Both ethnmethodology, as discussed by Garfinkel (1967) and social phenomenology (Schutz, 1976) both need to be considered, since the author is effectively accepted as a member of this SLT group.

To avoid researcher subjectivity; the following quotation of Burkart's (2005) explanation of his dialogic model of feeling is presented without any comments:

Feelings are combined with impulses for expression and processing. The processing of feeling comprises inward mental processes and/or outward actions and is directed at a changing of or coping with the object of feeling. The changed inward or outward situation, either by inward, or outward processing, or independently of the person, is emotionally appraised again, which may change the feelings and so on. The Model with its flow, which returns to the starting point, is only apparently circular. It describes, however a dialectic development in which either the subject and his or her feelings and his or her situation may change (Burkart, 2005:52).

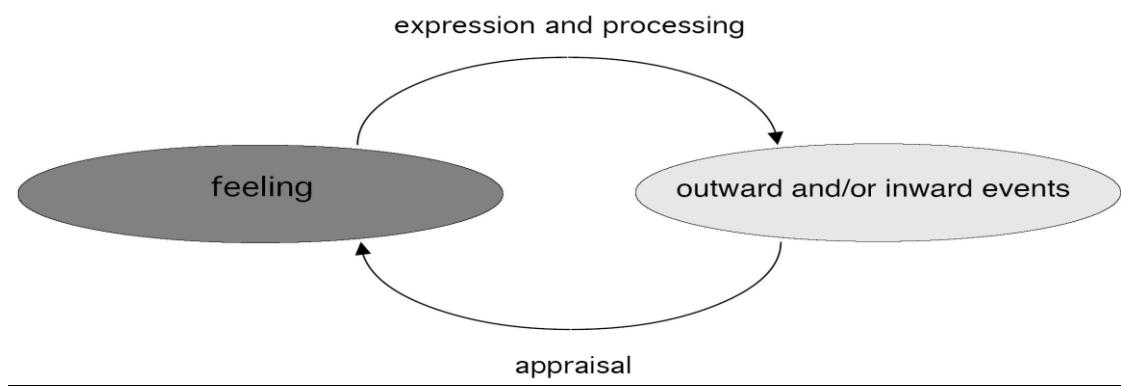


Figure 4 - Dialogic model of feeling (Burkart, 2005:52)

This dialogic model of feeling is considered important, as it helps to explain how members of SLTs can justify the decision-making processes that they go through. These decisions include diverting resources away from one group to another, and increasing the cultural capital of groups who are already more privileged. This model helps to justify the actions that their SLT collectively take when they believe that the outward events justify the circumstances and the decisions that need to be acted upon in their schools and colleges. Table 11, below, shows the inductive categories that were developed after the interview data that was generated. Following on from Table 11, is Table 12 - at the top of the following page – that gives paraphrasing examples from the interview reduction process.

Table 12 - Examples of evolving coding: Inductive and theoretical codes and indexes used for analysis

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| 1. Challenge | 1.1 What is the IBDP? (how is it really different?) (28) |
| | 1.2 Is the IBDP relevant here? (16) |
| | 1.3 Do our students/ parents want it? (22) |
| | 1.4 Can we afford it? (15) |
| 2. Curriculum | 2.1 How do we adopt the IBDP? (24) |
| | 2.2 Getting centre approval/ IBO Training Courses for staff (19) |
| | 2.3 Changing knowledge base: additional costs/ workloads (15) |
| | 2.4 Shifting political time frames: will the DP be covered by additional Government payment? (state) (10) |
| | 2.5 Shall we have to increase fees? (independent) (12) |
| 3 Learning curve: | 3.1 Individual and self-understanding: why doing this? (56) |
| | 3.2 Identity: huge change (3) |
| | 3.3 Personal viability: Is this the right thing to do? (48) |
| | 3.4 What have we learnt/ has gone well? (state/ independent) (72) |
| | 3.5 What have we learnt/ when withdrawn? (state) (22) |
| 4 Beliefs: | 4.1 Work and life-long learning (18) |
| | 4.2 Social justice implications (68) |
| | 4.3 Developing professional capital (22) |
| | 4.4 Including professional experience (38). |

Key to codes:

Numbers of multiple entries (in brackets)

Removed from the final lists of codes

Theoretically-derived codes

Inductively-derived codes – appear on this revised version as red, green and purple.

Table 13 - Paraphrasing examples – qualitative interview reduction

Examples of inductively and theoretically-derived codes

Paragraph/passage	Summary sentences	Keywords (categories/indexes)
<p>We had discussions and thought about the cost, Pete came up with some additional figures, and we thought, well I thought, is it really that much more to deliver than A-Levels? Why does it cost that much more?</p>	<p>Increased costs of introducing the IBDP Curriculum change</p>	<p>1.4 Can we afford it? 2.3 Additional costs/workloads 2.5 Shall we have to increase fees? (independent)</p>
<p>We had one long SLT meeting where we all agreed that we would adopt it [the IBDP] even if the finances did not come off for it in the longer run, you know, we thought it would change our USPs, and thinking that we'd attract a different group into the school, longer term.</p>	<p>Increased costs of introducing the IBDP Are we doing the 'right' thing?</p>	<p>1.2 Is the IBDP really relevant here? 1.4 Can we afford it? 4.2 Social justice implications.</p>

As an exemplar, Appendix 21 is highlighted to demonstrate how the In Vivo coding process repeatedly took place, on each interview transcript, through the identification of phrases and then cycles of reduction and para-phrasing (as shown in Table 13 above), so that eventually interviews of around an hour in length are reduced to a number of particular identified codes, as highlighted in Table 12 above on page 117. Through the Mayring (2000) Step Model of inductive category development, as demonstrated in Figure 3 on Page 110, these highlighted areas were physically cut up condensed, again and again until a set of codes and tallies was thoroughly collected, checked from the interviews. Once this process had been repeated to check on their reliability, the final working through the interview texts took place, so that the results could be tallied and placed in a final version of Table 12 – Examples of evolving coding.

2.12.2 Concepts and frameworks

In addition to the In Vivo coding, there is an additional framework used - as mentioned in The Introduction - that comes from the work of Neitzel and Welzer (2012). The idea behind utilising this framework in this doctoral research process is to enable the views of the SLTs in particular to be heard. In order to make sense of the interview material from the Senior Leadership Teams, the details of the 'felt' level and understanding 'experiences', has been explored. To be able to develop this knowledge base, the framework developed by Neitzel and Welzer (2012) of their 'frames of reference' have been utilised, in order to be able to contextualise the hours of transcript material, and learn from what the different SLT positions have been. Doherty et al (2009) have used a similar frame of reference idea to discuss the use of the IBDP in an Australian national context, namely 'globalization and the social imaginary'.

The 'frames of reference' described by Neitzel and Welzer (2012) are used in order to make sense of the transcriptions they have from soldiers and marines during the Second World War. They describe the need and purpose for these frames as:

Even if people's perceptions and actions are bound up with social, cultural, hierarchical, and biological or anthropological circumstances, human beings always enjoy a certain amount of freedom of interpretation and action. But the ability to interpret and decide presupposes orientation and knowledge of what one is dealing with and what consequences a decision can have. And a frame of reference is what provides orientation.

Neitzel and Welzer, 2012: 8.

These frames of reference become particularly important, as SLT members work inside their own schools and colleges often incorporating mandatory policy changes; that they have no control over (Chitty, 2009), or fending off wider policy changes and constantly dealing with changing spending criteria, and being involved in this level of the decision-making process can be all-consuming (Earley, 2013).

Individuals belong to groups who usually see things in the same way. This means that when asked to make a decision on an area in a particular environment, they do not have to re-think the argument from the beginning. Hence, '*shall we introduce the IBDP into our school?*' is merely that: '*should we do it?*'. It is not a long conversation about being in an already advantaged, selective, exclusive, environment and this is giving our students another advantage on top of all the other advantages they already have... it is just '*should we do it?*', or '*can we afford it*', not a moral retrospective of the system in which the SLT members work:

Most everyday tasks are taken care of by routines, habits, and certainties, and that saves individual human beings a colossal amount of work.

Neitzel and Welzer, 2012: 9.

Therefore, it is essential when seeking to understand the behaviour of any particular group to 'reconstruct the frame of reference in which people operated, including the factors which structured their perception and suggested certain conclusions' (Neitzel and Welzer, 2012:9). For this reason, the frames of reference are being utilised as a way of reconstructing the perceptions of the SLT members outside their complex organisations and into the wider structures in which they operate. The active links between education, globalization, and social change (Lauder et al, 2006), are not always obvious at an operational level. Hence the aim of reconstructing these inductively-coded interviews inside these frames of reference is 'to understand the preconditions for psychologically normal people to do things that they would not otherwise do' (Neitzel and Welzer, 2012:9). Whereas this thesis attempts to explain and understand the everyday, commonsense assumptions of professional practice; a form of practical understanding rooted in the quotidian life of SLTs involved in the IBDP. As such it is part of the justification of the research approach and strategy.

The different 'frames of reference' first needed to be established, before the inductive and theoretically-derived codes could be analyzed. Neitzel and Welzer (2012) distinguish between different orders of frames that have different levels of specificity and concreteness. These frames are important as they provide the

socio-historical backdrop where globalization effects local school and college decision-making, regarding how Senior Leaders are influenced by their emotions concerning whether or not policy change is a '*good thing*' for their students to be able to have the opportunity to take the IBDP. In terms of the inductively developed categories of in vivo coding this frame relates to the 'Challenge' of utilising the IBDP effectively.

The frames of reference are considered to be less concrete than was the case for Neitzel and Welzer (2012), as they were studying historical documents from the period that we now call The Third Reich, whereas this research process studies contemporary data, so this frame relates to late capitalist society (what Bauman, 2000, referred to as 'liquid modernity') where the dominance of neo-liberal influences are high on the educational agenda, concerning marketization, and performativity (Ball et al, 2012). This frame of reference is on the concrete constellation that the IBDP is uniformly prestigious, internationally recognised, and not interfered with by government. This is a vantage point that is little questioned or discussed, especially schools and colleges, (as was discussed in the first chapter's literature review), and provide a consistent language base from which Senior Leaders operate, generating terms unquestioningly, such as '*keeping their options open*', and '*providing a better standard of education*', and '*better preparation for HE than A-Levels*'. This frame concerns both 'Curriculum' and 'Learning Curve', where the Learning Curve refers to the collective experiences of the SLT members inside the institutions who are adopting the policy.

The final frame of reference deployed relates to the modes of perception, interpretive paradigms and the perceived responsibilities that individual senior leaders bring, especially in the state sector, to the theoretically-derived codes for social justice, have been particularly important. Hence it is considered that these frames of reference play a significant role in the analysis of the findings related to the 'Beliefs' that senior leaders hold in this research process, as they add explanatory reach for explaining how taken-for granted assumptions are actually mapped into both the perceptions and actions of these decision-making staff.

The wider contexts of ‘inequality’ have already been mentioned and these are evaluated in this thesis within an adaptation of some of Teare’s (2013) recent work.

2.13 Summary

Chapter 2 has considered the background to deciding on a Research Strategy, the ontological and epistemological positioning required by this approach, the Insider Learner stance, and the correlating Critical Realist Research Paradigm. It has detailed how the centres were chosen purposively for this research process, and it has considered the ethical considerations that are at play in such a study, and how these have been addressed throughout this doctoral research process. This chapter has detailed all phases 1 to 8 of the research process (as highlighted in Figure 1 on page 30), and has discussed how the four strands of the research process undertaken fitted into those eight phases of the overall research process, and how these were piloted beforehand.

Subsequently this chapter has discussed the belated but significantly worthwhile process surrounding the introduction of the SLT fourth strand of interviews, and how these have been coded using the Mayring (2000, 2003, 2007) method. Lastly, this chapter has evaluated both the chosen research methods and the limitations of the approaches taken, and has explained how this has been substantially beneficial in a professional learning context from undertaking this process (Blaikie, 2007). Although it should also be noted that Chapter 4 has a section on Research Assessment and Justification following from the analysis and discussion of the findings in the next chapter.

This chapter has justified the concepts and frameworks utilised in this research process, and has linked to the appropriate Literature Review in the first chapter. This second chapter was entitled ‘Towards a new future?’, and it is considered evident from the decline of the IBDP usage inside the state sector that a different future has opened up in the English education system than the future that was

given the green light under the Blair government. It is believed that the idea of keeping the (upper) middle classes on board with state education maintains a system that drives up standards, and what has been created since the abandonment of the funding for the IBDP in the state sector is a dual system that has both old and new paradigms, as the findings below demonstrate.

This enables elite groups to be able to take advantage of the IBDP in numbers that are impossible in the state sector, as this chapter has demonstrated. This, therefore, further compounds advantage to a ‘globally mobile transnational political elite group’ (Savage et al, 2015:243), and actively increases the divisions between groups that enables elite groups to access higher status university places, as the findings in the next chapter demonstrate.

Chapter 3 – The Findings: Old and New Paradigms

3.1 Introduction

This thesis centres on the IBDP role in modern elite formation and social differentiation, and this chapter details the findings of the empirical research process undertaken. It discusses the old paradigm which operated in England in the 2000s, where the IBDP was actively encouraged under Blair's 'New Labour' government, and an income stream was established - through the national Learning and Skills Council (LSC) as a funding body for post-16 education. This was to enable the IBDP to be introduced into at least one school or college in every Local Authority in the country. This process coincided with some of the neo-liberal themes which were permeating academic and professional discourse at the time, such as marketization and performocracy, as discussed in section 1.3, and were becoming further entrenched into the English education system.

This is contrasted with the period of research conducted from 2010 that highlights the withdrawal of the IBDP from state centres in England that has coincided with the ever-increasing fragmentation of the education system. This post-2010 situation, it is argued, has effectively created a new paradigm concerning which all policy-decisions have to be taken in a new context, where an economic cold climate exists (Lupton et al 2016; Dorling 2014; Piketty, 2013), and the public sector has to cope with on-going reductions. The implications found inside this doctoral research process for the 16-19 sector in England and their transfer to university is viewed as a critical part of modern elite formation. It is significant that through the non-mandatory policy that SLTs deal with - in this particular case with regard to the curriculum 'choice' of the IBDP - students no longer have the opportunities that they had in the 2000s.

With regard to the findings of the research, Chapter 3 provides:

- a brief overview of each of the eight centres
- details of the findings from all four of the strands of data collected

The narrative detail for each of the eight centres visited for research can be subsequently found in Appendix 12. The four strands of research are shown in Figure 5, which highlights how the fourth strand of data is therefore perceived as more significant, as the doctoral research process continued:

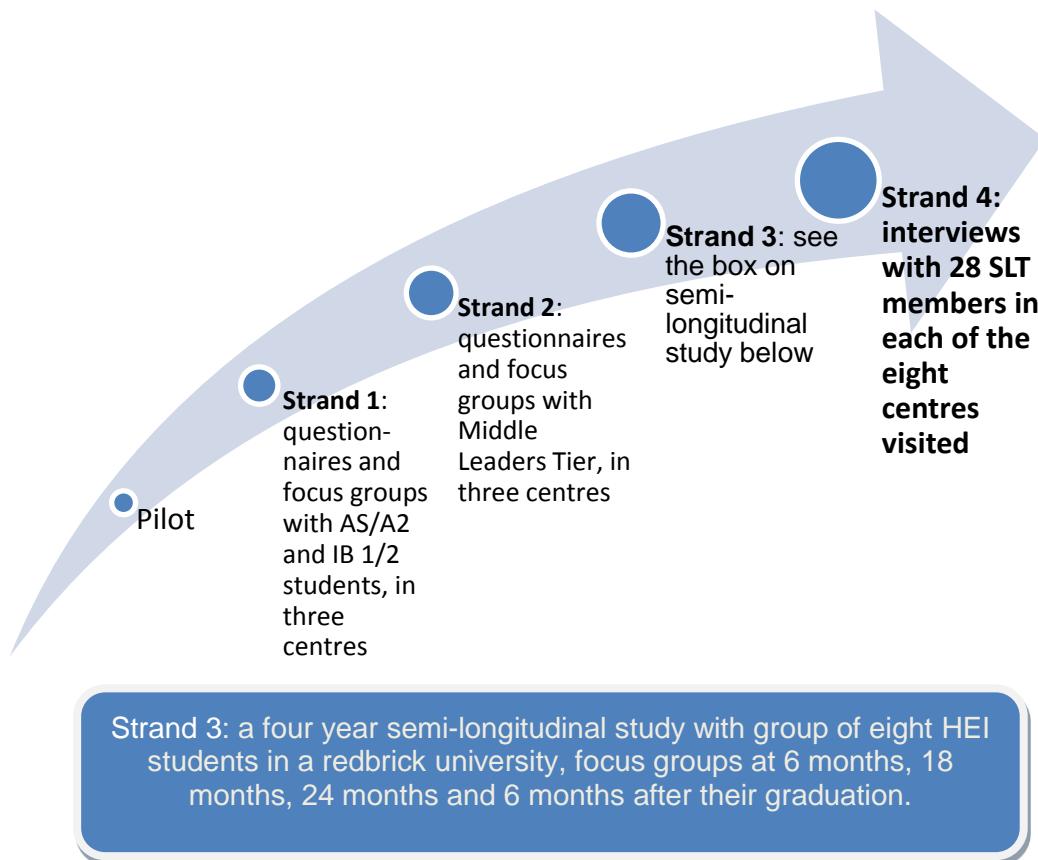


Figure 5 - The significance of the research strands over time

The findings from the Mayring (2000) main categories (MCs) from the fourth strand of (interview) data are considered to be the most important strand inside the four strands of this doctoral research process. Figure 5 shows the

progression of the four strands involved, and highlights how the final (fourth) strand of data is believed to be the most significant strand inside this process. This is because the fourth strand not only follows a natural consequence of the preceding stages, but also leads to a critical outcome, as Figure 5 demonstrates data was generated from earlier strands 1-3 of the doctoral research process. This data is put into context through the inductively generated In Vivo coded descriptions from the interviews that were held with the SLTs in the eight schools and colleges that teach (or had taught) the IBDP from Strand 4. The wider discussion of the relevant issues of educational leadership; cultural capital; and social justice; are put forward in brief but subsequently returned to in further detail in Chapter 4: Analysis and Discussion. Re-iterating the Research Questions given back in the Aims, in considered useful here:

- why do SLTs make the decision to implement non-mandatory policy?

Given that they do not have to go down this route as they do with other mandatory changes to their curriculums: such as linear exams and recent new grading structures.

- how, then, do these SLTs deal with the successes or failures that this can bring?

Why do they think it is beneficial? Why was it not? What went wrong? Why do they regard this as a learning curve for their SLT?

- how is modern elite formation and social differentiation an issue that the IBDP deals with through its adoption and implementation?

The underpinning sociological theory to this thesis: Archer (2013)/Beck (2009)/Bourdieu (1986)/Giddens (1991)/Savage et al (2015), and Zuber-Skerritt and Teare (2013) being of critical relevance.

The following pages provide some background to the narrative analysis on each of the centres, in order to contextualise the data. The anonymised details on these centres can subsequently be found in Appendix 12. Following the narrative analysis, each of the four data strands are subsequently taken in turn, detailing the empirical research data findings in sequence.

3.2 Background to the Narrative Analysis

The centres involved in the research process are very diverse, ranging from a relatively rural ‘top ten’ sixth form college; to an independent boarding school,

that admits day students for its co-ed sixth form only; to an inner-city, multi-cultural 13-18 comprehensive school; to a highly-selective high status completely co-educational boarding school; to a large 13-18 comprehensive school near a prestigious city; to a 10-18 independent highly selective boarding school; to deprived chain school in a large city, and finally, to an all boys boarding and day school. Hence the use of the term ‘centre’ throughout this thesis, as these are wide-ranging institutions (not all schools, often using the term ‘college’ in different forms) and covered by a number of very different funding mechanisms across both state and independent sectors. All of these centres are geographically placed in the South, the South-East, East Anglia, or the East and West Midlands. Furthermore, the IBDP is taught predominantly in London and the South-East (Bunnell, 2015: 397) - another factor that impacts on the social differentiation of access to the diploma programme.

All the leaders of these schools and colleges agreed to participate in the study, signing institutional consent forms, and individual consent forms, as can be seen in Appendices 1 and 10. This consent was obtained prior to each stage of the research process: when information on the study; debrief information; withdrawal from the study; and details on access to the finished study were given, as was described in detail in the methodology chapter above. All the centres were involved in delivering the IBDP when they were first approached to take part in this research process, and equal numbers (four of each) of state and independent centres were used for the Strand 4 of data collection, which is considered to be the most valuable in terms of understanding the resultant successes and failures of introducing non-mandatory policy into the curriculum.

Of these four state centres two places still deliver the IBDP and two have had to withdraw from it - one currently runs it at a loss, whilst another has found an interesting way to just about break even on their IBDP spending. All of the independent centres visited have expanded their IBDP numbers, two quadrupling them during this research process. Appendix 12 contains a summary of each of the centres, rather than characterisations of them, as was discussed in section 2.11 on ethical considerations.

There are very few centres in the independent sector that have introduced and then subsequently withdrawn the IBDP, in comparison with the number in the state sector. One of these few independent schools was contacted and invited to take part, but the head teacher would not agree. Granovetter's (1973) 'Strength of Weak Ties' research comes to mind here, as there were no known contacts at this centre, whereas contacts who had indirect links to the author had existed in all the other centres contacted. Granovetter argued that those on the periphery of one's contacts are often the most useful (applying his research to people searching for new employment opportunities) as they extend one's networks. The reason that this particular head master gave for not taking part in the research was that his centre was high profile, and had faced difficulties with the press, so he did not want to exacerbate the public position of their predicament with the IBO. Despite being offered anonymity, the request was firmly rejected, and whereas in other centres contacts existed who had successfully made introductions for the research process, in this centre, no such contacts existed. Bunnell (2015) has commented:

The IBDP in all other nation states (139 in total) has either grown or stayed constant in number which reveals the uniqueness of the situation. This paper is seemingly the first to attempt to address this phenomenon. The sudden, and largely unpredicted, fading away of the IBDP in the UK since its peak in 2010 has attracted very little attention or discussion even within the UK itself.

Bunnell, T. 2015: 389

The findings in this chapter, detail this 'sudden, and largely unpredicted, fading away' of the IBDP in the state sector, and Chapter 4 proceeds to analyze and discuss the implications of this decline for modern elite formation and social differentiation in England today.

3.3 Strand 1: 16-19 student experiences

The overview of data can be seen in Table 1: Empirical research data, on page 15. In this first strand, 147 questionnaires were systematically analyzed, and

were conflated with the data from the 16-19 focus groups. It should be noted, as can be seen back in the table of empirical research, that these 147 questionnaires are biased in their responses to the state centres, for two reasons. Firstly, it was only the first three centres that took part in this first strand of data collection: of these two were state centres, and one was independent. Secondly, the independent centre had much smaller class sizes (a maximum of 12 students) and its IBDP classes had only eight students, so it was a smaller data pool that was used. Nearly a third of the sample ($N=47$) were from IBDP responses, the remaining ($N=100$) were AS and A2. The IBDP classes were all significantly smaller than the AS/A2 classes.

The questionnaire, as can be seen from Appendix 4, is very detailed, and the general stratification data at its start on gender, subjects studied, age, and grades, were largely for background information and have not been utilised significantly. Once collated, the responses to both the questionnaires and the focus groups were analyzed thematically into four categories of: enjoyment with study; challenges that the study posed; transition through to HE; and social stratification. The overall summary was that the evidence from both the questionnaires and the student focus groups found that parents were very instrumental in the decision-making for the IBDP groups, but far less so for the A-Level groups. This was as far as it was possible to ascertain from the data collected across all three centres that took part in this strand of data collection, and is explained in detail. The following pages outline the responses to the individual questions in these questionnaires, and responses from the four student focus groups (two AS/A2 two IBDP) are added in, at points where their content highlighted examples of evidence from the data collected. As mentioned in the methodology chapter above, it should be remembered that these four student focus groups were conducted only in state centres.

3.3.1 Overall Questionnaire Analysis: ‘About yourself’

It should be noted that the first section of the questionnaire was on general stratification questions: unique ID code; gender; GCSE point score; subjects

taken. Essentially, this enabled the division of the IB1/IB2 and AS/A2 questionnaires. Not all of the data on gender and subject knowledge has been fully utilised, and as per the ethics section in the methodology on pages 103 and 104, it raises ethical questions if data are collected as part of such a process. This lack of full utilisation is in part because of sample size: there was a bias in the responses from these three IBDP cohorts towards gender, and in all these samples more girls than boys were undertaking the IBDP ($N=36/47$). This fits both the international and the national picture on gender stratification, with girls often being portrayed as more academically successful than boys (Reay, 2015), but it is a small sample size and gender was not the focus here. Also, the subject knowledge information was biased from the way the student data were collected by the talks given inside social science faculties, hence every student had a Sociology or Psychology subject as one of their IB Highers or A-Levels. Statistically, this would mean given the sample size the students were more likely (at least from the AS/A2 Level Groups visited, where they have fewer option choices than inside the IBDP) to be from the arts rather than sciences.

There was a space for students to state their achieved GCSE point score, because it is the main predictor for the outcome of results at Level 3: where an $A^*=8$, an $A=7$, a $B=6$ and a $C=5$, unsurprisingly (as it is considered a more academically challenging course) all the IBDP students routinely had higher point scores than A-Level students, an average across the 47 questionnaires of 43. However, in the two state centres there were students with as little as 25 points who had been allowed to take the IBDP. This did not really apply in the independent school data analyzed, as it was a selective school, so the GCSE point scores were all higher across the board, and they did not have the wide range of students on to Level 3 courses which is the state school and college varied from just 11 to 88, whereas from the independent school the range was 36 through to 90, and in the IB1 & IB2 groups it was no lower than 80 (or 10 A^* s) in either group.

The questionnaire responses are now analyzed systematically according to their sections:

3.3.2 'About your experience with Level 3 study'

This second section was broken down into answers relating to:

- the subject
- the style of teaching
- the coursework
- the class size
- the challenging course
- the examinations
- the extended project
- or another factor that they could add in themselves.

First, which aspects of Level 3 study have the students found most enjoyable, satisfying or rewarding, in terms of the above headings. Without exception all 47 IBDP students were enjoying either the subject, the challenge of their course and/or their class size that were in some cases a quarter of the size of the AS and A2 groups or 7 in comparison to 26 in an A-Level class. The remaining 100 AS/A2 students had responses that ranged through subject enjoyment, style of teaching or coursework, but only one (out of 100 students) had challenge of course and no-one in the AS/A2 group had the extended project.

Second, the students were asked to relate this list to what they had found most difficult or challenging in their Level 3 study, and the responses across cohorts and sectors were more mixed. Over a half (N=88/147) students had found their subject more challenging, and more than a third (N=52/147) had found the teaching more challenging. The extended project got a mention across the board too, with more than half of students in both groups finding it difficult or challenging (27/47 and 63/100), it should be noted that the IBDP EPQ is the ToK element, and most IBDP essay-based work is longer than the A-Level equivalent.

Third, the main area that both groups of students perceived would help them most at university was the style of teaching: 29/47 and 78/100. Interestingly though the Extended Project box was ticked by all 47 in the IBDP group but by only

15/100 from the AS/A2 group. This suggests one of two things, for the AS group – who are supposed to write their EPQ over their summer holiday: and the author visited just after Easter - had not sufficiently made any impact on them yet. For the A2 group it is optional in the state sector (but treated as compulsory in every independent school that had been visited), so even though their websites trailed it thoroughly there was not sufficient evidence of follow-through. The EPQ is precisely the sort of additional qualification that state centres advertize that their students have an opportunity to complete. However, the evidence base collected showed that the results of the take-up of the EPQ were very patchy in comparison to the state sector.

Last, in this section the longest assignment the AS/A2 group had written was between 1,000 and 2,000 words. But the IBDP group had all written more than three essays of between 3,000 and 5,000 words. This is interesting as this was IB1 as well as IB2 students, suggesting that their work is not as differentiated between years one and two at sixth form. No student ticked the over 5,000 words box, but several of the IBDP students wrote onto the questionnaires that they were working towards this, whereas only the Pre-U or A-Level students in the independent school commented on this, writing either the word ‘eventually’ or ‘in June’ onto the form. In contrast, none of the state school/college students commented at all on this, when their EPQ is supposed to be a 5,000 word essay, and plays a significant role in the websites of the centres’ pitch between the A-Level and IBDP qualifications. These centres have subscribed to the EPQ in order that their students are taking a longer piece of study that prepares them for HE.

3.3.3 ‘About your plans’

This middle section was a set of Likert scale statements from 1 to 10, about studying at university with 1 being insignificant and 10 being very significant. In the IBDP group everyone was planning on going to university. Whereas in the A-Level group 13/100 stated that they were not proceeding into HE. From the 13 who did not want to go on to university five went on to answer the other

statements, the remaining 8 left them blank. The numbers were, interestingly, higher in every area for the IB group with 9 or 10 circled in all four statements, in all 47 questionnaires. This suggests a very strong preference for university admission for all four categories. Again the whole IBDP group had a chosen degree area, even if some students had added the words 'perhaps/maybe/thinking of' as justification before/after their subject idea. There was a clear, strong correlation between IBDP and future expectations concerning all the area of subject-interest; improving job prospects; meeting people/socialising and family/friend expectations.

The results of these categories though for the AS/A2 groups were far more diverse, reflecting the diverse nature of their intake. Unsurprisingly, though, there were stronger correlations between students with higher points and the IBDP groups' results. So when the results were analyzed for students with 35+ GCSE point scores their results were almost identical to those of the IBDP group with 9s and 10s in most categories, with only the exceptional outlier result. But as the GCSE point score drops the level of academic confidence also drops and so does their significant interests.

It would appear that those with lower GCSE point scores, however, are more closely linked to going to university to improve their job prospects, as most groups put this at 6 or a 7 (N=82/100), still far lower than the IBDP group - but it seemed that this was on the higher side of the lower the point score, since all those with a point score under twenty (N=21) placed it at 7 or above. There was also a - perhaps coincidental - correlation between a lower GCSE point score and a stay at home mother/where only one parent was in paid full-time work.

3.3.4 'About your life at home and away from school/college'

This section of the questionnaire considers the levels of home support received by 16-19s. The results in this section varied considerably although there were a few trends:

- all of the IBDP group had parents that had gone on to university
- more than half of the IBDP group had a sibling that had done the IBDP
- more than half the IBDP group had a sibling that had gone on to university
- of the 47 IBDP responses all of them had ticked all categories (physical environment; equipment; advice & information; moral support) as contributing help at home towards their Level 3 study
- of these 35/47 responses said parental involvement/advice had contributed help.

This contrasted with the A-Level group where only 23/100 responded, saying that cultural and/or material factors had demonstrated any impact on their study, although two students did write the word finance into the ‘something else’ category, which showed an acknowledgment of deferred gratification.

The responses of the four focus groups with 36 16-19 students in both the state centres are summarized below, under each heading. It should be reiterated that these all took place in state centres, although were different groups with different courses. This was considered as an additional part of the Strand 1 data collection process, as it came from the student body, so gives background perspective to the student standpoint.

3.3.5 ‘Enjoyment with study’

Perhaps unsurprisingly, given that these were focus groups that were held during lunch-times, all students who attended these focus groups were enjoying their Level 3 study in either AS/A2 or IB1/IB2 classes. However, there was a clear set of reasons why the IB1/IB2 students had opted for their programme of study:

- wanting to be stretched
- enjoying the challenge
- not wanting to close options down for any one of arts/sciences/languages/humanities

This meant that the focus groups were self-selecting in terms of students who were interested in the doctoral research project, and finding out more about research and researching in general. The author found that some of the students also attended as they wanted to ask wider questions concerning university life

and expectations, as opposed to giving their views on their courses. Put another way, they gave brief responses to the questions asked – particularly in Centre 1 – as they had questions of their own to ask. This meant that the Middle Tier Strand 2 data, where the staff groups discussed the range of IBDP students and courses and future course access, was more rigorous than this 16-19 focus group data had been.

3.3.6 ‘Overall trends from Strand 1 data’

Bearing in mind the size of the data sample undertaken (Questionnaires N=147, and four Focus Groups N=36 students) in this first strand, there are some overall significant trends from the students that had opted for the IBDP. The first was that they appeared to have higher levels of cultural capital at least in the sense that a thought process had taken place concerning keeping open more options to access a different range of subjects and their HEI place, and everyone had accepted the argument that: *‘we work harder than the other [A-Level] students and this will pay off for us later on’*, when ‘pay off’ was clarified the focus group respondents in Centres 1 and 3 said very similar things. *‘We should get better access to Uni places’, ‘my Mum says it will ‘pay dividends’ around what Uni I end up at and what course I can apply for’*, focus group respondents commented. But they were all small groups who had been (and their parents probably had been) persuaded by arguments that the centres SLTs had put forward.

Interestingly, the IBDP groups on the questionnaires all knew their parental occupations (or at least were all prepared to write down their parental occupations on the questionnaire forms, whereas not all the A-Level students knew or were prepared to divulge this information). On paper at least the IBDP students all came from a more elite group. Examples of Socio Economic Status (SES) ranged from a Judge to a Civil Service Permanent Secretary in this IBDP group as those data had been overtly collected. Again, although only a small sample, N=47 out of 147, they also all – without exception - came from dual career households, which again reinforces Savage et al’s (2015) view of the specific patterns of behaviour of knowledgeable elite groups. This last fact was quite striking in comparison to the AS/A2 cohorts who wrote unknown [N=9] and

housewife [N=8] for their mother's occupation, so 17/100 of this group were from families where it appeared that one parent played a less significant economic role.

In contrast many of the A-Level students had 'fallen' into doing A-Levels as an inevitable consequence of staying on at post-16, and had put some thought into the subjects that they had chosen at A-Level but little thought into why A-Levels themselves. The IBDP groups, all had significant reason to choose the diploma programme, a friend or relative who had taken it, or a parent or member of teaching staff who had influenced them on it. The students in the IB1&2 focus groups in Centres 1 and 3, had all thought long and hard about it, and they had clearly been told it was more time consuming, more demanding, more exacting, but would not necessarily translate into a better place at university. However, keeping six subjects going instead of the usual three/four had evidently made enough of an impression on them, to undertake the additional workload that it involves. These IBDP students were also passionate about what they were doing with their time and why. They were very clear on the advantages that ToK had enabled on their overall understanding of wider issues, and had all considered not just what CAS meant for them, but what they were doing and why. The phrase '*better citizen*' came up a few times in their focus groups, and there was a clear understanding of the wider international aspect of the IBDP that made students take account of their own world positioning, and how fortunate they are.

These elements of wider citizenship and internationalism did not get raised in the AS/A2 focus groups, and at no point in any of these transcripts is there any mention of either the AQA Bacc or the EPQ, it was almost as if they did not feature in their school/college existence, despite the fact that they are so heavily trailed on the centres websites and these offerings are made to look equivalent to the ToK and CAS elements of the IBDP. But in these AS/A2 focus groups instead there were conversations about what else these students were expected to do: child-care, part-time work, full-time caring roles for family members. There was an absolute understanding that the course the peers had opted for was something that they did not have time to take.

The 16-19 students' responses to this were interesting, in that focus group comments made clear statements similar to this one that '*our A-Levels give us same Uni access anyway, so what's the point of doing something different?*'. These were various areas of consequence that the students mentioned, such as earning additional income to supplement the family household income, not just earning money for clothes or nights out. In the AS/A2 Centre 3 focus group there was a substantial conversation concerning the Education Maintenance Allowance, (EMA), and how the students no longer received it, thus in order to contribute the same as their older siblings had done back to the family to stay on in post-16 education they had to work an equivalent of six hours a week or more depending on their rate of pay. EMA was paid between 2003 and 2011 and was worth £30 per week, paid bi-weekly to low income students, dependent on their attendance rate. It was ended by the Conservative-led Coalition government in 2011.

3.4 Strand 2: Middle tier staff experiences – focus groups

As per Table 1: Empirical research data on page 15, middle tier staff focus groups were held in each of the first three centres. These focus groups numbered between four (Centre 2, again as with Strand 1 above, a smaller number from the independent sector, the school itself being much smaller) and seven (Centre 1) and eight middle leaders (Centre 3). The list of questions for the focus group schedule is given in Appendix 9. These focus group participants were all subject leaders responsible for curriculum content, and as was explained back in the last chapter these sessions were recorded, transcribed, and returned to the staff for validation and/or further comment. The staff participants signed to say that it was a true reflection of events, and none of the transcripts were altered.

All of these conversations were interesting and contained a combination of staff from IB and A-Level delivery. In Centre 1's transcript the debate was very heated

(as was mentioned earlier) as it was visited on the day that the IBDP was withdrawn from their curriculum for new starters from that coming September.

'The role that you have here involves managing the IB; tell me how the IBDP came about here, why did the centre decide to introduce it?'

- parental pressure
- keen staff
- reluctance to be 'left behind' in curriculum offer
- favourable UCAS tariff
- applied for funding allocation (Centre 3, Centre 1 had already introduced it, but applied for funding anyway, N/A for Centre 2))
- in Centres 1 and 3: Did not want to not be able to match the curriculum offer elsewhere, standards are high here, did not want them to be regarded externally as lower as IB was not on offer
- (state) Centres 1 and 3: Impact of being in an area near to many Independent Schools and seeing how their curriculum offer was changing
- Centre 2 (Independent) said that there was a 'feeling of not wanting to be left behind' in their curriculum offer, in comparison to many comparator independent schools in the South East of England.

'What are the most important factors, in your opinion that need to be in place to enable the students that attend here to successfully study for their courses? Do those differ for the IBDP and A-Level?'

- support & guidance
- study area & study skills
- access to other areas of school/college: wider programme
- IBDP:
 - access to wide range of specialist and IBO approved teachers
 - impact of CAS & ToK on students and timetable
- AS/A2:
 - Larger classes, so students wider needs considered
 - Physical arrangements sometimes difficult: room size/student ratio/difficulty of ensuring that class discussions are fully inclusive and differentiated
- interesting comment made in Centre 1: that IB classes were similar to how A-Levels had looked when they were studied more than twenty years ago, i.e. small classes with thoughtful engaged teachers. All staff present agreed.
- point scores discussed: IBDP is kept at Centre 2 for students who have a minimum entry criteria of 10 A* at iGCSE, ie 80 points (double the recommended point score in either of the state centres), so comments centred on the staff discussion regarding challenge of the curriculum and how universities did not understand the complex nature of it, so a significant SLT difficulty was only admitting their brightest students on it.
- point scores in Centre 3 – that classes were very divergent, lots of differentiation required, students who had previously gone to college or not 'stayed on' were staying with them, and the minimum GCSE admissions point score of 5 Grade Cs or 25 points was not being adhered to, hence if students were doing re-takes in these subjects they were counted as a pass which might be gained in November or June in Year 12.

'What has the take-up been for the IBDP? How many students (M/F) are registered on it?'

- Centre 1: routinely classes of 8, had one class of 11, split about two thirds Female to Male
- Centre 2: all classes under 10, average class size had been 8
- Centre 3: routinely classes of 6, had one class of 8, again more females than males but 60/40 ratio.

'What percentage is this of total L3 students? Is it increasing over time?'

- Centre 1 had taught IBDP for six years at this point and its overall share of the Level 3 students had not risen above 0.01% or around 20 out of 2,000 students approximately
- Centre 2 had taught IBDP for three years at this point, had a small sixth form of nearly a 100, where the IBDP accounts for approx 10%, many of whom are from its international students
- Centre 3 had a smaller sixth form of approx 350 so the IBDP accounted for nearly 0.5% of its student intake for three years.
-

'Have you had any feedback from students or universities that the IBDP better prepares students' for university? Does this appear to be a parental perception?'

- staff in Centre 1 reported that this had been mentioned in a Russell Group talk at a neighbouring HEI as something sixth forms could do to better prepare students for their work in HE
- Centre 2 said that last year's students did okay, and had progressed to courses that they reported that they were enjoying, and that they still considered Pre U far better for higher end grade allocation
- all centres: Parents seemed to divide into two camps: they either knew all about the IBDP or they knew nothing
- Centre 3: Open evenings had attracted lots of students who were going to do the IBDP in an independent school, but not with them, to see what their offer looked like – in both centres.

'There are lots of different Level 3 qualifications, which particular courses delivered here seem to attract students who go on to Russell Group universities?'

- Centre 1 has students access Russell Group Universities all the time, about a third of their student body go on to elite institutions, so given small numbers of IBDP take-up this was not particularly impacting on their overall course offer, but:
 - discussion of how EPQ was thought significant
 - discussion of how if IBDP was going their 'offer' to students should be improved with Pre U instead
 - TOK and CAS should be recreated, or kept on after their IB had been phased out

- discussion on IBDP holding the academic level that other subjects should aim for
 - discussion that it was a different type of qualification; you could not be both broad and detailed together, hence the SL/HL disparity inside the IBDP itself.
- Centre 2 SLT had moved to Pre U to better access to the Russell Group universities, and staff discussed how they felt that the Labour government's actions to better state school access were causing problems for their students, hence their wider take-up of places in the US Ivy League (see narrative detail on Centre 2 in Appendix 12 for detail).
- Centre 3 does not have same progression rate to elite institutions:
 - it is rare for a student *not* to progress to a Million+ institution
 - IBDP was clearly viewed by staff as a way of challenging expectations
 - staff were depressed by the discontinuation of EMA payments to their students.

'Universities require students to write longer pieces of work for assignments. Do you feel that some of your courses equip your students better for this than others?'

- consensus across staff in all centres that AS/A2s did not enable students to develop writing skills for longer pieces of work, but that the IBDP did, but overall bar was much higher, so 'good' students were far more capable of producing 'better' work
- this was considered one of many IBDP strong points, but as a course it is not considered suitable for 'all' students in Centre 1 or 'the majority' of students in Centre 3
- however, Centre 2, viewed their offer across Pre U and IBDP far more holistically: all students did the same number of hours study, all did CAS, all took TOK, so the staff viewpoint here, was that they prepared their students better for HE than state centre counterparts, regardless of whether they were IBDP students.

'How important do you feel parental knowledge is, in helping your students to apply for places at university? Do your students apply based solely on what you, as a school/college tell them, or are there wider factors involved?'

- Centre 1 staff believed that cultural capital and the role of parents, previous school expectations, siblings, were all very important:
 - students challenged staff knowledge base
 - helped keep them up-to-date
 - parents were generally well-informed
 - college chosen by many for their HEI progression rates
- Centre 2 staff believed that parents entrusted them with organizing their HE places, and the role that they played was pivotal in this, their offer to students (and parents through their communications) was:
 - considerably different to both state centres
 - alumni were more significant
 - role of visitors (leading professionals in their areas – often alumni) for dinners through the year gave good, practical careers advice and access to internships
 - the students own families were accessed for internships

- the use of HEI industry experts (such as Kaplan Associates) were well used for help in accessing Ivy League university places
 - the staff really felt that this was something that they did well.
- Centre 3 staff believed their sixth form was pivotal to student applications to HE:
 - students were usually first generation HE
 - parents usually had little experience/first-hand knowledge
 - expectation of progression onto HE from similar sixth forms locally did not achieve their student levels of HE progression
 - some groups of BAME students in particular relied very heavily on teacher view about what was best for their child
 - links into local universities for talks, access, places and connections, was felt to be critical
 - understanding of loans systems/available bursaries was critical to uptake and conversion of their students HEI offers
 - the staff were unhappy with all the changes to Connexions, the careers service, and felt that their students often did not have access to enough information
 - although there was a strong consensus that – as their own HEI access rate was significantly higher than other neighbouring state schools this was an area where they did quite well, but their student destinations could still be improved upon.

'Has the introduction of the IBDP affected A-Level classes? If so, in what ways? Class sizes? Funding? Has this situation changed since the statutory funding by the LSC in 2007?'

- This question was covered across much of the earlier discussion, but it Centres 1 and 3 it was felt that the IBDP had:
 - upskilled some subject areas, because of having to teach different subject content
 - class size had been controversial, and IBDP classes were up to a quarter of the size of other groups
 - previous LSC funding had now gone from Centre 1, and had never been successfully accessed in Centre 3, so staff commented that 'budgets were being very much squeezed'
 - the relative cost of implementing the IBDP was considered to be significantly greater than the IBO documentation had led them to believe
 - the assumption, in both centres, had been that it would be approximately £1K per student more expensive to deliver, but the reality appeared to be significantly different to this
 - if your centre offer does not include CAS or TOK, or a well-established EPQ when setting up then all those costs (which were assumed to already exist) also have to be created
 - staff also have to register with the IBO (a process that can take-up to three years)
 - attend IBO training courses, the leave for which impacts on other members of staff, and creates additional workload across Departments and centres.
- This question was not relevant in Centre 2, as their class sizes were relatively uniform (between 8 and 12) across IB and Pre U in their Independent school (only a few A-Levels exist in subjects where Pre U is unavailable). They also have always had a good reputation for their CAS, with all students taking part this is a key USP of their school.

All students take ToK and write an EPQ - with the IBDP students submitting their essays as part of their IBD programme. The Pre U also requires this element.

3.4.1 Summary of Strand 2

The conversation of not being able to continue the IBDP had (unsurprisingly) dominated the focus group in Centre 1 with individual staff being really upset about the training courses and development time that they had put into the IBDP and the great results that some students had achieved (point scores of 42 and 43 out of the maximum 45 mark available) for it to now be axed. AS/A2 middle leaders in Centre 1 strongly felt that it had involved a detrimental impact on their programmes over the last seven years that it had existed in their centre.

And a wide range of examples were given for this:

- increasing AS and A2 class sizes causing a detrimental impact on A-Level students;
- time spent on developing the IBDP curriculum;
- staff spending three years prior to the adoption of the IBDP getting the centre ready;
- attending courses at the IBO accredited training centre in Greece;
- much smaller IBDP classes giving the 'dominant parents' what they wanted; smaller class sizes for the children who were moving into Centre 1 from independent schools.

However, the staff in Centre 2 felt that they had got the offer right: the IBDP was for the brightest of 80+ point score, whilst the Pre U/A-Level combination was for everyone else, but the deal was the same across the sixth form: CAS, TOK, and EPQ, regardless of programme and a 24 hour taught week regardless of their programme. The enrichment of dinners, on-going access to different professionals, offers of internships from their alumni, access to admissions tutors and HE consultants puts them in a position where they could not seem to do much more for their students.

Centre 3 is in a town with three big independent schools two of which offer the IBDP. It was strongly felt by the staff in their focus group that '*it was right that it was offered here, as otherwise a chasm opens up in what's on offer to students*', but there was concern very similar to Centre 1 expressed, that the relative cost

of introducing it had meant that the other Heads of Department staff had been experiencing larger A-Level classes. Again, there was debate on who was in these IBDP groups, as a few students had come from independent schools in order to take the DP, and this had raised lots of issues for the staff concerned these students being in much smaller class sizes and whether or not that was fair on the students on other programmes of study.

3.5 Strand 3: HEI focus group – four focus groups

Strand 3 captures a particular snapshot of time. Having taught A Level until 2008, then moved into HE and started the doctoral process, Centre 3 was returned to, to explain the research methodology of my thesis: in part so that I could pilot some surveys and focus groups, but in part so that the students could have what is often regarded as an abstract research process more actively illustrated with them. So the AS groups (that I had taught from the age of 13) were final year A2 groups. These were introduced to my research area, in the same year that the IBDP was introduced into their school. This cohort then went to university, and a small group of 3 happened to go to the same university where there seemed to be a lot of ex-IBDP students.

Strand 3 was therefore a focus group with of a mix of HEI students who had previously studied either the IBDP or A-Levels, now all studying at the same university. This semi-longitudinal focus group reduced over the four years, from 11 down to 8, essentially it was my ex-students and their new friends and partners at university, who came from slightly different backgrounds: they had access to the IBDP and had either been at selective or independent schools, which is where they had taken the IBDP.

However, the focus group did not divide into who had been educated at state versus independent schools, or had taken A-Levels versus who had studied the IBDP, until the very last focus group where we met after they had finished university and some of those divisions seemed to be more evident. The first three

focus groups, conducted in the Autumn Term's of 2009, 2010, and 2011, divided into three sub-groups. One sub-group had studied the IBDP and were all passionate about it; one sub-group who reported that this former group had been advantaged; and lastly the sub-group who were determined not to let it matter. This last group, comprised two individuals who pointed out that they '*were all at the same Uni, that they all had access to the same study skills or additional language classes if they wanted them now*' and they were determined to think that it did not matter – at all, and their position did not shift over the four years. Whereas the other groups' positions seemed to matter less over time, as they were all there, involved, and (ostensibly) able to do the same things with their lives after graduation if they *chose* to.

The first session of this group really focussed on *preparedness* for HEI, and the IBDP students seemed clearer than the others that they were ready for Uni: '*we know what to do in lectures, we've been in mini-lectures for ages, we know how to take notes*', and '*we have had assessments all the way through [the IBDP], so having end of semester essays is what we are used to*'. These feelings, understandably, wore off as the students formed a more homogenous group, and Years Two and Three were relatively insignificant in the data – *apart from* what they were now doing outside university: the ex-IBDP group had found better quality internships rather than summer holiday jobs for each of their long summer vacations, and when we met up for their final focus group six months after their graduation in 2012, there was a coincidence in that all the students who had the IBDP were all in paid employment already, whereas none of the other four were, although two of the other four were engaged in post graduate study.

This paid employment finding was a potentially very interesting find in itself, but the sample size of this group is so small, that it is not possible to draw too much from it, inside the context of the overall findings process. Similarly, there was another discrepancy re the parity of the two groups as two of the ex-IBDP four were also engaged in PG study, but they had accessed theirs entirely free, as part of their new careers as graduate trainees in Law and Chartered Accountancy. We discussed this, and the responses were interesting: '*we went*

to private school', '*we have more contacts*', '*we speak more languages*', '*we are being paid for our training whereas you are choosing to stay here [at university] and do it*'.

This is not a sizeable enough group to be able to draw any definitive findings from the quality of the IBDP alone, and again – socio-economic factors play a role, as the students own comments concerning both their schooling and access to work experiences make clear. But the differences did appear to be marked all the way through their undergraduate study, and the two former state school students in this group who had studied the IBDP, had reached professional occupations with integrated Masters Level CPD opportunities, at this stage of their careers that matched their independent school peers, not their fellow state school peers. The ex-IBDP group did appear to have an 'IBO network', albeit not a highly formalized one, that they could tap into for career ideas and suggestions and track records that former IBDP' students' had done before them. This obviously does exist for A-Level students but not in quite the same way, as huge numbers of students sit A-Levels, so this relates to much narrower networks (clearly potentially socially differentiated) that are in place for students who have taken a qualification that far fewer people sit. The conversations with these students, and their level of agency, certainly impacted on the interviews with the SLTs in the final strand, not least because of the wider geographical changes of the IBDP becoming quite evident by 2012/2013, with state centres having dropped it, whilst the independent sector was running with it. This third strand therefore had a noticeable impact on the overall research process because they personified the advantages that were gained from the conflation of the IBDP and selective education, which was becoming more prevalent.

3.6 Strand 4: Senior Leadership Team interviews

It was also felt that by 2012/2013 this process had moved on: the changes (the removal of the IBDP from places in the state sector) had happened, and so an opportunity to access the senior leaders and to engage what they felt, and how they had experienced the system had arisen. This also provided a robust strand

to update the data that had been previously collected, and make the research process more current whilst keeping the revised research questions at the forefront of the process. Strand 4 therefore consisted of interviews with a wide range of 28 senior leaders from 8 schools and colleges as is evidenced in Table 9 above on page 99. This Table gives an overview of each of the centres that were part of this fourth strand of research in summary form, in terms of which SLT members were interviewed :from where, for how long, including their gender and whether or not they were head or principal. Table 13 below highlights, for this Findings Chapter, which centre numbers are schools or colleges that:

- are state or independent
- cover a particular age range
- still deliver the IBDP
- which other courses they deliver at Level 3, namely:
 - Pre-U
 - AQA Bacc
 - EPQ
 - Other Level 3 courses.

Table 12 (above on page 113) followed on from the detail of the Main Categories of the Mayring coding process that was carried out on all of these 28 interviews that were an hour or so long, as was described in the methodology chapter above. For a summary of this overall process, see back to Figure 3 on page 105. The Main Categories (MCs) for In Vivo coding – that are now explained in the following pages – were: Challenge; Curriculum; Learning Curve; and Beliefs were highlighted back in Table 10 on page 110.

These Main Categories (MCs) are explained in the next section below together with the Educational and Analytical Key Themes as was previously detailed back in Table 4 on page 66 - it is considered these that form the major themes of the analysis and discussion that follow on from the findings of this Strand 4 of data in Chapter 4. Following on from Table 13 below (the overview of the centre profiles),

are the findings from this coding process, and the Frameworks and major themes that have been developed from this analysis.

3.6.1 Major themes

These major themes are formed with the four groups of Main Categories (MCs) that were each split into four or five categories. It is the repetitive nature of this process that gives its rigour, as Figure 3 demonstrated, with its explanation of Mayring's (2000) Step Model of inductive category development, as each statement is checked and re-checked to see if it has a multiple entry in another category, as was highlighted in Figure 3 on page 105. These formative and summative checks of the coding process informing the reliability of the overall process. This left four main categories with their internal sub-categories, as was described in the methodology chapter above, and explained in Table 10 – The Main Categories for In Vivo coding, and Table 11 – Examples of evolving inductive and theoretical codes and indexes used for analysis.

These categories subsequently become redundant if not enough have given significant responses in this area, as Table 10 demonstrated. In this research process it was only in one particular area where data had been generated, that a sub-category was removed, all the others were considered valid and reliable because of the number of statements that had related to them. This left two categories with four sub-groups, and two with five sub-groups, as was explained in Table 11 on page 112. This was an arduous process, by hand with a highlighter pen and scissors, reducing and the paraphrasing the statements, and repeating the process to ensure that the categories and the tallies created were an accurate reflection of what the senior leaders has stated. Appendices 20 and 21 show this on a whole SLT transcript, as the allocation of categories becomes apparent, these statements are subsequently taken further apart as the paraphrasing and recycling process kicks in, in order to ensure the validity of the coding process.

Table 14 - Overview of centre profiles

Removed to protect anonymity of centres.

3.6.2 Challenge

It is worth first, noting that all of the codes inside this MC were inductively-derived as Table 11 on page 112 highlights. This first MC is concerned with the real learning and knowledge that the SLT and the school/college beyond them experienced. The first sub-category relates to the identification of the IBDP, (What is the IBDP? How is it really different?), and acknowledging that it is really different from the mainstream curricula provision of the Pre U and A-Levels. Senior staff (across both sectors) all, without exception, **N=28, referred to the DP as giving some variation on the comment that ‘breadth and depth that 3 A-Levels don’t’ offer/give.** Whereas some staff qualified this with the level of depth of HL is not quite the same as an A-Level, but even then the comments were made that when they were doing double the number of subjects - irrespective of the greater extra-curricular events the students were also doing. The depth of the curriculum that is usually covered in an A-Level could not be expected across the usual six subjects covered by the IBDP, when the other key elements of To K and CAS, are also taken so seriously.

The third inductively-derived statement inside this Challenge Framework was: **‘Do our students/parents want it?’ (N=22)**, as this is the area where views polarized from ‘*parental pressure*’ (respondents D and F, in Centres 1 and 2), to

the response that overlaps into the Beliefs Framework (below) '*to challenge students expectations*' (respondent I in Centre 3). The discussions that had taken place on the costings and the position of introducing a curriculum that potentially diverts resources away from elsewhere; derived from the code of '**Can we afford it?**' (**N=15**). This is a larger discussion in the state sector, than the independent sector - where the additional costs are directly passed on to the consumer (in this case usually the parents). It should be mentioned inside this Main Category of Challenge that for the two remaining state schools this is where the bulk of their internal SLT debates still lie.

The two state schools in this doctoral thesis sampling frame, who still deliver the IBDP, both do this at a loss. They are subsidised by either their academy sponsor or the community mechanisms that they have established to try and continue it successfully. This is a difficult and challenging process and cannot continue without considerable on-going evaluation of their position. It puts the SLTs in these centres in a particularly challenging position. This debate is inter-linked with the social justice implications of what their students were achieving (such as their first ever student into Oxford) as a 'consequence' these SLT members believed in access to the IBDP. This theme is picked up again, in the Beliefs theme below, which contains the theoretically-induced codes.

3.6.3 Curriculum

The second MC was on the actual adoption of the **programme into the schools and colleges curriculum**. **Logistical concerns centred on:** '**How do we adopt the IBDP?**' (**N=24**), and how this actually works in practice, with comments such as '**Getting centre approval/IBO Training Courses for staff**' (**N=19**). In this main category of Curriculum too, all the codes were also inductively-derived, as per the explanations given in section 2.12.

The next debate that SLTs had formed concerned the relevance of the programme to their centre, for some centres (the early adopters Centres 6, 7, and 8) the relevance of the DP had been entrenched and they could not imagine life without that level of curricula choice, or what might be termed ‘discretion’ in all centres for being able to allocate students to particular pathways, that create alternative biographical trajectories. The only additional qualifier from staff came when discussing requirements of Russell Group universities for STEM subjects: *‘the only real rationale for doing A-Levels in Maths and Physics now is that [the IBDP] HL in those subjects is not quite as detailed [as the A-Levels], but the benefits were still thought to out-weigh the disadvantages: ‘so it may mean that the DP student has to work harder than the A-Level student, but look at what they bring to the table: better essay writing skills from ToK, better well-rounded ability from CAS, better language and social science skills to put their scientific research into a wider context from having kept all of those additional subjects going, does that make them a better scientific undergraduate? No, not in their first year, but does it make them a better scientific researcher longer term? Yes, it very much does’* (respondent X)

In some codes there are clearly differing responses across state and independent sectors, which is itself unsurprising, but these still overlap because of their shared curriculum positioning. **‘Changing knowledge base: additional costs/workloads’ (N=15)** of implementing the IBDP. **‘Shifting political time frames: will the DP be covered by additional Government payment?’ (state) (N=10)**, but comments such as **‘Will we have to increase fees?’ (independent) (N=12)**. But for other schools/colleges the relevance concerning the choice of curricula options (and now lack of that choice in Centres 1 and 3) illustrated the rationale for *why* it had been chosen in the first place. To ‘even-up’ some of discrepancies across the sectors: students in the independent sector have longer days and weeks, and the time-tabling for the IBDP is dealt with in the same manner as any other section of the curriculum, which has the same length timetable. The additional time-constraints for state-sector students is a significant curriculum area discrepancy that was repeatedly mentioned.

3.6.4 Learning curve

The third MC was, again entirely constructed from inductively-derived codes, focussed on both the centres and the individual's framework of Learning Curve. It was in this MC that the single code was removed from the final list, as it was not considered significant enough '**Identity: huge change**' (**N=3**). This is an interesting area as it the space in which the Senior Leaders allowed some time for personal reflection as was discussed in section 2.4.1. The reflexive element of this doctoral research project has been of much interest due to the participant observer role that the author played in the data collection process. Hence many of these statements concerned '**Individual and self-understanding: why doing this?**' (**N=56**), and allowed for an exploration of the introduction of the IBDP (or the removal of it) potentially in a space that they had not considered these decisions before. This resulted in much of the dialogue between the author and the interviewees centring on '**Personal viability**' (**N=48**). Teare (2013:104) argues that 'education should equip learners for life – not just for employment – and to accompany this objective, people need to engage in... lifelong performance and action learning' (LPAL).

It is well known that leaders in education often feel that they are squeezed between groups (Townsend, 2015). Those they answer to – their own 'external' leaders: governing bodies, executive head teachers, chain school 'owners', local, and national government, on the one hand, versus the people they lead inside their organizations: teachers, support staff and students. The 1990s term for this former group was 'stakeholders', but Archer (2013) has written about how different groups define their emerging interests educationally, as was discussed in section 2.8.1. This latter group comprises what could be viewed as the 'internal' group involved in education: students, parents, and staff. The 'external' group then become all the other players. This squeeze between the internal and external groups on those leading – such as heads/principals and their SLTs - appears especially noticeable when dealing with change. '**What have we learnt/gone well?**' (**state/independent**) (**N=72**). Individual leaders who participated in this research process sometimes felt overwhelmed by their roles:

but still find the ‘traditional’ (perhaps inherent) satisfaction inside education - helping people. Hence the altruistic element of public service, changes as leaders progress through their careers. Instead of the direct involvement with students that happens earlier on in teachers’ careers, it becomes a more distant process for leaders; of implementing the policy - that in turn impacts on the students.

This potential disconnect between internal and external groups’ results in members of SLTs having a huge sense of responsibility to a very varied group: staff, students, parents, governors, and the policy makers at all relevant levels. **‘What have we learnt/when withdrawn?’ (state) (N=22)**, But this research shows that they feel they have insignificant power, being ever re-active to events and often feeling isolated and removed from their ‘core’ staff teams. Leaders still enjoy making a significant difference in others’ lives such as the students and communities that they see themselves as serving, but increasingly this comes from the decisions that they have taken the adoption of policy and ensuing curriculum choice. As this gives opportunities to groups of students and as these leaders are already on SLTs they are often quite removed from the ‘daily grind’ of teacher workload. Conversely, when leaders have to reverse the choices that have been made for altruistic reasons for budgetary ones and cannot continue with versions of the curriculum that they believe positively impact on their students (albeit a small number of them) that sense of disconnect to the groups that they serve becomes even greater, and their sense of altruism and achievement are reduced further.

There are a number of tensions here: leadership in schools and colleges has changed, as the political and economic landscape changes in education. The introduction, and extension, of neo-liberal policies experienced by leaders has meant that, particularly in England, the education system has been, and continues to be, in a state of flux. This creates tension for leaders on how to deal with change, but also how to explain these changes largely to their ‘internal’ groups - some discourses characterize these ‘internal’ groups as resistant to change (such as teacher unions on Academy Trusts for example). Yet in the

discussion between these ‘insider’ and ‘outsider’ groups there is little acknowledgment of the nature of organizations, systems and cultures. The potential limits of control and agency caused by local, national, and global forces and agendas are critical, as leaders are restricted in the world of schools, cultures and systems so they often do not have the control over events which particularly their ‘insider’ group(s) may assume that they do. This is analyzed in section 4.4.

3.6.5 Beliefs

The fourth and final MC centred on the Framework of Beliefs, and these are the theoretically-derived codes which justify much of the SLTs position. ‘**Work and life-long learning**’ (**N=18**), came high up in the interviews but the most populated code was on ‘**Social justice implications**’ (**N=68**), although this does mean slightly differing things to different SLT groups. It should be remembered that the IBDP is a stratified curriculum academically: students need to be highly-able to balance the workload alongside the ToK and CAS elements.

In this context the social justice implications concern enabling high ability students of all backgrounds to achieve to their full potential. The IBO’s own leadership capacity that it develops for staff as well as students, was raised inside the ‘**Developing professional capital**’ (**N=22**) code, and ‘**Including professional experience**’ (**N=38**), was also raised in the context of the IBDP being an international qualification, and how this adds to the potential skill-set of the SLT members themselves.

This theoretically-derived MC, and the code codes that it contains, is considered important to the overall tension depicted in the thesis, and is subsequently returned to in the analysis and discussion in section 4.6. The tension being that the state sector SLTs have introduced the IBDP, not just for ‘stretch’ for their more able students, but also as a process of challenging some of the elitist structures within their system: it is a policy-decision effectively, that gives their

student body additional agency (Archer, 2013). In the areas, where it has been able to continue, that is.

3.7 Summary

From Strand 1, there was clear evidence from both the questionnaires and the student focus groups that parents were very instrumental in the decision-making for the IBDP groups, as far as it was possible to ascertain from the data collected across all three centres that took part in this strand of data collection. From the student focus group information, those that had opted for the IBDP had higher levels of cultural capital - at least in the sense that they had thought about keeping open more options to access a different range of subjects and their HEI place. Everyone had accepted the argument that: '*we work harder than the other [A-Level] students and this will pay off for us later on*', when '*pay off*' was clarified *the focus group respondents in Centres 1 and 3 said very similar things*. '*We should get better access to Uni places*', '*my Mum says it will ‘pay dividends’ around what Uni I end up at and what course I can apply for*', focus group respondents commented. But they were all small groups, they were the tiny group who had been (and their parents probably had been) persuaded by these arguments that the centres SLTs had put forward.

In Strand 2, what was apparent was that middle tier staff had very mixed views concerning the IBDP qualification itself with real divisions inside all three of the centres between those who had wanted it, and wanted students to benefit from it and those who (for a wide range of reasons) did not want it as a post-16 option in their centre. These reasons were numerous in their focus groups, but ranged from diverting resources away from other areas of the curriculum (which had by that point taken place) with all of the centres experiencing larger A-Level cohort sizes, and the much smaller class sizes in the IBDP, being very obvious on visits

to the centres. Centre 2 staff had resisted its implementation for many years because it played havoc with the timetable, and as the IBDP is generally considered more timetable-intensive they did not want it to detract from time for sports and matches/fixtures, which are particularly important to them.

In Strand 3, the HEI students' perspective changed over time. In the first focus group there was little acknowledged difference, although the study skills and organisational skills of the former IBDP group were commented on as a sub-group by their ex-A-Level peers. This was put down to having dealt with double the number of 16-19 subjects studied and the greater use that had been made of their time with ToK and CAS activities. By the second year the differences appeared to have levelled out with both sub-groups into the swing of university life, but the last two focus groups were revealing in that they showed that the 'time maximization' attitude of the IBDP group was really coming into its own, with all of that former group being predicted, and then gaining higher level degree classifications. The final focus group meeting showed a significant achievement level of difference between the state and independent school students and the A-Level and IBDP group. One student, from a state school that had the IBDP, maintained a biographical trajectory with the IB DP sub-group admirably - despite not having the same levels of economic capital as her former IBDP peers - it appeared that she had captured cultural capital aplenty. But she is only one individual student, from the four years of HEI focus groups

Lastly from Strand 4, the SLT positions from the independent sectors were doing what was right for their student body, there was a student and parent demand for the IBDP and they are (although with charitable status) in a profit-making industry, whereby even small independent day schools have to run at a low profit. If it is not successful, they would withdraw it, came the interview response again and again. These leaders stated that it was successful, with growing numbers, without much advertising from the schools, so it had firmly become part of their Marketing Intelligence Framework (MIF). The Heads in the elite independent centres – where they have a number of international students – did comment on it being an expected standard that the IBDP was offered, and therefore the gate-

keeping of who is allowed entry to it becomes a very difficult position for them. Those public schools that are choosing not to offer the IBDP, are sending quite a strong signal to the international market.

Repeatedly, inside the state sectors responses, there was considerable respect for the qualification: the lack of government interference; the breadth of the curriculum; the wider opportunities; the greater confidence levels; and the lambasting of the lack of genuine opportunity to introduce it or let it properly succeed in the state sector. The discourse from the SLT members concerned: the lack of significant funding; the lack of parental understanding; the lack of drive by HEIs to say they want it or prefer it - because state schools don't deliver it - so everyone is afraid of saying what one independent school head maintains: '*the world has moved-on, unless you really want to do four in-depth sciences, you should be doing the IB it is the only qualification available that prepares students properly for their futures*' (respondent L). The wider challenges of whether or not state school students have the time to do the other elements that lead to the qualification, as opposed to the minimum time requirements of A-Levels, cannot be challenged, if it is not on offer as a curriculum choice. But both staff and student workload was highlighted in the two state centres that remain struggling to deliver it.

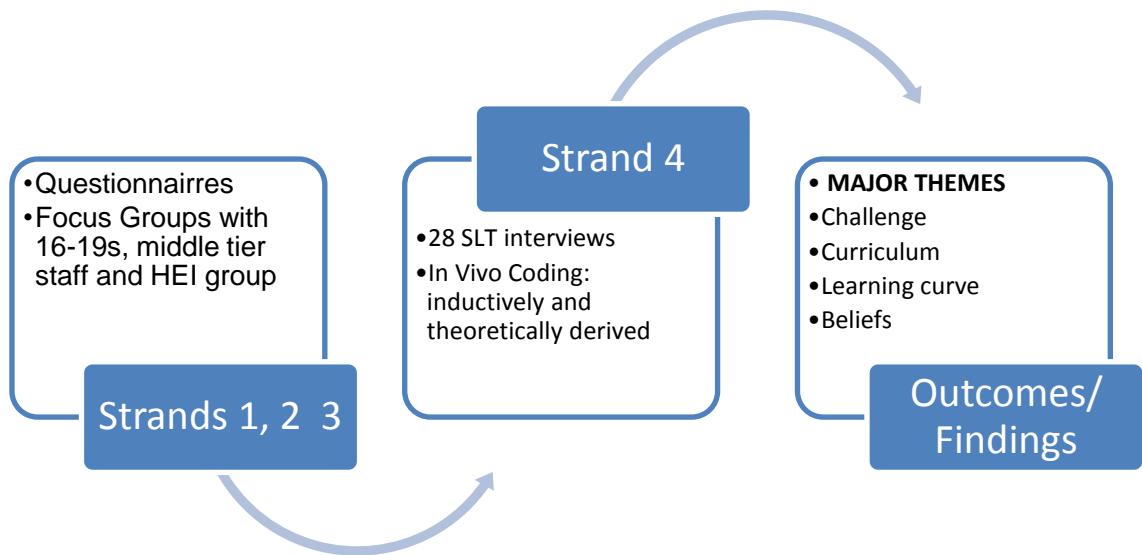


Figure 6 - The strands with their outcomes and findings

This chapter has given the findings of the data generated by the four strands in the research process and explained the positioning of the use of the IBDP in each of the centres visited. This chapter has displayed these findings to give a detailed snapshot of the issues that have been faced by Senior Leaders with regard to implementing a socially differentiated choice in their curricula offerings to students and parents. In conclusion, this chapter has highlighted the main categories of Challenge, Learning, Curriculum and Beliefs, considering the four strands involved in this research process, and these are now discussed further in the analysis and discussion chapter below with regard to the frames of reference (Neitzel and Welzer, 2012) that have been utilized.

Chapter 4 – Analysis and Discussion: Market Consolidation

4.1 Introduction

This chapter seeks to analyze and discuss the findings reported in the previous chapter, and to demonstrate the extent of the market consolidation of the IBDP that now rests in the independent sector. This position can be seen to be counter posed to the opportunity that existed at the end of the last decade, to implement it successfully into at least one state centre per Local Authority - as was the intention of the Blair government in 2005. Bunnell (2008) argued that the IB had reached a crossroads in its development in England, where on one side the IB:

could emerge as the ‘exclusive route’ for the independent sector, while on the other side the IB will be offered by one centre per LEA, ... ‘creaming off’ of the more able students.
Bunnell, 2008: 158.

Thus reinforcing Bourdieu's (1986) conceptual framework of cultural capital and forms of social closure (Parkin, 1971) as was discussed in section 1.9; as being key to the educational and analytical themes inside the thesis. This thesis goes one step further than Bunnell's (2015) analysis, and argues that in fact the IBDP has emerged as an elitist qualification within a process of elite social differentiation. This process exists within a solidifying hierarchy of selection and privilege that has significantly exacerbated during the timeline that this doctoral research process has taken place. It must be made clear by the author that there is nothing in this research process that remotely suggests that this is anything to do with the IBO: rather it is an issue over funding as the SLT interviews from the state sector schools and colleges in Strand 4 made quite clear.

From the research findings that were evidenced in the previous chapter, there are many reasons why the IBDP is not currently very successful in the state sector: changes to the additional funding required; time-tabling constraints (for both staff and students); facilities; and the demands that it puts on students in terms of involvement in a wider range of what would commonly be termed extra-curricular activities. Except, that in an IBDP context these activities are not extra-curricular; but are integral to the nature of this alternative Level 3 curriculum.

This chapter seeks to explore the data highlighted from the research process within the educational and analytical key themes that were espoused in the literature review, summarized in Table 4 on page 66. The following Figure 7, on the next page, diagrammatically explains the analysis and discussion inside this chapter. The diagram summarizes:

- the 'rationale' for the sources of data collected
- the methods employed in each strand
- and the outcomes of the data collected
- the key significant themes.

Figure 7, therefore acts as an overview of the analysis and discussion that takes place subsequently.

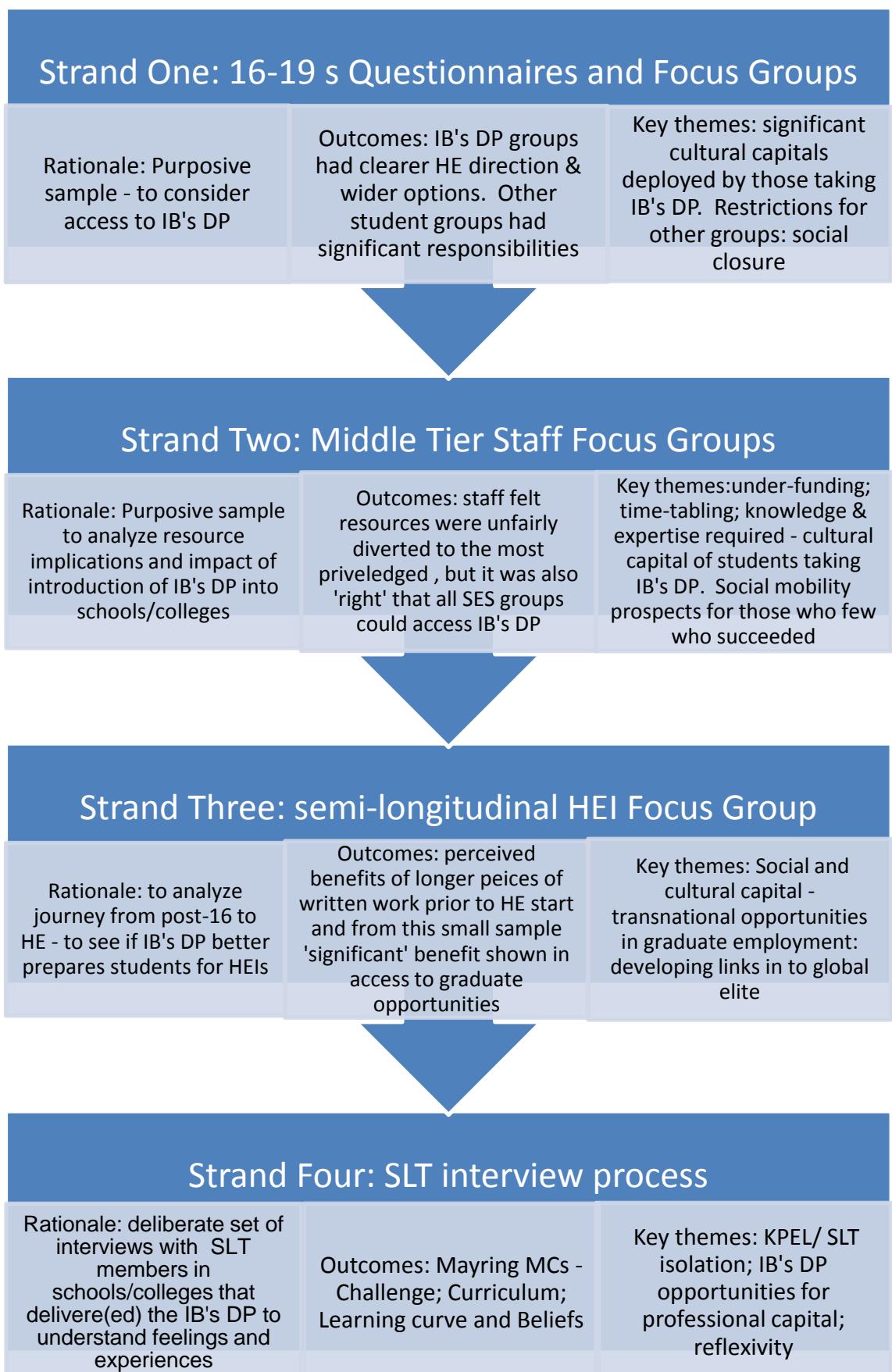


Figure 7 - Strands: rationale, outcomes, and key themes

4.2 Frames of reference

As was discussed in section 2.12.2, frames of reference, including globalization and social mobility have been deployed here, which allow for a conceptual coherence and explanatory power to be developed in order to discuss *how* and *why* the differing levels of post-16 curriculum opportunities can leave some student groups with very different forms of educational provision: leading to differentiated subsequent HEI access. As Kenway and McCarthy (2015) have commented, elite schools thrive in globalising circumstances. The development of a global transnational elite, is multi-faceted: it connects the global economy; London's housing bubble; and stratification of English HEIs. For those individuals who belong to this global group, choosing to educate their children inside the elite schools and colleges such as were visited for this doctoral research process gives rise to stratification and differentiation which ensures a 'narrative coherence' (Ball, 2003: 173) discussed in section 1.3. These parents belong to that elite group, and by ensuring that their children study an international qualification such as the IBDP, then the children can – if successful – access those HEIs which are also highly stratified, hence, recreating their parent's lifestyles. Even though, as Sennett (1999) pointed out, as was discussed in section 1.4, this may well be chasing global capital, and in some senses not look as glamorous from the inside as it does from the outside, in terms of the economic insecurities and frequent relocations it can involve.

However, social groups who cannot access either this type of schooling or the international lifestyle – and are therefore on the margins of these elite groups – often only view the positive glamorous elements. For these groups in English society whose children often cannot access the country's highly stratified universities either (Savage et al, 2015), the positives of the access that they perceive to give are witnessed. These frames of reference, therefore, become particularly important, as was discussed in section 1.5, when the active links between education, globalization, and social change (Lauder et al, 2006), are not always obvious – even for those in senior leadership teams. There are many wider society impacts that are also correlated here: rising independent school

fees (as elite schools capture an increasingly transnational group, so ‘peg’ their fees in relation to schools internationally rather than schools inside the domestic market); rising house prices meaning that a larger proportion of income is committed (even inside elite groups, as Savage et al 2015 discussed) and therefore unavailable for ‘traditional middle class’ uses such as school fees.

Hence, the aim of reconstructing these inductively-coded interviews inside these frames of reference is ‘to understand the preconditions for psychologically normal people to do things that they would not otherwise do’ (Neitzel and Welzer, 2012:9). This thesis has both explained and understood the everyday, commonsense assumptions of professional practice; a form of practical understanding rooted in the quotidian life of SLTs involved in the IBDP. As these SLT members have worked inside their own centres to incorporate the sheer volume of mandatory policy changes; that they have no control over (Chitty, 2009), that was discussed in The Introduction: these frames of reference become utilised as a way of reconstructing the perceptions of the SLT members outside their complex organisations and into the wider structures in which they operate: dealing with students, parents and universities, as the narrative detail of the centres in Appendix 12 highlights. In the independent centres visited, this meant dealing with the international and elite groups with which they deal on a daily basis. But in the state centres visited is was about acknowledging a personal viability and a risk ethos concerning making and taking deliberate decisions that had the ability to change the biographical trajectories of their more talented students, as was discussed with reference to the literature in section 1.8: ‘Achieving social justice?’.

4.3 IBDP: changing market?

Bunnell (2008 and 2015) puts forward some strong arguments, in historical context, as to why the IBDP may well be forcing a divide inside the post-16 sector in England, that are useful to the analysis and discussion of the findings from this thesis. Bunnell (2008) argues that the influential path of the IBDP is one where the IB and the role of international education is increasingly playing a huge – if

largely unnoticed - role inside the English and Welsh systems from primary education upwards. The most interesting trend, Bunnell reveals is that a 2007 survey by the Head Masters Conference (HMC) illustrated that approximately 240 'public school' members have introduced the iGCSE in English, mathematics, and science. The number offering one or more iGCSEs increased from '57 per cent in 2006 to 92 per cent in 2007', (Bunnell, 2008: 155). Essentially, Bunnell argues that the IBDP has become an extension of this process (now only really in the independent sector), for the reasons that were specified above in section 1.2, on the difficulties with national qualifications and levels of government interference.

However, the links made to the wider economic global context and how one class group can again monopolize that for their own advantage remains a relevant theme that fits with the concept of institutional habitus and the links to the IBDP, as was discussed in section 1.7: Equity, learning and the global context, in the literature review. If these themes are linked together what we witness (from a time of economic crisis) is one where a global group, i.e. a transnational economic elite group, is able to monopolize, consolidate, and reproduce its class position effectively without any challenge by host education systems; 'education structures' as Archer (2013) has critically considered, being key to this successful process. Arguably, the on-going marketization of the education system in England, and the active 'selling' of the concept of the British curriculum by the UKTI (2016), not only welcomes this group, but actively seeks to entrench it into British values and culture.

Although the IB - at all three of its levels – is international at its heart, the epistemological basis that it uses is Western, and it has been accused (by a former Director of the IBO) of being mono-cultural (Walker, 2002). This accusation is levelled in a dual sense that it has not developed in other areas of the world outside the West, and its approach does not consider other epistemological traditions. But poorest parts of the world have little or no IB association, as was discussed in 1.7, in relation to GULL and LAL (Zuber-Skerritt and Teare, 2013). Some of this may be obvious: in that it is expensive to run;

designed for International Education; is bought by elite groups, or a transnational class. However, many of the connections remain critical – even if they are opaque.

4.4 Consequences of the findings on leadership

Gunter (2012) has argued the creation of National College for School Leadership (NCSL) (now the National College for Teaching and Learning, NCTL) by the last Labour Government back in 2000 was an act of neo-liberal policy in itself. As her Knowledge Production in Education Leadership (KPEL) study showed members of SLTs were not free to choose their own forms of leadership or to engage in scholarly activity that may have produced an evidenced based framework for leadership, but were mandated to attend the NCSL approved National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH), even if they were already engaged in an Ed D. Such examples of neo-liberal policy are now evident across the education system, but it is considered here that the IBDP provides a good example of how this policy plays out in education. As was documented in 1.3, successive Secretaries of State have pledged support to the IBDP (Gove, 2014) but do not ensure that a viable framework is provided for such a curriculum change to be successful inside the sector. The IBDP is therefore considered here to be a good example of the areas that we have witnessed policy rhetoric on in the last decade, as SLTs make the decision to extend their curriculum and adopt it, but then have to remove it again when such adoption is unviable because of the state's financial constraints. This leaves the politicians 'free' to state that they support the IBDP, and it is up to SLTs therefore to make the decisions on the policy. When it then fails in the state sector it is held up as an exemplar of how the state sector is not as 'dynamic/ forward thinking/ innovate' as the independent sector who have managed to successfully implement it, as was discussed in 1.1 and 1.2.

What has been witnessed in this doctoral research project from the data provided by Strand 2 (middle tier focus groups: 3.4) and Strand 4 (the SLTs: 3.6) , was that – in relation to the tensions surrounding the IBDP at least – the two groups

had completely different views, agendas and experiences. The concept of Distributed Leadership (DL) is clearly linked to the concept of ‘performativity’ (Ball, 2010) in all its different guises. This is not to say that the SLTs are not, ultimately, accountable for their results, but that the day-to-day workload and responsibility has been pushed down to the middle tier, as highlighted in 1.10. The responses in Strand 2, put forward in 3.4, illustrated the different focus and lack of explanations from SLTs about their external workload, which is often not visible inside school environments, which was illustrated in the MC of Learning Curve put forward in 3.6.4.

The changes between those staff who face internally and those who face externally came through very clearly in the SLT interviews in Strand 4, particularly in 3.6.2: largely because of the recent poor economic context and the largely neo-liberal ideological response to this situation (Hall, 2013). The creating of greater inequality in English society: of which access to the IBDP from inside the education sector is but one example. In this ‘moral climate’ we have a government ‘morally’ providing economic capital for those considered disadvantaged under the pupil premium policy, so that teachers can ‘solve’ a multiplicity of combined disadvantages (material, cultural, social and economic) just by having access to an additional £935 a year for secondary aged students (DfE, 2015; EEF Toolkit, 2014; Outhwaite, 2016).

The current state average allocation for post-16 students is worked out by very complicated funding formula (DfE, 2015), and differs across state sectors (schools, sixth form colleges and FE funding). However, it is thought to work out at approximately £5,592 per year (DfE, 2014) and this is in stark contrast to the average school fees for independent day schools where the IBDP is currently taught at approximately £18,000 (IBO, 2015), and in boarding schools where the fees (as mentioned above) in elite schools are currently averaging £64,000 for the duration of the IBDP. The HMC maintain that approximately £12,500 a year is met on curriculum needs, but this is still more than double that of the state school equivalent (HMC, 2016). As was examined in the findings in 3.6 and 3.6.3, the major themes and curriculum debates are different between the two sectors,

but the High Stakes testing, to get their students into HEIs is very much socially differentiated, and the role that the IBDP plays in this is an important one.

4.5 Prestigious qualification

The IBDP is used as a “prestigious” qualification to enable status to be conferred to students (whose parents can afford to buy places on it), given the very restricted number of places where it can now be studied. With less than half of these centres now left in the state sector, it therefore acts as a form of social and cultural reproduction for elite groups, for the access it gives 16-19 students to a peer group with a global outlook. As Doherty et al (2009) noted, the frame of reference of globalization encourages an international outlook on behalf of students (and their parents), who are looking at using an international qualification in order to access Higher Education in other countries.

Elite schools make much of their ‘IBO World Status’, unlike the state schools that were visited for this doctoral research process which made far less of their status, but were busy trying to find income streams, in order to continue the perceived benefits of the IBDP to their centres. As evidenced in 3.6.5, the behaviours of the SLT members were constrained in the state sector: financially and emotionally. Instead of being able to spend the time (that they actively wanted to spend) on explaining to their communities about what this label meant and what the qualification could do – they had, instead, to spend the time working out how to fund it, and judging whether the perceived benefits were worth it.

What some state sector SLT members had felt through being able to introduce a qualification, for their 16-19s, that maintains a level of access for bright students into elite groups, and what they thought they would have the opportunity: ‘*clearly never materialized*’ (Respondent K). This meant that for the differing biographical trajectories and possibilities (particularly in schools that are geographically close in urban centres) the polarization of the post-16 offering – has become acutely dependent on whether you can financially access it.

4.6 ‘Choice’ of curricula

SLT members have given witness to how structures can both enable and prevent their students from achieving. Hence being able to influence the choice of curriculum so that appropriate levels of status are conferred or restricted, can be regarded an attractive decision on which to base policy, as was witnessed in 3.6.3. Discussion on levels of ‘choice’: and what choice means in these differing schools and colleges was explored in these inductively-derived codes. These SLTs all have different constraints whether state or independent. They also have differing levels of engagement with international communities: some, the transnational global elite that have been discussed here, but others have international communities from changing urban multicultural environments. SLTs that were visited (including those who had neither of these contexts) also had an understanding of the fact that they were educating students to be part of a globalized society: irrespective of their circumstances.

Instead the choices that SLTs in state sector faced were concerning financial restrictions, and a lack of parity that exists in educational structures (Archer, 2013). This means that genuine choice does not exist: even if the professionals believe it is the most appropriate pedagogical programme for their student body. So the introduction – and subsequent removal – of the IBDP led to both the feelings, related to the Challenges explained in 3.6.2, but also the Learning Curve that these leaders had to go through themselves as was explained in 3.6.4.

4.7 Equity and Social Justice

When the IBDP has been adopted in the state sector, there seems to have been a conscious mantra regarding the development of equity issues: some centres experienced first ever Oxbridge success. This was clear from the very first

interviews conducted with staff in the state sector. The IBDP gives access to elite HEIs, because it prepares students well for the rigours that are expected of them, and enables concepts of globalism and internationalism (that are often dealt with negatively in the press), to be dealt with in a very positive educational context, and the Academy has a role to play in this, (Phelps, 2013).

This is where the theoretically-derived codes in 3.6.5 on ‘Beliefs’ are essential. As Table 4 (page 66) explained, the key educational and analytical themes that have been witnessed relate to these academic works that analyze the (lack of equity) across all systems. Although the IBDP has been considered in its Western context, the parallels are maintained into areas of the world where there is even greater inequality. The IBDP is ‘sold’ as a genuinely international qualification, but has not made in-roads into the poorer areas of the world, and exists only where there is an already established and developed education system, as was highlighted with reference to the work of Teare (2013), in section 1.7. This is an on-going area for development for the IBO that others have commented on Van Ord 2007: Walker 2002, and it will be interesting to watch the developments that occur in this area.

4.8 Research assessment /justification

The mixed methods used in this doctoral research process were varied and interesting, and in part changed over time as a response to the unfolding situation of the decline of the IBDP qualification in state centres in England whilst it was being studied. There is an overview of the methods used in the methodology, see Table 8: Research Methods – mapping, approaches, and data sources, on page 89. From questionnaires, focus groups and interviews providing the empirical research data through to the deployment of participant observation and ethnography; all methods have been useful for the perspectives that have been illuminated during this doctoral research process. However, some methods have been more appropriate and/or useful than others, and this section puts forward an assessment of the methods utilised.

Strand 1 was appropriate as the research process was initially concerned with collecting the views of 16-19 students, to analyze why they had prompted for a non-standard choice of qualification. The idea of the questionnaires and follow up focus groups of both AS/A2 and IB1/IB2 groups was to see which particular stakeholders (parents, teachers, universities, and others) encouraged students to opt for the IB as opposed to A-Level. Questionnaires are absolutely appropriate to collect larger scale data (Silverman, 2014), and the response rate to the questionnaire was excellent because of how it was integrated into A-Level 3 session on research methodology inside A-Level and IB classes (for detailed explanation see page 95).

Strand 2's focus groups to Middle Leaders (of which the author had been one) were appropriate to the chosen study because it required understanding the data set. Who was opting for the IBDP? Why were they making that decision? Where were the 'push and pull' factors in the system coming from? Their data was informative and useful to identifying who was choosing to study the IBDP and what issues it was potentially creating inside schools and colleges. This was particularly useful as the author had been involved in these conversations whilst a school middle leader, but with her transition into an HEI, was no longer privy to this information, and could not see what was happening from outside these centres. This is, in part, where the participant observation was appropriate as the author's role was being back in these centres making notes on what was seen and heard, and accessed them on-line through their websites. This is a combination of the use of focus groups with 'analytic memo writing', as referred to earlier on page 110 (Saldana, 2013:49).

However, Strand 2's focus groups also highlighted that these middle leaders were not the instrumental decision makers in their systems - it highlighted what they knew, but also what they did not know. It also, critically, did not highlight how senior leaders felt considering the significant impact that the IBDP was having to their centres and what options they had open to them to address any of the issues that were arising, such as resourcing. This is what Strand 4 belatedly addressed through the interviews.

Strand 3 came about serendipitously, in that a small group of three of the author's former A-Level students all studying at the same university, contacted me to share their thoughts, and the author was not sure if their information would be relevant or not. The focus group reduced from 11 to 8 on the second session that we met, but the author was surprised that all of this group turned up to subsequent sessions, including one after university, and the data set that it generated was thematically very interesting particularly regarding the social and cultural capitals displayed by the former IBDP students. Although it was interesting talking to this group of students on four occasions, it is hard to differentiate whether their advantages came from taking the IBDP or came from their independent schooling, as was discussed in The Findings in section 3.5. Suffice to say these former (state-sector) students were surprised by how much this group of peers were able to do, and how opportunities seem to have 'fallen into their laps' far more easily. But as is documented above, this is in part due to the fact that the former state school students need to work through holidays to pay their way through university, and therefore are unable to take opportunities (or place themselves in positions where such opportunities may be presented) such as unpaid internships, just as the Milburn Report (2009) maintained. These four HEI focus groups, then, although only a very small part of the overall data set, were useful in that (at A-Level) the level of specificity they offered of some concrete examples on social differentiation related to elite group behaviour and opportunities.

Strand 4, is believed to be the most significant strand, the most contemporary and also the most time consuming! But what the Mayring process allows is for the codes to be inductively developed and the paraphrasing allows for simplification of hours of relatively complicated material. This is why in the analysis and discussion, the frames of reference are employed: in order to simplify, condense, and paraphrase the context in which all of this decision-making regarding post-16 qualifications and the ensuing differentiated access that it gives to HEIs.

The interesting research method of participant observation (Bruyn, 1966) should also be returned to. It was noticeable, in conducting the interviews that as well as being a colleague, who had been recommended into these institutions by peers, the author was also a programme leader in a Russell Group university by the time they were held, and so these school leaders were interested themselves in areas of access and progression that came up in the interviews, in the same way that the author was interested in the visits to the centres, and how the notes made at the time impacted on the details in Appendix 12 on the centre narratives.

Overall, the four differing strands of research are considered to have been useful and worked to yield relevant and appropriate data. It is these data sets which have of course helped to shape the analysis and discussion contained in this chapter. It is worth adding that with hindsight this has been a more complicated process than was originally anticipated, and it could have been far simpler. However, if the author had not collected some of the strands of data, this research process would not have the depth of understanding of the differing positions that have been identified here.

Three other areas are of significance in our understanding of the issues and themes that this thesis has identified. The first area is the complicated one of socio-economic status. In an ideal world the students answering the questionnaires would have known their parental occupations, and the questionnaire data could have been stratified accordingly to see if there was any direct correlation between IBDP take-up and elite groups. However, although such social differentiation has been witnessed in other areas in this research process (such as inside the student focus groups and in comments made by different levels of staff both in focus groups and interviews) it was not possible to find any clear correlation from the questionnaire results as students either did not know or were unwilling to provide detailed and accurate information on parental occupation or their socio-economic status. It is well known that research on class and socio-economic status is problematic (Crompton, 2008).

The second area is that of parents themselves. It is considered that had it been possible to conduct a parental focus group to explore in depth with them the issues surrounding social differentiation that would have generated a useful strand of data and further contextual insights. The external scoping of the research could then have more thoroughly considered: whether or not parents are being pushed into using the independent sector - as the IBDP is now virtually unavailable across the state sector outside a few notable areas, as has been discussed. It is believed that this idea for an additional strand of research would have been useful; but it was discounted because it was just too problematic to organise. However, if a director of IB or head teacher were conducting such a strand of research their access would potentially be easier than has been for this doctoral research process, now that the author is one step removed from the relevant school and college contexts. Although of course power issues would need to be addressed inside such an insider research process.

The third distinct area that is considered useful for the external links to this doctoral research process, but was again discounted: was to involve a global dimension. With the IBDP being a very international qualification but taught in a more international school context, a global dimension would also have been interesting, and highlighted some of the differences of how the IBDP is operated around the world. In a larger study, this could potentially show how the qualification is used as a form of stratification through curriculum choice, and this could look at other forms of qualification that elite institutions deliver such as the American Baccalaureate too. Of course, these additional areas of recommendations for further research, or 'disclaimers', do not detract from what is intended to be a rigorous description and analysis of educational and curriculum reform which has taken into account the need for verifiable evidence, and generalisability, where appropriate.

4.9 Summary

In summary, this chapter has analyzed and discussed The Findings from Chapter 3, in relation to the Literature Review from Chapter 1: exploring the key educational and analytical themes that were espoused in Table 4 on page 66. The key questions have been: whether or not entrenchment occurs because of the IBDP? Do groups with high levels of capital successfully maintain the IBDP for themselves? This fourth chapter has addressed, through the research assessment and justification that some of these areas have been hard to collect data on specifically, because of the difficulties of collecting Socio Economic Status (SES) statistics, but the findings from all Strands this thesis maintains that the decline of the IBDP in the state sector has led to a situation where access has become further differentiated: to elite group advantage. The results from the small HEI focus group of Strand 3 demonstrated some of these continued advantages. It is only the 'elite' in society that are now able to access the IBDP: either through independent school fees or by accessing one of the few remaining, declining, places that this research process has visited in England where the IBDP remains on offer in the state sector. Inside Strand 4, some SLT members (particularly from Centre 7) spoke of parents (and students) who had re-located into their catchment area, in order to access the IBDP, in the state sector.

The four strands of data conducted in this research process all identified ever-changing priorities from government as central issues, and lack of support for ideas that have been put on the agenda for schools/colleges to follow through on being pivotal to their eventual success or failure. Critical to an understanding of the challenges of educational leadership, then becomes not just the personal, individualistic circumstances, but the wider social, political and economic context in which these leaders are operating, as has been highlighted.

Chapter 5 – Conclusions: a new model developed

This chapter details the conclusions from the professional doctorate undertaken and the four strands of data collection and analysis that it involved, over the 8 phases between Phase 1 in 2009 and Phase 8 in 2016, as detailed in Figure 1, on page 30. This thesis gives a particular set of conclusions and recommendations for further research investigating the use of the IBDP in the context of the English education system, and how over this period it has been effectively appropriated by those who Savage et al describe as the ‘globally mobile transnational elite’ (Savage et al, 2015: 243), which was not the case

when this research process began back in 2009. These conclusions argue that a new model has been developed in relation to the use of the IBDP, inside the English education system, during this timeframe that leaves it almost impossible to access without recourse to the independent sector. Figure 8, below, diagrammatically demonstrates an overview of the thesis to illustrate how the educational and analytical key themes raised in the literature review, have led to the chosen empirical methods and data, and how the thesis has demonstrated both theoretical and professional insights gained.

5.1 Professional practice and research

This thesis has presented research rooted in professional practice in the field of post-16 curricula, and shows how this relates to modern elite formation and social differentiation. The thesis represents and records a period of personal and professional development of seven years (2009-2016) within the broad field of sociology of education and in the specific arena of educational leadership with post-16 curricula changes in England, within the IBDP. It shows both how the author moved from the field of specialist post-16 teaching, encouraging students to access HEI places, through to working in an HEI and subsequently dealing more with senior school leaders through the roles of managing Masters Programmes and delivering these back into schools. This meant that the area of professional practice left behind in schools, being a middle leader, and interested in distributed leadership – began to change into an acknowledgment of the agency that senior leaders have within the system.

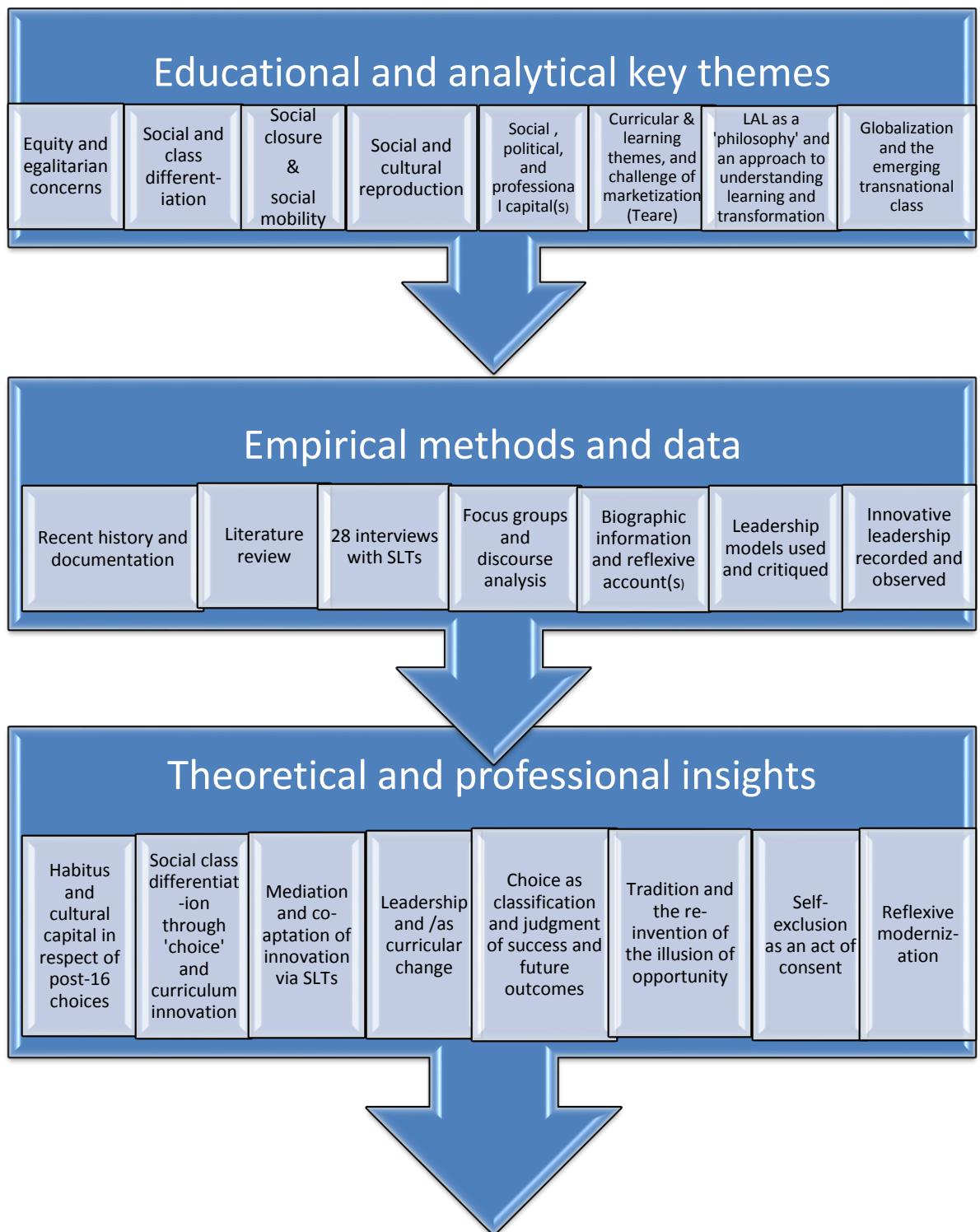


Figure 8 - Thesis Overview

Over this seven year period the author's position in the field, has moved from being a middle leader in schools to being an HEI manager who regularly now mentors senior school leaders on the changes that are taking place across the system. Through continued work in schools: delivering Masters programmes; being a parent governor; sitting on Academy Trust and Teaching School Alliance Boards; running a Research Interest Group (RIG) in leadership preparation, and development; the author has moved her positioning from that of a middle leader to being regarded as a peer with the senior leaders.

The backdrop of the changing context of the adoption of the IBDP and its subsequent removal was used to highlight both the personal and SLT developments. These developments were the focus for professional interventions in the lives and learning of young people who were considered to be capable of studying a broad range of subjects up to the age of 18, rather than the narrow A-Level curriculum that is usually followed in England. At the heart of this broad range of subjects inside the IBDP are the elements of ToK and CAS which are critical, to a broader qualification that does not centre alone on academic excellence. The findings yielded by this doctoral research project have extended into feelings and emotions centred on social justice and SLTs wanting to improve students' life chances and possibilities, which were discussed in detail in chapters 3 and 4.

This thesis also explored the key educational and analytical themes through the mixed methods processes presented in Chapter 2 and the theoretical analysis presented in both the literature review, and the analysis and discussion. The research aims of this project were achieved with the four strands of findings: these include what is considered to be the most significant strand of data, as highlighted in Figure 5 on page 127, namely the 28 interviews with SLTs who implemented the adoption of the IBDP. These interviews with members of SLTs who had actively participated in this major post-16 curriculum change have contributed to a better understanding of the recent English experience of adopting the IBDP, but then – in the state sector – withdrawing from it again. Thus, the opportunity for these senior leaders to own and define the concept and

experiences of this educational change, at a time when there was already mass wider educational change taking place, has been particularly useful.

First, the research phase followed a time-line in which - after the withdrawal of additional state funding for the IBDP - elements of the empirical data collection process started to disappear. What started out as an exploration of the rise of the IBDP as the new A-Level ‘gold standard’ evolved into a doctoral research project that examined access, and intention of access, by both educational leaders and whole social sub-groups. The thesis became an analysis that critically reflects on how modern elites are formed and whether it is possible to use choice of curriculum - and access to post-16 choices - as a form of social differentiation. This meant that the role of the SLTs themselves, in offering the curricula choice, was crucial and led to the SLTs exploring the contribution and effectiveness of the possibility of social change, and social justice. The aim of all the eight phases of the process (described in Figure 1 on page 33), and for the research itself, was to identify why and how a post-16 curricula choice was being used in the ways that it was.

Four strands of research were identified and explicated in the thesis through a series of research questions and investigative strategies. First, in Strand 1: how do students themselves relate to the choices on offer in post-16 education, and how these choices provide biographical trajectories beyond school and college, sometimes illustrated through sibling or parental examples. These questions were addressed through the questionnaires and the focus groups that were undertaken with (the N=100) 16-19 students across three settings that introduced the IBDP. The methods, the results and the findings from this specific group were dealt with in detail in chapters 2, 3, and 4 of the thesis. The concepts of choice and transformation in relation to each other were analyzed and presented in detail in Chapter 4. Issues related to challenges, success, and change were presented and incorporated within these chapters. The first strand of the research had attempted specifically to ask 16-19 students if they were aware of the socio-cultural backdrop in which they studying, which had provided very mixed answers on levels of awareness of socio-economic status (SES) data, and a very mixed

response to understanding the levels of cultural capital that alternative curriculum choice can bring. These issues and findings inform both the analytical evaluation contained in Chapter 4, and the conclusions discussed here.

Second, how did the middle leaders in these schools and colleges feel about the introduction of the new curriculum? This question was addressed in Strand 2 in particular. Support from fellow staff; leaders; and the IBO were the focus of attention. The author's own observations on the reality of how a new resource-intensive curriculum was being played out were of interest. 16-19 students who had the opportunity to study in centres where the IBDP was offered on an equal basis with A-Levels, with the positive and negative aspects of these realities were discussed. How the system and the realities of daily life can disadvantage these brighter students in the state sector, by not providing adequate time to meet their need to learn on an equal basis to how this is organised in the independent sector were outlined. Whilst at the same time, it was conceded that other basic standards of access on to HEIs were met and developed through the main curriculum entry route: namely that of A-Levels. The results of these focus groups and analysis presented in chapters 3 and 4 also addressed this question from the middle tier staff viewpoint; the perspectives and challenges that relate to distributed leadership.

Third, what is it like to be a student in an HEI studying alongside students who have both these types of qualifications? Strand 3, addressed this question with four focus groups: in each year as they progressed through an undergraduate degree programme, and investigated this throughout the thesis since this third strand formed a semi-longitudinal set of focus groups that highlighted some of the economic, social, and cultural capital issues that exist inside the English education system. Different forms of education system exist, and are highly stratified, as has been critically questioned using the work of Archer (2013). The thesis also investigated the disconnect between personal desires and wishes, for example, and what constraints impact on students as they progress through the post-16 education system into HEIs. This was highlighted by the graduated student group still having very different biographical trajectories in that each of

the IBDP students had gone on to find employment with in-built graduate opportunities that had been paid for by their new employers. Whereas the ex-A Level group were all engaged in further qualifications through government loans or parental help, as opposed to graduate management opportunities. This was only a small sample, as the findings in Chapter 3 made clear, but it was clear through the focus group responses that these opportunities came more easily to those who had the IBDP.

Last, in Strand 4 the role of the SLTs became the central focus: the 28 hour long interviews shedding light on why and how SLTs make and take the decisions that they do, and sometimes how far beyond their own control these decisions are taken. These SLT decisions showed elements of contrast with their own beliefs and value-systems, but ultimately if there are not the financial resources to follow through on these curriculum choices then restrictions on such curricula options have to be taken. Differentiation relates to both social and economic pressures inside the English education system, as has been argued by Green (2013). These SLT members could individually experience the pressure from all sides (or stakeholders): students, parents, middle-tier staff, even exclusion from the wider social institutions with their own peers - if their curriculum choices were handled badly, as the findings in Chapter 3 demonstrated.

These multiple identities of (and pressures on) senior educational leaders were discussed and analyzed in Chapter 4 through the main categories of challenge; curriculum; learning curve; and beliefs. In some areas of education, new forms of curricula were both culturally adapted and welcomed, but this depended very much on the levels of wider support to these SLTs and their financial positioning. Finally, how can alternative curriculum provision in the form of the IBDP, create desired social change and social transformation and how can we expand the circle? The concept of transformation was apparent through the whole process of the research analysis. A summary and analysis of the transformation concept and process was presented in detail in Chapter 4, section 4.2. This final Strand 4 although time-consuming, and requiring painstaking effort with the coding process, allowed an area for further exploration; in accessing some of the SLT

members' individual positions a triangulated perspective on these issues emerged which enhanced the research validity.

5.2 Biographical trajectories

This thesis involved a distinctive snapshot of time at the start of the 2010s in England, and the relationships that are rooted in senior leadership teams and across schools and colleges that help post-16 students to access their future places in HEIs. The development of this thesis required attention to how the personal and biographical experiences interacted with the realities of social differentiation and the formation of modern elite groups. The whole project concerned the author's work, and her previous and current environments, whilst simultaneously being about herself both as a learner and a practitioner. The author's personal and professional journey was an important and relevant part of this professional doctorate, and it is important to acknowledge that this project existed at several different levels.

Chapter 1, for example, locates the literature on how elite groups are changing and how social differentiation is now - critically - often 'played-out' through the educational choices that post-16 students have open to them. Chapter 2 uses a critical realist perspective, with the works Archer (2013) and Bhaskar (1978) to highlight how the methodologies are rigorously deployed inside these environments in order to be appropriately undertaken at this doctoral level. Chapter 3, meanwhile, demonstrated the findings of the structured nature of the researched encounters with learners (both at 16-19 and in HE), middle-tier teachers, and members of SLTs: to illustrate a snapshot of the successes and failures of introducing the IBDP into English centres. Whilst Chapter 4 analyzed and discussed the implications of these findings inside educational leadership in the IBDP, in order to be able to critically reflect upon how modern elites are formed, and entrenched, and the role that social differentiation plays in this process.

The cumulation of these researched encounters was deeply experiential requiring thorough re-assessment and re-evaluation of methods and approaches. Each distinctive phase led to a subsequent phase, as highlighted in Figure 1, on page 33. This meant that openness to alternative approaches was required, particularly when the empirical data set really felt as though it was 'disappearing', as state schools and colleges started to withdraw from the IBDP through 2010, 2011, and 2012. This was a challenging sequence of events to watch as a researcher, at the beginning of the doctoral research process in particular, whilst on the other hand, it brought alternative strands of data collection, that were not conceived at the start of the process. Namely Strand 4, as the focus shifted to the decision-making that senior leaders were taking - in relation to the national picture - of whether or not the IBDP should be continued inside their own school or college.

The author's focus at the beginning was only on middle leadership, with an interest in how leadership was distributed down to this level, from senior leaders. However, this line of thinking had shifted after the first six phases of research, as Figure 1 makes clear. When the author had realized that she needed to expand her research into senior leadership teams themselves this also fitted with the biographical trajectory that had taken place within her own role inside HEI too. By working with senior leaders from schools on what they wanted their staff to achieve from Masters programmes that she was responsible for running, gave additional agency in the interviews that were conducted, as the interviewer was regarded more as a peer in another context, than had been the case in earlier years (and phases) of the doctoral research process. This shift of thinking and interest was reflected particularly in Phase 7 of the research. Engaging in this Ed D, but also other areas of leadership development such as gaining fellowship, then senior fellowship of the HEA, gave further parity of esteem with the author's role in conducting the interviews with senior leaders, and ensured a more adaptable vision and approach. The author worked in different ways in the different setting, as was reported in detail in the findings of the research process in Chapter 3, and the narrative details of all of the 8 centres visited are described in Appendix 12.

This thesis represents a detailed and carefully maintained report of an extensive action learning project - over an extended period of six years. This evidences the author's own strengths and limitations arising from experience and learning in both her former and current workplaces, inside which the researcher has considered the object(s) of study as part of the social process of enquiry. Through this method, which Zuber-Skerritt and Teare (2013) refer to as lifelong action learning (LAL), individuals develop both the confidence and the capacity to understand their own learning and to be part of a sustainable development of community culture. The practitioners who are involved in LAL necessarily produce self-knowledge and reflective practice, as was the case inside this thesis, and the research process that preceded it. There must be a learning subject available, in order to create new insights and opportunities - in addition to the object of the research.

The intellectual framework for the research was thus derived from both published sources and primary data (together presented in Chapters 1, 2, 3 and 4). In summary, the work represents a reflective and inquiry-based based project using independent research for practice. It is trusted that in its completion it has made both an original contribution to knowledge: both in terms of practitioner insight and to the theoretical arguments which centre on the critical reflections on modern elite formation and social differentiation that are currently taking place inside the English education system. These are analyzed in Chapter 4 through the lens of practice and learning which addressed the main categories of themes as challenge; curriculum; learning curve; and belief.

However, it must be reasserted that this doctoral research project was not simply an empirical investigation into a learning system, or study of a particular type of curriculum. It was research into feelings and emotions which were 'played-out' through the introduction and then removal of the IBDP inside the English education system, at a time of both economic and educational change and upheaval. This doctoral research project records the linked worlds of the author-researcher, with respondents being the members of senior leadership teams

through the framing concepts of biographic continuity and identity (Jenkins, 2004) and personal viability (Teare, 2013).

5.3 Learning process

In reviewing the learning processes undertaken in this doctoral research project, the author believes it is possible to identify a learning process that this thesis has successfully identified and achieved. These would have to include both the significance and the relevance of the learning experiences. Knowledge and experience has to be relevant both to the nature and the character of any individual acting as a ‘free’ person: the ‘active self’, as Giddens (1991), Jenkins (2008), and Zuber-Skerritt and Teare (2013) remind us. This ‘active self’ both needs to be creative and must help to create a unique version of ‘reality’: through relevant values, behaviours, and activities. Such a notion of self, derived from Teare (2013) does not admit the ‘failure’ of those senior leadership teams who withdrew the IBDP from their curriculum, nor the HEI student group who couldn’t access the same opportunities as those who had studied the IBDP, that has been illustrated and analyzed inside this doctoral thesis. Instead, this thesis has illustrated the ability of extending the capacity to individuals to determine for themselves their future life course, and how they learn from the difficult decisions that they are required to take along that process. If that were not the case, this thesis would not have specifically focussed upon the educational leadership inside the IBDP, but it would have taken a different angle. By Strand 4 collecting the data on the senior leadership teams and their ability to demonstrate what they had learnt from the process of having the IBDP in their school or college – even for a short space of time – these SLTs acknowledged their ‘real learning’ that had taken place.

Another element deserves mention - this is the possibility of growth and change through overcoming the isolation and the exclusion that SLT members’ (heads and principals in particular: Townsend, 2015) have discussed that they suffer from. The interviews conducted for this thesis has confirmed much that has already been written by Castells (1996), Putnam (2000), and Townsend (2015),

specifically concerning the need to overcome isolation in senior roles in order to be able to achieve fulfilment on a personal basis, as well as a professional one. Hargreaves and Fullan's (2012) work on Professional Capital is useful to show the collaborative areas of learning inside professional communities.

As was explained back in Figure 1, this research process has evolved through eight phases which have had to cope with the changing backdrop of English education policy. Phases 1, 2, and 3 that were undertaken as the taught components and the piloting of the potential research methods were useful to the overall process as they helped to set the scene in which the empirical research data then disappeared from, as the implications of the changing funding mechanisms for post-16 education in England became clear. To have this focus on a situation *whilst it was changing* was very useful, as it enabled the author to be able to consider the ways in which the research could be actively, and usefully, taken forward. In the five-year research project (that followed the taught phase of the Ed D) choosing the appropriate area to locate the research inside; choosing the appropriate methods to collect the data; justifying those methods; ensuring that it was informative, productive and critically experiential (in that personal and professional attitudes and practices were the object of self-critical analysis). Although time consuming, the work has proved very fruitful.

In the final Strand 4 of the research process the author was more confident (as was detailed above) that interviewing senior leaders, almost in a coaching capacity, would yield an understanding of their curriculum decisions from their own standpoint (Smith, 2005), but still this did not mean that an 'end-product' as such was particularly clear or evident from the four strands of data collected; but built up more of a picture of the challenges that schools and colleges face in the current highly marketized and competitive climate that post-16 education is in, with particular regard to the access that it affords into higher education. The author has learnt a considerable amount, not just from conducting the interviews with the 28 members of SLTs, and the middle tier and both age ranges of student focus groups, but also through having visited the 8 centres and the role that participant observation plays inside this research study. The author has not

taught at secondary (or post-16) level for 8 years now, but by having a role in an HEI where she returns into schools to teach on Masters programmes and through conducting this research process, the opportunities that have been afforded to the author as a consequence of undertaking this research have been fascinating, and provided numerous opportunities for self-reflection. When a reader has an anonymised set of centres and abstracted statistics it is perhaps difficult to witness the sights and sounds of the students whose life chances are impacted upon by these changing decisions on curriculum choices and frameworks - but the ability to have options at this stage in their lives impacts on their own biographical trajectories as Doherty et al's (2009) work illustrated.

5.4 Participant observation and research

One of the challenges the author had to face during this doctoral research process was that of being a participant observer. The combination of the 'analytic memo writing' (Saldana, 2013:49), and the knowledge base that is accrued from working in similar environments are combined, and act as reminders of signifiers in the system. Each aspect of the roles: whether teaching, programme leading, tutoring, lecturing, or even parenting, had loyalties and an almost separate system of ethics. Being inside a qualitative paradigm enabled the number of roles held to ensure that these were partners in the research process. Holding the particular sessions for post-16 students where this doctoral research process was explained, in order to ensure a thorough understanding of how a whole research process can take place, was reported back as being a valuable process. It was also a reflective point for the author centring on how this was better dealt with after leaving post-16 teaching, potentially than it was when she was responsible for delivering this herself inside 16-19 environments.

This was one of the strengths of this period of research because as a researcher, the emphasis was on collecting the data and contributing to the knowledge base, and understanding and improving the knowledge and access to how the decisions are made on changes to the curriculum. Holding a multi-role, where

secondary teaching had been the expertise and HE was the new area of teaching contributed to the personal development both of the participants and to the generation of new knowledge in relation to newly developed own practice. In contrast, a multi-role could be regarded as a weakness of the process, as it potentially creates different competing priorities. The author believes that access to elite groups is the key to being able to study the nuances and the sometimes opaque nature of them, and hence as in the work of Khan (2011), especially after conducting the interviews with the participants and analyzing the data, that the multi-relationship in this case has potentially enriched the professional role that developed.

In addition, the author's qualifications and professional knowledge base as a secondary teacher then an HE tutor, with professional qualities, contributed to the research process that was reported in this thesis. The close relationships that were successfully built with the participants inside the research project brought both honesty and transparency to the interviews, since participants were already used to expressing their opinions freely and openly in the tours around the schools and colleges that often preceded them. The purposive sample of centres included in the research, helped with this process. Respondents and participants were always encouraged to express themselves and their feelings and experiences; and this contributed to the authenticity and veracity of the doctoral research process. The ethical issues of this were given in-depth consideration inside Chapter 2 of the thesis.

5.5 Lessons learnt

There is a variety of significant lessons learnt from this thesis and its conclusions will be discussed in more detail below, namely:

- the reasons for the withdrawal of the IBDP in significant numbers from state schools and colleges In England
- the socio-economic implications of this withdrawal for curriculum usage
- the views of senior leadership team members on these changes

There are also some minor lessons learnt concerning:

- how students at Level 3 potentially understood curriculum implications
- how middle tier staff viewed the IBDP and stratified curriculum differentiation
- how HE students felt that the IBDP resulted in stratified social access through its increased usage in the independent sector

As has been stated throughout this thesis, it was not the original intention of the research process to record the demise of the IBDP in the state sector, but originally, rather, to discover why it was being so readily adopted by the education sector in general and regarded as the gold or ‘platinum standard’ (Oakes and Seldon, 2011). The resulting data collection process, however, took place as the IBDP was being withdrawn from many centres in England, largely as a result of government funding changes.

There are significant wider lessons learnt from this thesis, not just in terms of the views of these groups (students at post-16 and HE; middle and senior staff) and their differing levels of understanding of curriculum differentiation and access, but also for the researcher on a personal level on engaging with the research methodologies and first hand practice in questionnaires; focus groups; and interviewing. This has led to lessons being learnt on research methodology in educational leadership which are now in the process of being shared inside the relevant research community, such as in the Special Interest Group (SIG) on educational leadership in BERA, and the Research Interest Group (RIG) in Leadership, Preparation and Development in BELMAS. These lessons in particular relate to the final and most contemporary strand of this research process, Strand 4, namely what senior leaders thought and felt about the introduction, or the introduction and then the removal of the IBDP. The lessons here are on the lack of parity between the state and independent sectors more generally, as both the implementation, and the continuation, of the IBDP curriculum is relatively straight forward in centres where there is a heavy time-tabling load; a multitude of extra curricular activities, and the encouragement of

an ethos of service to ensure that some of that extra curricular involvement includes volunteering in a capacity that generates a wider notion of citizenship. The co-curricular nature of education, where learning takes place both inside, and just as significantly, outside the classroom to develop and engage active and informed citizens.

5.5.1 Methodological considerations

There was a range of methodological considerations inside this thesis, namely the processes by which the researcher moved from the first strand to the second one, and how this subsequently influenced each strand of the research process, and what was learnt from engaging in the research process in this way. The strands approach adopted in the methodology were helpful in that they corresponded with the layers of critical realism discussed by Bhaskar (1978) with the views that the post-16 students had revealed (in the first strand of data collection) being able to inform the questions that were asked both of middle tier staff and then latterly of the senior staff interviewed. This strand approach was also considered to have enabled the thesis to evolve in a way that accommodated both the changing reality of the participants (both students and staff) on the ground, as the take up of the IBDP decreased over time in the state sector, whilst continuing to increase in the independent sector. The methodological considerations here were also that researching over a period of time: moving from post-16 to HE the focus of the researcher shifted from capturing the *experience* of the students and middle tier staff to the wider social policy implications of the decline of the IBDP in the state sector, and what leaders *felt* about this. In particular, as highlighted in the Appendices, the early methodological considerations in the research process had involved engaging the views of 16-19s for the data collection process. Centre approval; departmental approval; staff approval; student approval but also parental approval was gained before the questionnaires and focus groups in the first strand of the data were completed.

Subsequent methodological considerations were on focus group size, when the third strand of the data collection process reduced from 11 to 8, with only 7 being

present in their fourth focus group (Appendix 19). Further methodological considerations were raised by circumstances, such as when the focus groups both in Strand 2 (with the middle leaders) and Strand 3 (with the HEI students) when they were clearly unhappy about the lack of funding and support for the IBDP and how that left individuals feeling potentially disadvantaged. The methodological considerations here concern the content of the pre-delivered schedules of questions, and the researcher not wanting to deviate from the schedules, but also choosing to move on from topics at various points. With hindsight, when transcripts are re-read there were opportunities presented where the researcher could have further explored some of the staff and student issues raised, but the relative inexperience of the researcher and, on some occasions, the perceived highlighted inequalities between different groups meant that it was methodologically sound to move on from those areas of conversation rather than more actively pursue lines of research that individuals could have found upsetting to discuss further.

In a wider sense methodological decisions are taken at a particular time, relatively early on in the research process, and these then have to be kept to as part of the ethical approval process. However, on the whole, although many methodological considerations were taken throughout the research process, it was felt subsequently that many of those taken early on in the process on the size and scale of the research design were appropriate, even if they subsequently grew over the research process as it developed. The essential research design did not change, explicitly, it was still focussed in schools and colleges dealing with post-16, it merely expanded to capture the changing data of the circumstances that developed.

5.5.2 Recommendations for others

The recommendations for others specifically on the methodological considerations are to consider the size and the scale of the research, realistically, before embarking on the time consuming processes of both quantitative and qualitative data. The questionnaires all collected in this process (N=147), were

fed back in the findings and analysis chapter, but as with the focus groups and interview data collected there is probably still more that can be done with the data. Therefore, it is best to think carefully about what the appropriate methods are to ascertain the most relevant data requirement rather than generating lots of data that remain potentially under-utilised. The same is true with focus groups and interviews: which are particularly time consuming, and although the advantages of engaging transcription services are that a reduction in the workload associated with your data can be achieved. Yet there is something very satisfying about working through the transcribing process, and when the data is well-known that enables it to be used potentially quicker in a coding process such as Mayring's 2000 process, as the paraphrasing and reduction techniques whilst still slow and repeated are coming from data that is at least already known and understood.

Wider recommendations for others are varied in that the data collected showed that senior leadership teams who have been through failure appear to be stronger together, have closer bonds, and appear to have individually and collectively learnt more than those for whom introducing the IBDP has just gone well. Their learning curve was wide-ranging, concerning their own intake; parental and staff knowledge bases; their marketing strategies; and the extent of their realistic degree of challenge to their usual catchment and student intake.

5.5.3 *Limitations*

The limitations of this doctoral research process are best broken down into the conclusions from each strand of research under-taken. There are wider limitations though on what was not included in each of these four strands, and what would perhaps be done differently, if it was known that the IBDP was going to be pulled from state school and college curricula after its rapid take up in the 2000s, and the range of reasons that have been identified for this: namely, the changing availability of state funding, and how expensive state schools find the nature of the IBDP, in comparison to their independent counterparts.

The main limitations associated with Strand 1, were that the students were either unwilling or unaware of their parents' socio-economic status, so the data that was hoped to be collected on which socio-economic groups the students belonged to, was far harder to determine. This is, however, also the view in literature on social class (Crompton, 2008), so did not come as a huge surprise. This strand also collected too much data, as can be seen from Appendix 4: because of the shifting of the research questions in the later phases of the thesis, some of this information piloted and then collected earlier on inside the doctoral process was consequently no longer required, when meeting the later RQs.

The main limitations with Strand 2, was neither the focus groups nor the schedules associated with them, but the reality of the time period in which these focus groups were being held. The middle-tier focus groups, being held in Centre 1 on the same day that their senior leadership team had decided to withdraw the IBDP, was catastrophic: in the way that it highlighted that it was the middle-tier staff that were not responsible for the decisions now being taken at an institutional level on the IBDP. This was critical in shifting the focus of the later strand, and research questions, to the senior leadership teams, and away from the middle-tier staff.

The main limitations with Strand 3, were felt to be that this was a small strand where the final focus group, of four, had fallen from 11 participants over the years down to 7 (see Appendix 19), and the socio-economic status of these graduated students was as much in evidence, as the post-16 curriculum that they had studied. Although this was an interesting group, and the former-IBDP students certainly had opportunities that the ex-A Level students had not – because only one of these former IB students came from a state school – it was not clear to what extent the students' additional successes were from their independent education or the curriculum that they had studied. In all likelihood it was the combination of the cultural capital from both factors combined, and the state educated IB student did appear to have as much advantage as the independent students, but this was inconclusive from such a small sample.

The main limitations from Strand 4 were felt to be the time that it had taken to set up the interviews, and for these to snowball to other centres, so that the bulk of the interview data that was collected was in 2014 and 2015. This was a very time consuming process, as has been noted, and although the data was well known to the researcher, through the transcription and coding processes repeatedly undertaken, the number of interviews ended up being significantly larger than was first intended, and so the use of NVivo software, as opposed to by hand In Vivo coding may have been a useful tool for the doctoral research project.

5.6 Directions for further research

Directions for further research in this area, in England, are now very different to how they were back in 2009. Further research in the state sector would now be contained by the reduction in IBDP centres, which would mean that (even) smaller scale qualitative research could be done, but this would need to take place largely in London and the South-East. Similar research to that conducted for this thesis could be replicated in the independent sector (which is little researched in England anyway) and here it would be of particular interest to know:

- whether in centres that have both the IBDP and A-Levels, when are students encouraged to take one route or the other?
- are only brighter students being encouraged to take the IBDP as a form of stretch in the independent sector?
- if so, are such decisions widely known in HEIs?
- does there exist a bias to the IBDP for having already chosen the brightest students at 16-19?

Then there are other areas of comparative research that are of interest with the IBDP. The English education system is used very much as a form of stratification (Savage, 2015). There is an interesting piece of comparative research therefore to be conducted on how other SLTs in other countries have made the decision to implement the IBDP, and how their motivations potentially differ from those in

schools in England. In particular, the take up of the IBDP has been on the rise in the Netherlands, and at least two of the SLT members involved in this study are now employed in Dutch schools delivering the IBDP, so this would be an interesting angle to further pursue.

There is also the wider, global dimension of the IBDP that was originally discussed back in the literature review in that take-up of the IBDP has traditionally been used in curriculums that are English-speaking, and particularly those that followed an English curriculum, for example the proliferation of English public schools who have set up counterparts in the Gulf Coast Countries (GCC) rather than areas such as sub-Saharan Africa that are yet to have formalised education systems, and what this means for access of the IBDP and the impact that this has on the creation and development of the ‘global transnational elite’ group who have been much discussed inside this thesis. Bunnell (2016) has recently looked at the dearth of IB schools across Africa, and the lack of access to the IB, at all levels here is of continuing interest to those who believe that it should be a genuinely international qualification not the Western-centric one that was discussed above, in the literature review .

Then there are wider implications of the research on SLTs conducted here, so the SLT members from the state sector here were quite unenamored with the EPQ being an equivalent process to the IBDP, so there is a whole range of research that can be done with an English focus, examining what individuals in SLTs *think and feel* about decisions that are taken, and what we have to learn from that. In particular at a time of such rapid change in the English education system, what do leaders *think and feel*, using a similar Mayring, 2003 approach to the collected data that overlap with this research would be about:

- the E-Bacc
- changes to the return of linear structure of A-Levels

The last remaining areas that would also be of interest to research here, is how the IBDP is used in both the 16 United World Colleges (UWC), as a form of co-

curricular study, which is in itself little-researched. But also how the IBDP has been maintained in one particular area in the state sector: which is state boarding schools. There are approximately 40 state boarding schools in England, not elite schools as in this research process, but schools where the government still pay the educational element, making them about a third less expensive than elite boarding schools. Due to the nature of these schools, taking in English students whose parents have been based abroad, the IBDP is still delivered as these students have often studied the IBO's Middle Year's Programme in International Schools abroad, and these students are coming home in order to apply for university courses.

5.7 Implications for stakeholders

There is a range of implications for stakeholders to analyse and learn from this research process that cut across a large number of stakeholder groups, namely: policy-makers; schools; senior leadership teams; universities; students; and parents, these shall be dealt with in turn.

As this thesis has explored, the LSC made a decision to fund one centre in every local authority to deliver the IBDP back in the 2000s, this was an extension of the Gifted and Talented programme (NAGTY, 2003), and also the increasing concern on (lack of) social mobility which led to the Milburn Reports (2007, and 2009).

5.7.1 Schools and Colleges

For schools and colleges, the IBDP was first used as a curriculum reform from below, initially at least, when it appeared to give teachers and middle leaders a new role as curriculum developers, and recognised perhaps their professional autonomy. This was articulated in the Strand 2 research data with some of the themes in 'big' and 'small' education (Compass, 2015) as was explained in the thesis introduction. This great and progressive reform did not really come into being and the explanation lies at the structural and ideological levels, in that funding was withdrawn and a neo-liberal government then came into power which

had no issues with the IBDP only really being available in the independent sector. For individuals in schools, this meant however, that the realities are (were) felt, in the phenomenological sense, both at the personal and individualised level(s). Some of these individuals have continued to be involved with the IBDP by teaching it in an international context, but for those middle and senior leaders in schools who were trying to use the IBDP as an overt form of social mobility for their disadvantaged students, clearly this route is currently no longer available.

5.7.2 School Leadership Teams

The ever-shifting landscape that changes education can potentially provide some future opportunities for SLTs, who believe in being able to offer other curriculum opportunities, to their students. Gunter's (2012) study on Knowledge Production and Educational Leadership issues, is very important here, as the knowledge control has gone in a particular centralised direction over the last decade. The creation of competing Multi-Academy Trusts all aiming for their own Unique Selling Points, however, creates future possibilities in a system where SLTs have, arguably, more opportunity to stamp the education that they provide. This is difficult inside a system where a cold climate (Lupton et al, 2016) is acknowledged as a major factor which has created the decline of the IBDP. Yet SLT professionals who have a knowledge base on the potential curriculum advantages of the IBDP have professional capital which can continue to be shared with parents and students. SLTs who hold this capital, can also use it to access places at state boarding schools and places such as UWC for their potential IBDP students, so that some may still benefit from the perceived advantages.

5.7.3 Universities

Savage et al (2015), has clearly indicates the use of stratification of HEIs in England, and it is clear even from the small scale of Strand 3 data focus groups that socio-economic group is still very significant in resulting in class differentiated

occupations. For universities, the implications of the IBDP being increasingly less available inside the state sector and outside London and the South-East poses an on-going issue as students are over-represented in HE from independent schools as the data from HMC, 2016 demonstrated. If the IBDP does better prepare students for HE study (as all groups of data here stated) then this is an on-going problem for universities as students with the IBDP are an wanted commodity, an asset, but these now largely come from the independent sector. There are changes that could be made here, as new forms of post-16 education arise, with university-sponsored academies. If universities want students who are better at time-keeping; multi-tasking; more broadly educated; better developed global citizens (from CAS); who have a more-developed philosophical understanding (gained from ToK), then HEI Admissions Tutors, in particular, do need to be aware of this decline of IBDP usage in the state sector in England. The emergence of ‘differentiation’ and some of the older and more ‘buried’ aspects of social class are significant for these stakeholders.

5.7.4 Students

The main implication for students that became apparent through this research process was the decline in access to the IBDP, in the state sector as the initial research phases progressed. As has been made clear, the original research aims centred on the rapid growth of the IBDP in the state sector, but these were eventually shifted to the research aims on how leadership teams were learning from the adoption of, and removal if applicable, of the IBDP from their post-16 curriculum. Apart from a few notable exceptions such as Broadgreen International School in Liverpool and Impington Village College in Cambridgeshire, there are now few state centres that deliver the IBDP outside London and the South-East. The notable exception is with state boarding schools, such as Hockerill Anglo-European College, that cost about half the fees that the elite boarding schools charge. However, students still have to have significant material capital to attend school sixth forms currently costing approximately £17,000. This state provision remains, at least in part, because these schools have the amount of room in boarding school timetables to cover

both the curriculum, and the co-curricular nature of the IBDP, so as with the elite schools there are longer days, and weekends, in which to cover the more wide-ranging nature of the IBDP with its ToK and CAS elements.

So the current implications for students is on the current lack of access to the IBDP outside London and the South-East, particularly free access through the state sector, or ability to study in an environment that charges if this is unavailable. Whilst plentiful access to the IBDP exists across London and the South-East in both state and fee-paying schools, there is now virtually one centre per region for the IBDP away from the South, and there are some regions like the East Midlands which now have no access to the IBDP aside from a single elite boarding school. Clearly as Savage et al (2015), has commented because of the stratified nature of undergraduate study in England, there are consequences here on cultural reproduction and equity of access to education (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990).

5.7.5 Parents

The implications for parents are very varied from this research process. The Strand 4 data was particularly rich from SLT members in state centres where leaders felt that they had not explained well-enough to the parents what the advantages were of the IBDP ‘over’ A-Levels for brighter students. The issues that were raised by parents were incredibly varied: from those who knew all about the IBDP and were prepared to access it through the independent sector if they were unable to access it through the state sector (as the 16-19 student focus group data from Centre 1 in particular showed), to those parents that the SLTs talked about in Centre 3, who had no interest and thought that it was a tremendous amount of additional work for their children when A-Levels resulted in equivalent access to university.

What was clear from the data, as has been noted in the findings, was that all the teachers that took part in the research process (at both middle and senior levels) thought that the IBDP was worthwhile: it gave students a stretch in their sixth form

education that A-Levels were considered not to, even when A-Levels were added to by additional programmes, such as the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ). An implication for parents then, from this research process, is this support and understanding of the IBDP, and how the teachers (accessed for this research) believed that it added value to a sixth form education. Thereby explaining why the lack of current access across the country, and lack of financial ability to deliver it in their own state schools and colleges was felt to be an issue experienced by these SLTs.

5.8 Agenda for Action

From any research process, it is clearly important to identify an agenda for action, from which lessons can be learnt and future potential changes made. From this research process it is the leadership commitment to the amount of time that 16-19 students have to study that is the interesting difference between the state schools that have managed to still continue with the IBDP, and those that have had to relinquish it. Through this research process, the analysis here demonstrated that SLT members believed that this increased curriculum offer, often including the nature of co-curricular activities, is what gives students their additional cultural capital when having studied the IBDP: juggling the workload of six subjects with the ToK and CAS demands, is not cheap to maintain in comparison with a 3 A-Level curriculum. Those schools and colleges that have given it up, because of lack of funding constraints, still believed in the co-curricular nature of the IBDP to influence the social mobility of its brighter students. In these schools and colleges an opportunity to deliver a high quality IBDP for the same funding as 3 A-Levels is not possible, but if the financial agenda changed and multi-academy trusts were able to increase funding into the post-16 curriculum, then such action would undoubtedly enable a wider range of students to be more academically challenged, in a manner that would get them to think about their wider position as global citizens.

Particular agenda for action items, then, are:

- the re-consideration of state funding for the IBDP, in each locality across England
- free access to the IBDP for students who currently live outside London and the South-East where it is currently more prevalent
- further research into the co-curricular nature of the IBDP, and the potentially increased cultural capital that this appears to generate
- research into the United World College (UWC) movement that leads on the development of international citizens and co-curricular study
- research and analysis into the key features of an education system in England that it is based around the concepts of small and big education, as highlighted in Table 2.

5.9 Challenge and change

This professional doctorate was originally started in order to analyze how the IBDP was becoming the new ‘gold standard’ of post-16 education, in England. One of the key aims of this project was to see how the new popular curriculum was being implemented. However popular the qualification looked as though it was becoming in England, the author knew from her own teaching experience in schools and colleges that it was not necessarily easy or straightforward to implement, and the rigours of the IBO had to be closely followed in order to become a prestigious IB World School. In a society which is becoming increasingly divided (Dorling, 2014), funding and investment were required, and granted, in order for brighter students in the state sector to be able to have access to the IBDP, as the write-up of the research has made clear. The amount of financial investment required to achieve such an alternative curriculum, may appear modest in education in the face of massive and persistent inequalities in English society (Atkinson, 2015), but it was difficult to procure and post the 2007/2008 economic recession impossible to keep even a little of this additional financial resource targeted at the IBDP in the state sector, as the decision was taken to remove its additional funding premium.

This project therefore researched an area that has not been researched before in England - and that Bunnell (2015) has argued needs further research. The exploration of differing economic, political, and social elements within this post-16 educational frame are distinctive in itself, as are the findings of the various phases that were reported on inside Chapter 3. The knowledge that was uncovered and generated by this doctoral research process is important then, since it has provided a particular snapshot of the challenge of implementing the IBDP, and the change that the education system has been through during this decade: in terms of SLTs choosing to adopt a non-mandatory policy, but then having to subsequently relinquish it again.

The scope and reach of this doctoral research project was extensive, covering different sociological areas, including critically reflecting on how modern elites are formed, and the social differentiation that exists inside English society (section 1.4). The author's roles of teaching; lecturing; managing programmes; and working with heads all came into play here, as did the element of transformation and the theme of personal viability of SLT members as part of a model of such transformation. It is considered that the thesis has represented both a distinctive and a potentially innovative contribution to the collected knowledge in the field of sociology of education and educational leadership (section 1.6) and applied within individual learning settings – particularly with regard to the challenges that these have faced, and the changes that they have made to their post-16 curricula as a consequence.

In this doctoral research process, both as a researcher and as a practitioner, the author has demonstrated the significance of professional and personal identity, and has shown that these are central to both the practice and the conducted research itself, especially when working with groups of young people who do not have the opportunities to take a curriculum that maintains both an Arts and a Sciences set of options post-16, because they do not have access to the IBDP (section 1.8). Inside the Literature Review in Chapter 1 this particular post-16 context was highlighted within the current backdrop of marketization, and the lack

of equity, learning, and the global context (section 1.7) was discussed with reference to the plethora of literature that exists in this arena.

In the analysis and discussion in Chapter 4, concepts and empirical events related to the issues of social differentiation were explored and analyzed: understanding the nature and concepts of identity that can characterize post-16 environments, were contrasted with the more individualistic notions of schooling and competition that marketization strategies have embedded into educational structures. The changing market of the IBDP was acknowledged, and the impact of this entrenching of social closure (Parkin, 1971) was assessed.

5.10 Contribution to knowledge- critical reflections

This thesis concerns learning and development both internally through the formal educational system, but also externally to it through the learning that has taken place inside the senior leadership teams. The thesis intends to contribute to our critical understanding on modern elite formation and social differentiation through its focus on access to the IBDP. This professional doctorate is also a record which was established originally in order to demonstrate that the IBDP was replacing A-Levels as the ‘gold standard’ post-16 qualifications in England. Thus it records a practice-based project, examining the adoption and subsequent decline of the IBDP inside the state sector, and the practices of the SLTs who took these decisions on implementation, as well as the insights gained into the understanding of a form of action learning. It stresses the importance of exploring the feelings and emotions of leaders, and the challenges to do with identity in personal and collective terms. Educational Leadership in the International Baccalaureate: critical reflections on modern elite formation and social differentiation is a narrative concerning personal, biographical, cultural, economic, social, and professional transformation.

The change in the direction of the IBDP, as recorded in this thesis, could be regarded as a form of social documentation, on the changes that have taken place inside a decade, with regard to curricula access. This is of original

significant since this process (of the adoption and subsequent withdrawal of the IBDP) seems not to have been researched elsewhere. This doctoral research process into these experiences of SLT members – and the use of curricula in particular – is also considered to be significant. This is because the thesis concerns the ability of post-16 students to have access – and equity – to a choice of curriculum. The intention was initially to be able to demonstrate to policy-makers that the IBDP successful curriculum does enable smoother transition into HEIs and better prepares students for their HEI journeys. However, after the *disappearance* of the empirical research data set, put forward in Table 1 on page 15. The critical objective over time, became an exploration of how the IBDP has instead been used in order to reinforce, solidify, and cement social closure and social boundaries, leaving ‘a global transnational political elite’ (Savage, 2015: 243) potentially more advantaged and less challenged by peers who no longer have such curricula access. This thesis has successfully established and reported a distinctive contribution to the understanding of the role that curricula access can potentially play inside our educational structures, and to the ways in which we can both understand and adapt the learning practices and processes required to challenge the process of such entrenchment.

The main assumption of this doctoral research project is how the agency of the learner is within themselves, and as a consequence of this the individual experiential qualities are best understood within the broader social network of meanings (Beck et al 1994). These meanings are always personal and biographical and are part of the sources of action and change. The location of this action and change was within the post-16 curriculum in schools and colleges in England. The overall theme was concerned with exploring and illuminating change and transformations in post-16 students’ biographical trajectories as a consequence of the access to the curriculum that they had been afforded. Tensions abounded though with students and staff both feeling that some groups had colonized resources for an already advantaged group to become even further advantaged. Inside this process individual identity versus group identity came to the fore – both with student groups and staff groups alike, which was reported in depth in the findings inside Chapter 3.

The Main Categories (MCs) of research coding from the SLT interviews were analyzed and discussed in Chapter 4: Challenge; Curriculum; Learning Curve; and Beliefs. In relation to the tension, for example, inside the two state centres that are still attempting to maintain the IBDP, but doing so at a loss. Personalization and personal viability versus social and professional obligations were identified as a tension, and these were also evaluated. In exploring post-16 curricula access as shaped by social, economic, political, and cultural and professional constraints, this doctoral research process has revealed a snapshot of how educational leaders can act and how these actions can appear transformative for those who have access to them. This little told story of the IBDP adoption and withdrawal in England, has illustrated contemporary global identities and possibilities, for students whose trajectories can be uncertain in transnational market places. It has illustrated how leaders are constrained by their circumstances when wanting to engage in something new, and highlighted how government policy decisions can discuss parity whilst not acknowledging funding ratios that ultimately enforce a lack of equity across the education system.

5.11 Summary of the research

This section seeks to summarize this doctoral research process, with a view to considering what it has contributed in terms of new knowledge. This chapter proposes a new model has been developed that identifies that 'small education' (Compass, 2015) as was detailed in Table 2 on page 20 now dominates the state sector in England. The overriding neo-liberal nature of the system has prioritized the 'narrow' elements of the curriculum, as have been discussed. Whilst the rhetoric of the 'big education' ideas that often surrounds the IBDP, have been side-lined, at least for the majority of the state sector that can no longer afford to take part in the IBDP - leaving the latter to be studied only in exclusive settings in the vast majority of schools and colleges where it still exists in England. This is in contrast to other areas of the world where the IBDP is delivered, such as The States, and just because it is the current position of the IBDP in England does

not mean that it has to be this way - just as it was not like this at the beginning of this research process.

The decline of the IBDP in England witnessed during this doctoral research process has been analyzed from a number of different perspectives: hence the different strands in the phases of the research work undertaken. From Strand 1 there was an understanding from 16-19 student data collected that many students did not feel that the additional workload involved in the IBDP was worthwhile or advantageous to them. In fact, as demonstrated in Chapter 3 these 16-19 students who worked felt that they did not have the sufficient time to engage in further areas of study, and as their A Level qualifications enabled them to proceed into Higher Education, the vast majority of these students did not feel disadvantaged from not having access to the IBDP. It was only in the IBDP focus groups from this strand of research was it evident that one or two students recorded, who had accessed the IBDP in the state, would have accessed the IBDP from the independent sector, if it had been unavailable to them inside state sector. This perhaps suggests that there are a few students who now access the IBDP in the independent sector as it is largely unavailable in the state sector outside London and the South-East (Bunnell, 2015).

The Strand 2 research, which was the focus groups with middle tier staff, demonstrated the support that the IBDP had gained from this group, who were largely Heads of Departments who had either successfully implemented the IBDP into their centres, or had unsuccessfully tried to introduce it, and the IBDP had subsequently been withdrawn. All staff involved here appeared from the transcripts incredibly passionate about it as a qualification. This group were keen to talk about the breadth that it gives students when preparing them for Higher Education, and the type of global citizens that it creates, with a knowledge base from each main group rather than the narrowed curriculum direction that A-Levels tend to steer 16-19s towards, although there was a given that the IBDP is aimed at brighter students, these staff groups discussed how it was not just for the super-bright students but helped to develop citizens in the sense that the CAS element is compulsory. These groups also discussed how maintaining six

subjects (plus CAS and ToK) helped sixth form students to improve their time planning and organisational skills, as they needed to be able to take part in all elements in order to pass, whereas has been discussed, additional elements to the A Level curriculum such as the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) can just be dropped as unnecessary additional if students do not cope with the workload. This is not an option with the IBDP, as each element is compulsory.

The Strand 3 research, was considered to have been somewhat dated (having been completed in 2012) by the time the final write up of the thesis was completed in 2016. Nevertheless this strand was interesting, as discussed in Chapter 3, for the fact that it highlighted some essential socio-economic divisions of students backgrounds and what they go on to study, what was interesting from this strand was that the IBDP students (one of whom had come from a state school) all had professional employment that included the paid costs of their training. Whereas the ex A-Level were all paying for the costs of their professional training themselves.

The Strand 4 research, demonstrated that the SLTs were very keen on the IBDP (as they had all been running schools and colleges that had introduced it), and in areas where this had not been successful perceived that the students were losing opportunities for development as a consequence. This had led to changes to their curriculum and the use of additional extras such as volunteering and the EPQ but this was perceived as not as integrated as the IBDP would have been.

5.12 Recommendations from the research

The recommendations of this research process are that further research projects should explicitly look at centres that have introduced and subsequently had to remove the IBDP, to see if these are factors in common:

- 1) Additional costs for the IBDP: above the rate that the state sector is currently maintained by the DfE's 16-19 funding ratios.

- 2) 16-19 students working in paid roles through little individual choice, directly compromises the time that they perceive that they have for Level 3 study (of any type).
- 3) A Unique Selling Point (USP) of schools that offer the IBDP identifies their school or college as part of a global or international community in one form or another.
- 4) Minimal take-up from all other social groups, except those who appropriate the independent sector for their children's education, because of the circumstances of where and how the IBDP is offered.
- 5) The continued use of universities to demand equally high grades from students from both state and independent sectors leaves SLTs vulnerable to introducing curriculum change that may otherwise potentially benefit their students.

5.13 Summary and final comments

There is a clear view from all of the eight schools and colleges visited in this research process that the IBDP is more rigorous than just the 3 A-Levels usually offered at 16-19 study in the state sector. Furthermore, even where state centres 'up their game' and introduce an Extended Project or a Critical Thinking qualification, it is still believed that these are no match to the independence, rigour, and breadth of the IBDP with its essential ToK and CAS elements plus the study of academic subjects across six different groups.

Using a critical theory approach, this thesis has demonstrated that the IBDP, in all eight of these centres (at the start of the process) had an additional academic, social and cultural 'value' which has a particular 'worth' in the communities who are in a position to value it. It is this value and worth that make it a viable qualification in some environments but not in others, as this has to be understood in terms of the potential differentiated benefit (or social closure, Parkin, 1971) that it can bring.

5.14 Personal reflections

As has been detailed throughout this thesis, my personal and professional reflections have clearly had an impact on the role that I consider that the IBDP could have played in the state sector, had we been in a slightly different time in the economic or political cycle. But the dominant neo-liberal influence inside the education system, that has been evidenced, has meant that we now have a clear divide between the two sectors regarding qualification type and potential socio-economic group access in the system, in all but a very few centres where SLTs are currently managing to still deliver programmes that either run at a loss, or break even as a consequence of some interesting processes. Such a process was highlighted in Centre 7, where a proportion of parents look after international students in their own homes effectively in order to give their children access to the IBDP, as they could not afford to access the IBDP through Centres such as 2, 4, 6, and 8.

It is a difficult role for a social scientist who wants to be objective, and bring a sense of objectivity to an area of academic study, to find the political landscape shifting to quite the extent that it has during this doctoral research process. This thesis was supposed to concern how A-Levels were being replaced by the IBDP as a ‘Gold Standard’ qualification. Instead, during this research phase, England has become the only country in the world where the IBDP take-up has fallen, and fallen considerably in the state sector. The multi-faceted nature of this decline requires further study, but it has been difficult to disentangle my previous role as a middle leader in school and college having conversations about the introduction of the IBDP, being subsequently adopted in all three centres where I worked, then watching it be removed again in both of those state centres. The social differentiation of access to the IBDP, as it is now: largely only offered in the independent sector, is quite marked. This was not the case at all back in 2009 as there were plenty of state centres still discussing their adoption of the IBDP, and as Bunnell (2015) has commented it was on a growth trajectory in England.

This professional doctorate has made a connection between the work of those such as Zuber-Skerritt and Teare (2013) on how we extend education to those in the global precariat, through to how education is delivered to the globally mobile transnational elite groups. However opaque this connection may seem, the resourcing at one end of the system clearly far outweighs the resourcing at the other. Whilst it may be difficult to tie these two groups together the marginality of one group exists in part because of the dominance of the other. Savage et al (2015) have made this point with regard to the newly revised GBCS, but this research has outlined some of the links of how that is extended onto the global educational stage. Clearly the IBDP is only suitable to implement in areas where an established educational infrastructure exists (Bunnell, 2016), but the international nature of the IBDP makes it an ideal qualification to extend to wider social groupings, and it will be interesting to see in future years how the IBO copes with the global changes that will make the world significantly less Western-centric, and how take-up of the IBDP will end up changing globally as a result.

This thesis has therefore demonstrated how the IBDP has become an indicator of new and emerging forms of social differentiation, over the last decade in England. It has explored whether education environments, and their senior leadership teams, are able to influence either their students or the wider education policy agenda, in order to actively achieve social justice through the curriculum.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Information letter on research to Centres

On UoD headed Paper

Dear [REDACTED],

I am writing to request permission for [REDACTED] to be one of the educational centres where I conduct the research for my Doctor of Education on the 'IB versus A-Levels'. My doctorate is at the University of Derby where I now teach on a range of undergraduate and postgraduate education programmes.

I would like to have some time with students and middle leaders who both study and teach on Level 3 programmes, I am particularly interested in the IB, distributed leadership, and the decisions around university transition and access. My research is potentially on class intersections, but I know that it is difficult to collect data on Socio Economic Status.

Ideally, I would like your permission to visit some AS and A2 and IB1 and IB2 classes with questionnaires and follow up focus groups. Then have a focus group with middle leaders on university access and transition. I have been in touch with [REDACTED] [REDACTED], and she is very happy for me to come in and explain my research process with the Sociology and Psychology groups across AS/A2 and IB1/2 classes, if that is acceptable to you?

My research proposal has gone through the university's ethics process, and I attach an institutional consent form (two copies) for you to sign and keep/return, if you are happy for me to proceed. [REDACTED] says that I can conduct my pilot as part of her post Easter revision process on Methodology with the groups. I will be bringing individual consent forms for all parts of the research process, and all participation is voluntary as per my university Code of Ethics. All of the schools and colleges who take part in my doctoral research process will have the right to see my finished thesis, and of course all the research will be thoroughly anonymised.

With Best Wishes,

Deborah

Deborah Outhwaite MSc, PGCE
Education Lecturer
Faculty of Education, Health and Sciences
University of Derby

Appendix 1 contd – Consent to participate in research (institution)

On UoD headed Paper

I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet.

I also have had the opportunity to fully consider this information; and ask any questions connected to this doctoral research project. Any subsequent questions related to this project have also been answered to my satisfaction.

I fully understand that my school/college's participation in this study is voluntary and I may withdraw my centre from it at any time, without giving any reason.

I understand that this research process has been approved by the University of Derby, and each stage of the research will be explained to the participants, and consent sought on an individual basis for each of the questionnaires distributed, and focus group selections undertaken, with all participation being voluntary.

I have seen an example of the questionnaire and focus group schedule, and corresponding consent forms, including the information being sent home to parents, and I understand that all these focus groups will be audio-recorded. I also understand that it is difficult to guarantee removing data from a focus group, as participants names are deliberately not clearly identified in the audio-recording.

I am aware that neither myself, my centre, nor any colleagues or students will be identified in any report, publication or presentation related to the findings of this study; as any direct quotes taken from this research project will all be thoroughly anonymised.

Signature of Principal

.....

Name of Participant (Please Print)

.....

Date

**Signature of Person Taking
Consent.....**

Name of Person Taking Consent

.....

Date

Appendix 2 – Consent to participate in research letters (student)

On UoD headed Paper

Invitation to Participate

Dear student,

You are invited to take part in a piece of research involving students at [REDACTED], which is being conducted to find out about students' experiences of studying for qualifications prior to university as they look ahead to making the transition to university study. This data is being collected to also be used in my Doctor of Education research process.

There are, initially, two parts: a questionnaire survey followed by a focus group, for the students who take part. Taking part in the survey is entirely voluntary, and if you decide not to take part that will have no effect on any other aspect of your studies. Taking part involves filling in the attached questionnaire. It should take about 15 minutes. Then, later in the same day, some of the students who took part in the questionnaire survey will be invited to take part in smaller focus groups to explore the issues covered by the survey in more detail.

All the information we collect will be treated as strictly confidential. The questionnaires are anonymous so you should not write your name on it. The completed questionnaires will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in an office at the University, and the information will be transferred to a computer file for statistical analysis.

If you decide after taking part in the survey that you do not after all want to be included, you can contact me and your data can be withdrawn from the study, if you do so within two months of the survey. To make this possible while ensuring the questionnaires are anonymous, we use a *unique identifying code*. This is a number that you write on the questionnaire and that we can use to locate your data and withdraw it. So write a *unique identifying code* on the first page of the questionnaire, and also record it for your own information on the debriefing sheet at the end of the questionnaire that you will detach from the questionnaire and retain. The code can be anything you like, but we suggest you use the last two letters of your first name plus the last three digits of your phone number.

The protocol for the survey has been reviewed and approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the Psychology Department, University of Derby, and the survey is funded by the Higher Education Academy, through the *Flying Start* project, which is a collaborative programme of initiatives that are all focussed on the student transition to university and degree-level study. For more information about Flying Start, see www.hope.ac.uk/flyingstart

When the questionnaire and focus group data have been analyzed, we will produce a summary of the main findings, which we will send to your tutor so you have an opportunity to see the conclusions and discuss the findings with your tutor. We will then be interested in any feedback from you and your tutors about the results of the research as we consider the next steps in this programme of work on student transitions.

For further information about the survey you can contact Deb Outhwaite
D.Outhwaite@derby.ac.uk or tel: 01332 591804.

With Best Wishes,

Deborah Outhwaite MSc, PGCE
Education Lecturer
Faculty of Education, Health and Sciences
University of Derby DE22 1GB

Appendix 3 – Consent to participate in research letters (parent)

On UoD headed Paper

Invitation to for your son/daughter to participate

Dear Parent,

You son/daughter is being invited to take part in a piece of research involving students at Level 3, in a few colleges and school sixth forms around the country. This is being conducted to find out about students' experiences of studying for qualifications prior to university as they look ahead to making the transition to university study. In particular, it is examining the increase in take-up of the International Baccalaureate's Diploma Programme versus A-Level Qualifications. This data is being collected to also be used in my Doctor of Education research process.

There are, initially, two parts: a questionnaire survey followed by a focus group. Taking part in the survey is entirely voluntary, and if your son/daughter decide not to take part that will have no effect on any other aspect of their studies. Taking part involves filling in a questionnaire that should take about 15 minutes. The second part is a focus group where some of the students who took part in the questionnaire survey will be invited to take part to explore the issues covered by the survey in more detail. This should take no longer than 45-50 minutes.

All the information we collect will be treated as strictly confidential. The questionnaires are anonymous so your son/daughter should not write their name on it. The completed questionnaires will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in an office at the University, and the information will be transferred to a computer file for statistical analysis.

If your son/daughter decides after taking part in the survey that they do not after all want to be included, they can contact one of us and their data can be withdrawn from the study, if you do so within two months of the survey. To make this possible while ensuring the questionnaires are anonymous, we use a *unique identifying code*. This is a number that is written on the questionnaire and that we can use to locate the data and withdraw it. We are recommending that your son/daughter writes a *unique identifying code* on the first page of the questionnaire, and also records it for your own information on the debriefing sheet at the end of the questionnaire that they will detach from the questionnaire and retain. The code can be anything you like, but we suggest you use the last two letters of your first name plus the last three digits of your phone number.

The protocol for this research has been reviewed and approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the Psychology Department, University of Derby, and the survey is funded by the Higher Education Academy, through the *Flying Start* project, which is a collaborative programme of initiatives that are all focussed on the student transition to university and degree-level study. For more information about Flying Start, see www.hope.ac.uk/flyingstart.

When the questionnaire and focus group data have been analyzed, we will produce a summary of the main findings, which we will send to your son/daughter's tutor so that you may have an opportunity to see the conclusions and discuss the findings with their tutor. We will then be interested in any feedback from you about the results of the research as we consider the next steps in this programme of work on student transitions.

For further information about the survey you can contact Deb Outhwaite
D.Outhwaite@derby.ac.uk telephone 01332 591804.

With Best Wishes,

Deborah Outhwaite MSc, PGCE
Education Lecturer
Faculty of Education, Health and Sciences
University of Derby

Appendix 4 – Questionnaire schedule (four pages)

On UoD headed Paper

Transition to University Survey

About yourself

What is your unique identification code? _____ / _____
(the last two letters of your first name and last three numbers of your phone number.
This is optional and gives you the opportunity to withdraw your data from the study up
to two months from now if you change your mind about taking part)

Are you male or female? [] Male [] Female What is your GCSE point
score_____

How old are you? _____ years

What Level 3 study are you taking presently? [] A-Level [] International
Baccalaureate

If IB are you studying at [] Standard Level or [] Higher Level

What subjects are you taking?

1. _____ 2. _____ 3.
4. _____ 5. _____

What were your grades for those subjects at AS, if applicable?

1. _____ 2. _____ 3.
4. _____ 5. _____

About your experience of Level 3 study

What aspects of Level 3 study have you found most enjoyable, satisfying or rewarding?
(tick more than one box if necessary)

The subject [] Class size []
The style of teaching [] Challenging course []
The coursework [] The examinations []
The synoptic paper [] The extended project []
Something else [] Please say what

What aspects of Level 3 study have you found most difficult or challenging? (tick more
than one box if necessary)

The subject [] The style of teaching []
The coursework [] The examinations []
The synoptic paper [] The extended project []
Something else [] Please say what

What aspects of Level 3 study do you think will help you most when you go to
university? (tick more than one box if necessary)

The subject [] The style of teaching []
The coursework [] The examinations []
The synoptic paper [] The extended project []
Something else [] Please say what

What is the longest assignment you have written as part of your Level 3 course? (tick one box, only)

- Less than 500 words or less than half a side of A4 paper []
Between 500 and 1,000 words or up to one side of A4 paper []
Between 1,000 and 2,000 words or 3-4 sides of A4 paper []
Between 2,000 and 3,000 words []
Between 3,000 and 5,000 words []
Over 5,000 words []

How many assignments of that length have you written so far? (tick one box, only)

- Just one []
Two or three []
More than three []

Have you had any private tuition for your Level 3 study? Yes [] No []

If Yes, please give details of subject and length of timeframe:

About your plans

Are you planning to go on to study at University next year or the year after? [] No
[] Yes

What are your main reasons for wanting to go to university? Please circle the number:

Interest in the subject

(one – insignificant, ten – very significant)

Insignificant 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Very
Significant

Improve job prospects

(one – insignificant, ten – very significant)

Insignificant 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Very
Significant

Meeting people and socialising

(one – insignificant, ten – very significant)

Insignificant 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Very
Significant

Expectations of family and/or friends

(one – insignificant, ten – very significant)

Insignificant 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Very
Significant

Something else

[] Please say what

What subject/degree course do you hope/intend to take?

What is your first and second choice of university?

1st choice _____

2nd Choice

What aspects of university do you think you are most well equipped or prepared for?
(tick more than one box, if necessary):

- | | | | |
|---|-------|-------------------------------------|-----|
| Writing essays and other academic assignments | [] | Seminars and other small group work | [] |
| Reading textbooks and research papers | [] | Meeting people and making friends | [] |
| Referencing and citation systems | [] | Living away from home | [] |
| Studying independently | [] | Managing financially | [] |
| Something else | _____ | Please say what | [] |

What aspects of university do you think you are least well equipped or prepared for?
(tick more than one box, if necessary)

- | | | | |
|---|-------|-------------------------------------|-----|
| Writing essays and other academic assignments | [] | Seminars and other small group work | [] |
| Reading textbooks and research papers | [] | Meeting people and making friends | [] |
| Referencing and citation systems | [] | Living away from home | [] |
| Studying independently | [] | Managing financially | [] |
| Something else | _____ | Please say what | [] |

What made you chose your current programme of study? (tick more than one box if necessary)

- | | | | |
|--------------------|-----|---------------------------|-------|
| Friend | [] | Parent | [] |
| Tutor | [] | Status of course | [] |
| Type of assessment | [] | University recommendation | [] |
| Something else | [] | Please say what | _____ |

How well-equipped did you feel to choose your course at university?
(one – little, ten – very well)

Little 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Very Well

How well-equipped did you feel to write your personal statement for UCAS?
(one – little, ten – very well)

Little 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Very Well

How well do you feel your course prepares you for university?
(one – little, ten – very well)

Little 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Very Well

How motivated do you feel to attend a course at university?

(one – little, ten – very well)

Little 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Very Well

About your life at home and away from college

Did either of your parents or the adults you live with go to university? [] No [] Yes

Are either of your parents/adults you live with able to help you with A-Level/IB work? [] No [] Yes

Do you have any brothers or sisters who have gone to university? [] No [] Yes

What aspects of your life at home do you think have helped you with your Level 3 study
?(tick more than one box if necessary):

- | | | | |
|------------------------|-----|---------------------------|-----|
| Physical environment | [] | Equipment, e.g. computers | [] |
| Advice and information | [] | Moral support | [] |
| Something else | [] | Please say what | |
-

What is the occupation of your parents/adults you live with?

1. _____
2. _____

Do you have a current career idea?

Thank you for taking part in this survey. This project is one of several initiatives examining ways to help smooth students' transitions to university. We are looking at ways that students' experiences of studying at A-Level are helpful and unhelpful in preparing them for the transition to studying at University.

All the information you provided will be kept confidential and anonymous. You have the right to withdraw the information you provided, for two months from now. If you wish to do that, contact Deb Outhwaite using the contact details already provided. You will be asked to provide your unique identifying code to enable us to identify your data. For your information, write down your unique code and keep this in a safe place.

Appendix 5 – Invitation to participate in a focus group

On UoD headed Paper

Student experiences of transitions to University

Dear student,

You are invited to take part in a focus group as part of the Transition to University Survey. Please take time to read the following information carefully. Ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you would like to take part. This research is also being used for my Doctor of Education.

What is a focus group?

A focus group is a structured discussion with approximately 6-10 student participants. The focus group will last around 45 – 50 minutes. The facilitator will follow a standard set of initial questions, but the discussion can follow up any aspects of participants' experiences of studying at Level 3. The focus group discussion should be confidential. This means that participants should not repeat what has been said outside the group.

Why is this research being done?

The research is being conducted to collect some information about the transition to university, as part of the Flying Start project. It will provide valuable information about student experiences of studying for University entry qualifications.

What happens to the information that is collected?

The focus groups are audio-recorded, and the recordings are transcribed into a written account. The transcription will not contain any names or identifying information about participants. The transcripts will then be analyzed to identify themes in participants' experiences of transitions to university. This will help us to understand the experiences of students studying for pre university qualifications. When the research is completed, the audio-recording will be destroyed.

Do I have to take part?

No – it is up to you. If you decide to take part, you will be asked to sign a consent form and you will be given a copy of this information sheet and the consent form to keep. You are free to stop taking part at any time during the focus group, without giving a reason.

Will my information be kept confidential?

In a focus group we cannot give a guarantee of confidentiality because it is possible that participants may repeat comments outside of the group at some time in the future. However, the importance of respecting other participants' confidentiality will be stressed to all participants before the focus group begins, and a statement about that is part of the consent form that all focus group

participants sign before taking part. Therefore, we encourage you to be as honest and open as you can, but remain aware of our limits in protecting confidentiality.

All the information that we collect will be treated by the researchers as strictly confidential. The audio-recordings will be stored securely at the University until the study is completed and will then be destroyed. The anonymised transcripts will be kept for seven years (the length of time we need to keep research information for) and then will be destroyed. All the information in any reports or presentations about the study will be anonymous, so that you could not be recognised or identified from it.

What will happen if I don't want to carry on with the study?

As mentioned above, you are free to stop taking part at any time during the focus group, without giving a reason. If you change your mind after taking part, you can contact me and I will remove your information from the study, for the questionnaires, however it is not possible to remove your data from the focus group audio-recording, due to the difficulty in identifying you on a tape where we will attempt to keep students anonymity to a maximum. To enable me to remove your questionnaire please write your unique identifying code (the last two letters of your first name and the last three numbers of your phone number) on the consent form.

Further information and contact details

If you would like any further information please contact Deb Outhwaite on 01332 591804 or email D.Outhwaite@derby.ac.

If you decide to participate you will be given a copy of this information sheet and a signed consent form to keep.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet and considering taking part in the focus group

Appendix 6 – Consent form for focus group participation

On UoD headed Paper

I confirm that I have read and understood the participant information sheet.

I also have had the opportunity to fully consider this information; and ask any questions connected to this project.

Any subsequent questions related to this project have been answered to my satisfaction.

I fully understand that my participation in this study is voluntary and I may withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.

I am aware that this interview will be recorded.

I understand that after the focus group, I should respect the confidentiality of the group and not discuss or pass on what any other focus group participant said during the focus group.

I understand that I have the right to withdraw information, which I have shared here today for the next two months, and it will not be included within this study, however I accept that this is difficult to guarantee for a focus group, as participants names are deliberately not clearly identified in the audio-recording.

I am aware I will not be identified in any report, publication or presentation related to the findings of this study; as any direct quotes taken from this research project will be anonymous.

Signature of Participant

.....

Name of Participant (Please Print)

.....

Date

Signature of Person Taking Consent.....

Name of Person Taking Consent

.....

Date

Unique Identifying code

Appendix 7 – Focus group: procedure

Facilitator – Deb Outhwaite

Number of students per group - between 6 – 10 students

Interviews will be taped and a transcript produced

A thematic analysis will be produced from the transcripts

Introduction

Thank you for participating in this focus group. You have a right to withdraw if you wish to do so. It should take no longer than 45 -50 minutes. A focus group is a bit like a group interview. The questions are more in-depth than the survey you completed about your experiences of studying at Level 3. The aim of the focus group is to explore your thoughts about going on to University. We would like to find out about your experiences, so there is no right or wrong answer. In fact we are interested in different perspectives so I would anticipate a wide variety of views. If your experience is a bit different from what others are saying, that is what we want to hear. Sometimes you will find that if you share your experiences, you will find that others feel exactly the same. We want to hear your views and opinions because there is always something unique about a person's own experiences. My role is to ask you a number of questions and to facilitate a group discussion. I will sometimes prompt you or ask you to say a bit more about a particular topic. My role is also to keep us on track and to make sure we stick to the topic we want to explore. We want to hear about all of your experiences so would like to hear from all of you. We would like to hear as many different things from as many of you as the time allows.

The focus group will be conducted by asking you a fairly informal question first as an ice breaker. This will be followed by a range of questions. I will indicate when I reach the last question, then briefly summarise what has been discussed. I will ask you to agree to this summary. You will be given an opportunity to make changes at this point.

The discussion will be recorded and a transcript produced from the focus group interview. The transcript will be anonymous, referring to you only as participant 1 or 2 and so on, please remember though, that this anonymity means that it is difficult to withdraw you from this process retrospectively.

Check time availability and whether any participants wish to withdraw.

Appendix 8 – Focus group schedule (Strand 1)

Opening question:

1. Tell us your name and something about the subjects that you are studying.

Introduction question:

2. What are the most important factors that need to be in place to enable students like you to successfully study for your course?

Transition question:

3. Thinking back to the last piece of work you did, how did you prepare for it? What kind of barriers or difficulties did you experience?

Key questions:

4. Do you think your course prepares you for university?
5. Suppose you had to offer advice to a friend about the reading you have to do for your courses, what would you tell him/her?
6. There are lots of different Level 3 qualifications, what is it about your course in particular, that stands you in good stead to apply for the course you want to study at university?

Transition question:

7. Thinking ahead to the next academic year what do you think might be the most demanding challenges about going to University?
8. At university you will be expected to write longer pieces of work for assignments. Do you feel ready for this?
9. Explain what is it that motivates you to go onto university? - How important do you think your relatives and friends have been in influencing your position?

Ending question:

10. We are always trying to improve what we offer students. What advice would you give to college managers about helping you to become better at studying?

Short break

Facilitator to give a summary of the group discussion.
Focus group invited to make comments.

Facilitator to give de-brief, remind students of option to withdraw data afterwards.

Appendix 9 – Middle leader focus group questions (Strand 2)

Opening question:

1. The role that you have here involves managing the IB, tell me how the IBDP came about here, why did the centre decide to introduce it?

Introduction question:

2. What are the most important factors, in your opinion that need to be in place to enable the students that attend here to successfully study for their courses? Do those differ for the IBDP and A-Level?

Key questions:

3. What has the take-up been for the IBDP? How many student (M/F) are registered on it?
4. What percentage is this of total L3 students? Is it increasing over time?
5. Have you had any feedback from students or universities that the IBDP better prepares students' for university? Does this appear to be a parental perception?
6. There are lots of different Level 3 qualifications, which particular courses delivered here seem to attract students who go on to Russell Group universities?
7. Universities require students to write longer pieces of work for assignments. Do you feel that some of your courses equip your students better for this than others?
8. How important do you feel parental knowledge is, in helping your students to apply for places at university? Do your students apply based solely on what you, as a college tell them, or are there wider factors involved?

Ending question:

9. Has the introduction IBDP affected A-Level classes? If so, in what ways? Class sizes? Funding? Has this situation changed since the statutory funding by the LSC in 2007?

Short break

Facilitator to give a summary of the group discussion.
Focus group invited to make comments.

Facilitator to give de-brief, remind managers of option to withdraw data afterwards.

Appendix 10 – Strand 4: Consent forms for SLT interviews

On UoW headed Paper

Dear (Insert name of Principal/Head),

As you are aware, I am completing a Doctorate in Education with the University of Derby, on Leadership in the IB, and as part of this research process I am completing an additional strand of research interviewing senior leaders in the school and college sectors who deliver the IBDP.

I would like you to invite your senior leadership team to take part in these interviews, and attach a schedule of the generic research questions that will be asked. These interviews will be recorded, transcribed, and returned to your SLT member for checking within two to four weeks of the interview date.

Taking part in this research process is entirely voluntary and the individual can withdraw their participation within eight weeks of the interview transcript being returned to them. However, after this period the data will be included within The Findings of the overall study and it will then not be possible to withdraw their content.

However, all data will be thoroughly anonymised and each of the centres that take part will of course have access to the completed research study.

Individual consent forms will be given out prior to each interview, to ensure consent at the personal as well as institutional level is given by all participants.

If you agree to giving your centre's consent below, I would be grateful if you could have your admin support pass me the individual e-mail addresses of your other SLT members so that I can arrange suitable dates and time for these interviews.

I greatly appreciate your help with my Ed D research, and look forward to seeing you again at the interview.

Many thanks,

Deborah

Deborah Outhwaite MSc, PGCE, FHEA
Senior Teaching Fellow
Centre for Professional Education
University of Warwick CV7 4AL
Email: d.outhwaite@warwick.ac.uk
Tel: 07341 072 466

Signature of Principal/Head:
Name of Institution:
Date:

On UoW headed Paper

I confirm that I have read and understood the participant information sheet.

I also have had the opportunity to fully consider this information; and ask any questions connected to this research project.

Any subsequent questions related to this project have been answered to my satisfaction.

I fully understand that my participation in this study is voluntary and I may withdraw without giving any reason.

I am aware that this interview will be recorded.

I understand that I have the right to withdraw information, which I have shared here today for the next two months, and it will not be included within this study, however I accept that after eight weeks from the transcript of today's audio recording having been returned to me for checking and confirming the data will be subsumed into the main study, and after this point it will not be possible to withdraw.

I am aware I will not be identified in any report, publication or presentation related to the findings of this study; as any direct quotes taken from this research project will be anonymous.

Signature of Participant

.....

Name of Participant (Please Print)

.....

Date

Signature of Person Taking

Consent.....

Name of Person Taking Consent

.....

Date

Unique Identifying code

Appendix 11 – Interview schedule

This was placed as Table 9 in the main transcript on page 103, the invitation to centres to participate (Appendix 1) had already been distributed and the individual consent forms (Appendix 10) were given out immediately beforehand, but kept separately, the SLT members were reminded of this process in the e-mail that confirmed the date and time of interview, the full list of which was provided on page 141 as Table 13 – Overview of centre profiles: with dates, times, lengths of interviews, gender, and length of time in post.

Open ended interview schedule (generic for all SLT members)

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

Facilitator to give de-brief, remind leaders of option to withdraw data afterwards, and remind them that a full transcript of the interview will be e-mailed to them within the next two to four weeks. Politely remind leader that it would be great if they could check this transcript for accuracy and any amendments, and e-mail back a confirmation for script validation.

Appendix 12 – Narrative details from each centre

Removed to protect participant centre's anonymity

Appendix 13 – DfE Revised A-Level statement

New A-Levels and GCSEs from 2016

Based on the advice of the A-Level content advisory board established by the Russell Group of leading universities, I have also already announced that A-Levels in mathematics, languages and geography will be reformed for first teaching from September 2016.

I can announce today that GCSEs and A-Levels in religious studies, design & technology, drama, dance, music and PE - and GCSEs in art & design, computer science and citizenship - will also be reformed and brought up to these new, higher standards for first teaching at the same time, in September 2016.

Awarding organisations and subject experts will draft content for these new A-Levels and GCSEs over the coming months, and we will consult on their recommendations for content - while Ofqual consults on its recommendations for assessment - later in the year.

All our reforms to GCSEs and A-Levels complement the changes we have already made to technical and vocational qualifications, removing those which are not endorsed by businesses or employer bodies from league tables, and leaving only those which represent real achievement.

Taken together, these changes mean that every young person in this country will have the opportunity to study high-quality, rigorous, demanding qualifications across the academic and vocational curriculum from September 2016 onwards.

These changes will increase the rigour of qualifications, strengthening the respect in which they are held by employers and universities alike. Young people in England deserve world-class qualifications and a world-class education - and that is what our reforms will deliver.

Taken from:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/gcse-and-a-level-reform>

Accessed 02/04/16.

Appendix 14 – Cambridge Pre-U details

“Cambridge Pre-U is available in 25 [Principal Subjects](#). Each Principal Subject is a two-year programme of study with exams at the end. Short Courses (typically one-year programmes) are also available in some subjects.

We developed Cambridge Pre-U with input from universities and higher education. All syllabuses develop in-depth subject knowledge and skills in problem-solving, critical thinking, creativity, team working, independent learning and effective communication.

Schools can enrich their curriculum by offering Cambridge Pre-U Global Perspectives and Research (GPR). This is taught as two successive one-year courses: Global Perspectives develops research and thinking skills during the first year, preparing students for the extended project in the second year (the Research Report). Learners can achieve the Cambridge Pre-U Diploma by taking Cambridge Pre-U GPR with three Cambridge Pre-U Principal Subjects (one or two can be substituted for A-Levels).

Flexibility is a key feature of Cambridge Pre-U. Students can choose any combination of subjects, and can combine Cambridge Pre-U with A-Level qualifications.

Schools tell us that Cambridge Pre-U offers genuinely interesting syllabuses, and is stimulating for both teachers and learners.

Educational aims of Cambridge Pre-U

Cambridge Pre-U is underpinned by a clear set of educational aims:

- Encouraging the development of well-informed, open and independent-minded individuals
- Promoting deep understanding through subject specialisation, with a depth and rigour appropriate to progression to higher education
- Helping learners to acquire specific skills of problem-solving, critical thinking, creativity, team-working, independent learning and effective communication
- Recognising the wide range of individual talents and interests
- Promoting an international outlook and cross-cultural awareness.”

Taken from:

<http://www.cie.org.uk/programmes-and-qualifications/cambridge-advanced/cambridge-pre-u/curriculum/>

Accessed 02/04/16.

Appendix 15 – AQA Bacc details

“From September 2015 (first entry 2016) any AS level or Level 3 Core Maths qualifications will count towards the breadth element of the AQA Baccalaureate (AQA Bacc).

This is due to the DfE announcement – following the [reformed GCSE and A-level subject content consultation](#) – that A-level and AS-level [General Studies](#) cannot be redeveloped under government changes to A-levels. The last assessment will be summer 2018.

The AQA Bacc comprises:

- three A-level subjects (a student's main subject choices)
- independent learning through the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ)
- skills development through Enrichment activities: work-related learning, community participation and personal development
- breadth through one AS level, A-level or Level 3 Core Maths qualification, provided that this differs from a student's main programme of study.

The AQA Bacc can be based on A-levels awarded by **any** awarding body. Students achieve a grade of **Pass, Merit or Distinction**.

The overall AQA Bacc grade indicates:

- consistency of performance in A-levels and the EPQ
- achievement in a broadening subject
- the development of valuable skills, aptitudes and personal qualities via work experience, volunteering and personal development activities.”

Taken from:

<http://www.aqa.org.uk/programmes/aqa-baccalaureate>

Accessed 02/04/16.

Appendix 16 - IBO Mission Statement

"The International Baccalaureate® (IB) is more than its educational programmes and certificates. At our heart we are motivated by a mission to create a better world through education.

We value our hard earned reputation for quality, for high standards and for pedagogical leadership. We achieve our goals by working with partners and by actively involving our stakeholders, particularly teachers.

We promote intercultural understanding and respect, not as an alternative to a sense of cultural and national identity, but as an essential part of life in the 21st century.

All of this is captured in our mission statement:

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.

To this end the organization works with schools, governments and international organizations to develop challenging programmes of international education and rigorous assessment.

These programmes encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right."

Taken from:

<http://www.ibo.org/en/about-the-ib/mission/>

Accessed 02/04/16.

Appendix 17 – HEI focus group schedule A (Strand 3)

Opening question:

1. Tell us your name and something about the subjects that you are studying.

Introduction question:

2. What are the most important factors that need to be in place to enable students like you to successfully study for your course?

Transition question:

3. Thinking back to the last piece of work you did, how did you prepare for it? What kind of barriers or difficulties did you experience?

Key questions:

4. Do you think your Level 3 course prepared you for university?
5. Suppose you had to offer advice to a friend about the work you have to do for your courses, what would you tell him/her?
6. Do you feel confident about your future and your ability to succeed?

Transition question:

7. Thinking ahead to the next academic year, have you considered any work experience or placement in what you want to go on and do?
8. Has your university started to talking to you about next steps?
9. Explain what is it that motivates you to go onto the next stage? What do you want to do or achieve?

Ending question:

10. We are always trying to improve what we offer students. What advice would you give to school staff or HEI tutors about helping other students next steps?

Short break

Facilitator to give a summary of the group discussion.

Focus group invited to make comments.

Facilitator to give de-brief, remind students of option to withdraw data afterwards. Transcripts sent to all students within two weeks, and signed and returned for accuracy.

Appendix 18 - HEI focus group schedule B (Strand 3)

Opening question:

1. Tell us your name and something about what you are now doing..

Introduction question:

2. Having now graduated (congratulations!), what are the most important factors (with a bit of hindsight) that you think need to be in place to enable students like you to successfully in their studies?

Transition question:

3. Thinking back to your applications for your new PG courses and careers, what kind of barriers or difficulties did you experience?

Key questions:

4. Now you have some distance from it, do you think your Level 3 course prepared you for university?
5. Suppose you had to offer advice to a friend about the work you have to do now for your PG courses and new careers, what would you tell him/her?
6. Do you feel confident about your future and your ability to succeed?

Transition question:

7. Thinking ahead to this year and beyond, have your work experience or placements (that you did at UG) helped you to go on and do what you are doing now?
8. What are your next steps, now?
9. Explain what is it that motivates you to go onto the next stage? What do you want to do or achieve?

Ending question:

10. We are always trying to improve what we offer students. What advice would you give to school staff or HEI tutors about helping other students achieve their own next steps?

Short break

Facilitator to give a summary of the group discussion.

Focus group invited to make comments.

Facilitator to give de-brief, remind students of option to withdraw data afterwards. Transcripts sent to all students within two weeks, and signed and returned for accuracy.

Appendix 19 - A Student Focus Group entire transcript

Transcript removed to protect participant anonymity.

Facilitator to give a summary of the group discussion.

Claire stopped recording and fed back, based on notes taken.

Focus group invited to make comments.

All busy eating puddings by this stage! All said had said what they wanted to.

Facilitator to give de-brief, remind students of option to withdraw data afterwards.

DO did this, they were all happy as it was focus group 4/4, so had been through the process before.

Transcripts sent to all students within two weeks, and signed and returned for accuracy.

All received.

Appendix 20 - An SLT interview entire transcript

Interview ref: H

Date: 16/10/14

Pleasantries/ Preamble on recording

Consent form received (two weeks before)/ understood/ signed/ collected

List of questions received in advance? Yes

Happy just to talk through the questions, while being recorded? Yes

Full transcript of interview removed to protect participant anonymity.

Interview ended, participant thanked, discussed that transcript would be returned within two weeks via e-mail attachment for signing to verify accuracy. This was understood by interviewee. Subsequently done. Signed transcript returned by e-mail on 3/11/14.

Appendix 21 - A Coded SLT transcript

Please see **Table 11: Examples of evolving coding on Page 112** for the tabular details of the statements and codes and indexes used for analysis. Please note that this table has been amended with different colours in the revised thesis submission in order to demonstrate how the axial coding was implemented here:

1. Challenge: real learning/knowledge – the SLT and the centre beyond.
2. Curriculum: a changing knowledge base – shifting political time frames.
3. Learning curve: the individual and self-understanding – identity and personal viability.
4. Beliefs: work and life-long learning – social justice, developing professional capital, and including professional experience.

This Mayring (2003) process was conducted by hand with a multitude of highlighter pens on the original transcripts. In Vivo coding, as deployed here, is followed by structural coding relying on content and concepts which have framed the interviews. The creation of second cycle coding allows the emergence of themes and content, and 'axial' coding identified categories on which other areas revolve. Axial coding allows for the data which has been 'split' during initial coding to be re-assembled so that dominant codes and data can be identified. Synonymous codes can be removed and redundant codes deleted at this stage. A procedure of detailed paraphrasing and condensing of interview material was required, which is extremely time-consuming, but as the cycles proceed the requisite themes emerge (Mayring, 2003).

In this way categories and sub-categories are created, and then contrasted; and the properties of categories can be tested against concepts and the 'spoken realities' of the interviewees. The research process requires a synthesis to emerge where issues can be analyzed and explained. This highlights how education policy - in relation to the IBDP - has been deployed in the last decade. This builds a picture that enables learning to take place from the successes and failures that happen from within the senior leadership teams. Such SLT positions and decisions are critical to their environments (Hargreaves and Fullan, 2012).

Appendix 20 (above) is now recreated here, with examples of sentences highlighted according to the inductive and theoretical codes and indexes allocated. This is only a snapshot of the process undertaken though, as is illustrated in Table 12 (Page 119) as the sections are then subsequently reduced by paraphrasing, as is explained in 2.12.1.

Consent form received (two weeks before)/ understood/ signed/ collected
List of questions received in advance? Yes
Happy just to talk through the questions, while being recorded? Yes

Full transcript of interview removed to protect participant anonymity.

Interview ended, participant thanked, discussed that transcript would be returned within two weeks via e-mail attachment for signing to verify accuracy. This was understood by interviewee. Subsequently done. Signed transcript returned by e-mail on 3/11/14.