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Paul Tarc

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**International Baccalaureate:
Meanings, uses and tensions in a globalizing world**

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Paul Tarc
Associate Professor
Faculty of Education
Western University

ptarc2@uwo.ca

Abstract:

Based on mission and programmatic steering, International Baccalaureate (IB) seeks to 'create a better world' via progressive educational curricula aimed at fostering 'international mindedness.' Across its fifty-plus year history, IB's enduring progressive visions confront the pragmatic demands of viability and sustainability. Evident is the 'malleability' of IB, which allows for the distinctive uses of IB across the many diverse sites of its adoption; also evident is a set of dynamic tensions produced as the progressive visions entangle with instrumental realities. IB is emblematic of the growing prominence of international education, and the transnationalizing of schooling, under wider globalization processes.

Keywords:

global citizenship education, globalization, International Baccalaureate, international education, historicizing, international mindedness, international schools, internationalization of education, progressive education, school internationalization.

International Baccalaureate: Meanings, uses and tensions in a globalizing world

1. Introduction

Much could be written about the multiple dimensions of the current phenomenon of the *International Baccalaureate* (IB)—its presence, growth and impact in the world as well as its uptake in the academic literature. Therefore, I want to make explicit my approach to constructing this entry. First, to fully appreciate what IB represents today, it is vital to consider its history. And, it is critical to understand not only how IB emerged in the field of a small set of multilateral international schools in the 1960s (Peterson, 1972; Mayer, 1968), but to differentiate the conditions of this past historical moment to those of today (Scott, 2004; Tarc, 2009, 2011). There are instances when policy expressions from the period of IB's creation have been read through the filter of the (21st-century) present, misconstruing what was meant by those expressions and, by consequence, misrepresenting the past's mark on the present.

Moreover, with the current mainstreaming of terms like 'global citizenship' sloganized across multiple organizations, it is easy to forget that it is only relatively recently that nation-states have been more sympathetic to such terms as 'global citizenship education' and to forms of internationalizing education, given the traditionally tight grip 'sovereign' nations have held upon their (idealizations of) state schooling (Heater, 2002; Tarc, 2009). Indeed this shift, beginning in the early 1990s, represents a core feature of the "shifting geopolitics of education" under globalization. Accordingly, to understand the character and development of IB requires an examination of the larger conditions that have shaped its concrete manifestations and evolving policy rhetoric on its purposes, achievements, adaptations and plans. On the current (2020) "about-the-ib" webpage, viewers confront IB's long-standing aspirational vision, "Now in our 52nd year, we're more dedicated than ever to

developing international education that creates a better world” (ibo.org). This aspirational goal, of making a better world through a progressive education for ‘international understanding,’ has endured since IB’s inception. However, how these aspirational visions are expressed and manifested in practice are enabled and constrained by institutional and regional pressures/agendas and larger temporal conditions (Tarc, 2009).

Second, the official stories that IB leadership tells of IB represent only one part of the reality of IB. The other part is what happens on the ground, why and how schools, universities, governments and families open to and (potentially) adopt or use IB. These parts reflexively inform one another, but they also produce discord, contradictions and tensions. IB, then, is constituted by both top-down governance and policy as well as bottom-up engagements, above and below the IB organization’s core function of providing its four educational programs in schools. For this reason, I employ in my title the more performative terms, “meanings and uses” of IB, consistent with a pragmatist lens (Rizvi, 2014). From this perspective, IB is not some essential ‘thing,’ but has flexible meanings and tangible uses and intended and unintended effects across the diverse contexts in which it is adopted and engaged. These meanings and uses (and tensions) are mediated by a confluence of factors, such as the following: larger conditions of neoliberalization (exogenous and endogenous to nation-states), IB’s policy rhetoric and governing practices, state and university admissions policies, school/curricular practices and the (cosmopolitan) perspectives and (global) class-making strategies of IB users’ families.

Finally, the section on the historical development and evolving tensions of IB, as a way to historicize international education under the globalization processes of recent decades, is mainly derived from a periodization of IB presented in my book, *Global Dreams, Enduring Tensions: International Baccalaureate in a Changing World* (2009). For greater explication on the historical development of IB and how the three structuring tensions (citizenship,

curricular aims and operational function) find altered dynamics across time, readers can turn to this 2009 publication. Given the date of this publication, I have, for developing this current entry, particularly considered the literature on IB published in the last decade; further, I have reviewed more recent IB policy statements to extend the analytic trajectory of the *Global Dreams* text. For additional historical analyses of IB, see Bagnall (1994), Bunnell (2008), Fox (1985), Hahn (2003), Hill (2002a, 2002b) and Peterson (1972, 1987).

1.1. The phenomenon of IB

As of July 2020, the IB Organization reports that there are 7002 IB programmes offered in 5,284 schools in 158 countries; about 52% of these schools are state-funded schools (ibo.org/programmes/find-an-ib-school/, accessed, Nov 25, 2020). From 2015 to 2019, the numbers of IB programmes adopted increased by a significant 37.9%. Adoption of the IB programs by schools is geographically uneven particularly with IB schools in public sectors. Just over half of the IB schools are in “The Americas” (predominantly in the U.S. and Canada). “Africa, Europe and the Middle East” have about 21% of the schools (despite recent growth, Africa accounts for only 2.3% worldwide). And the “Asia-Pacific” region accounts for about 27% (ibo.org/programmes/find-an-ib-school/, accessed, Nov 25, 2020). 2018 statistics analysed by Bunnell (2020) are illuminative:

Put simply, in 2018 there were at least 53 nations where there existed authorized ‘IB World Schools’ yet zero public schooling activity, whilst four nations (Australia, Canada, Ecuador, and the United States) accounted for 81%. . .of the IB’s overall body of public schools. . . . In most parts of the world, the IB (still) operates out of a traditional, private and relatively elite schooling mode of activity. (p 60)

Thus, apart from a handful of unique arrangements with governments and IB (such as in the cases of Ecuador and Sweden), the majority of IB publicly funded schools are located in the

Anglo-West; whilst, in ‘developing country’ contexts, most IB schools are private institutions, primarily serving mobile and national elites.

The IB is run by a non-profit foundation registered in Switzerland. In the most recently published Annual Review (2018-2019), the current Director General, Siva Kumari reiterates IB’s “three business areas:”

Working closely with our passionate community of educators (over 5,000 schools in more than 150 countries), our mission inspires us to continual improvement in all aspects of our work in our three business areas: curriculum development, working with schools, and assessment. (ibo.org/about-the-ib/facts-and-figures/ib-annual-review/year-in-review-2018-2019/a-message-from-dr-siva-kumari-to-the-ib-community/, accessed on November 25, 2020).

Centering IB’s “work” is the provision of four preK-12 educational programs; the 5000 plus *IB World Schools* offer at least one of these programs to their students. The *IB Diploma Programme* (IBDP), the longest-standing and most popular program (offered by more than 3500 schools), is provided for students aged 16-19 years; it officially began in 1968. The *Middle Years Programme* (MYP) for ages 11-16 began in 1994. The *Primary Years Programme* (PYP) started in 1997 and is for children aged 3-11 years. More recently, in 2012, IB launched the *Career-related Programme* (CP) for 16-19-year-olds that leads to “further/higher education apprenticeships or employment” (ibo.org/programmes). Currently there are 274 schools offering this new program. The IB’s website (ibo.org) is a well-updated site hosting materials and comprehensive details on its mission, philosophy, governance structure, finances, operations, history, curricular programs, geographic spread and growth, annual review statements, research summaries on IB, IB events and initiatives (some showcased in the ‘IB World’ magazine), etc. This entry will not provide a description of the various elements of IB; the website is a good source for accessing these details.

Beyond the increasing numbers of authorized IB World schools and users of IB programs and IB courses in the K-12 private and state-funded sectors, IB has found notoriety in additional arenas. On the one hand, IB has a growing presence in national and transnational educational policy spheres (Tarc, 2009; Tarc & Beatty, 2011); on the other hand, the IB has entered new domains to spread its influence (Tarc, 2009). For example, across the last two decades, IB has partnered with multilateral policy actors and philanthropic foundations on non-IB educational projects. More recently, the IB has partnered with a select number of universities' faculties of Education. In concert with the IB organization, these faculties now offer *International Baccalaureate Education Certificates* (IBEC) in or alongside their preservice teacher education or graduate education programming (see ibo.org/contentassets/f23b082dbc184e379a5bec2d42009e73/ibec-2020-university-directory.pdf). Additionally, the 2018-19 *Annual Review* highlights new partnerships and projects with the governments of United Arab Emirates, Japan and South Korea, and the launching of a Master of Education program with the University of the People to offer “a tuition-free online university degree to benefit teachers worldwide” (ibo.org/about-the-ib/facts-and-figures/ib-annual-review/year-in-review-2018-2019/impact/ accessed on July 22, 2020). Such examples illustrate the IB Organization's commitments to “service” and having “impact” beyond its core mandate of providing its four educational programs.

Anecdotally, a good number of colleagues and acquaintances over the years have incidentally mentioned IB; I am always intrigued to know what they mean by it. As suggested above, the IB has multiple meanings and uses; and, as I have argued (2009), this flexibility of IB has been instrumental to its widespread adoption and financial sustainability. Is IB a cosmopolitan social movement (as implied in DG Siva's invocation of a “passionate community” above and showcased/advanced in the IB World magazine and various IB networks, blogs and groups)? An education for global citizenship (Dvir et al., 2018) or

international mindedness (Hacking et al., 2018)? A private school education (within a publicly funded school) for only the price of examination fees (Tarc, 2007)? An inquiry-based pedagogical model (Twigg, 2010)? A “gold standard” (of quality) for well-established international schools (Lauder, 2007) and/or for the fast growing, for-profit sector of Anglo-Western-inspired international schools (Waterson, 2016)? A liberal—but not political—model of international education (Tarc, 2011) acceptable to more authoritarian nation-states? An UN-inspired infringement on state schooling in the U.S. (Bunnell, 2012)? A model of gifted education (Kyburg et al., 2007; Poelzer & Feldhusen, 1997)? An “international passport” to elite universities in the West (Lee & Wright, 2016)? An academically challenging program for U.S. Tier One / low SES schools (Mayer, 2008)? Or, a school choice option for (upper-) middle class families (Doherty, 2009)?

As reported in the literature, IB is understood and used in each of these ways depending on the context and stakeholders involved. This malleability has proven useful for the IB’s viability across contexts and across time, but it also has produced concerns and tensions that require labour by the IB organization to assert and re-assert its authorship over the IB brand/ideals and via its programs. I will continue to address this malleable feature of IB as it (in)forms the research literature and the terrain upon which IB policy is (re)formulated and the ongoing cultural production of the IB brand.

1.2. Research on IB

As a “learning organization” (Tarc, 2009), the IB is invested in research in terms of better understanding and improving upon its programs and operation, as well as to leverage findings to build its reputation and deepen and broaden the IBDP’s acceptability to university admissions offices (and state educational ministries) internationally. As Resnik (2019) asserts: “IB research is one of the main nonhuman actors that encourages DP recognition...” by universities (p. 347). Thus, the research IB does on students’ readiness for, or success in,

university programs becomes part of the way that IB inserts itself into the national; positive research findings thus act as a “non-human actor” in a larger “assemblage” of actors influencing university admission policies on the IBDP. Such evidenced-based research also allows IB to participate more legitimately and distinctively in the performative cultures of transnational policy making spheres with more prominent agents as OECD or UNESCO.

IB has also increasingly come on the radar of academic researchers, including graduate students. The malleability and multidimensionality of the IB is well reflected in the growing number of research studies engaging IB. Research on IB crosses a broad spectrum from more insider or practice-based studies, conducted or commissioned by the IBO, that investigate (some dimension) of IB with a focus on evaluation or improvement, to more outsider or academic research that takes IB as an exemplar of a particular form, or proxy, of education (such as gifted education) or as a window onto a larger phenomenon (as school choice for class making). In these latter approaches to research, the aim is to illuminate the form of education or the larger phenomenon more than features intrinsic to IB. However, there are also insider studies that engage larger questions of educational aims or methods and use IB as the example, and academic research that does more intrinsically study the IB. The IBO hosts a research page (ibo.org/research/) which profiles IB in-house and IB commissioned research categorized as either “outcomes research,” “curriculum research” or “policy research.” They also have commissioned and posted annual annotated bibliographies inclusive of academic research conducted on IB for the period 2010-19. These bibliographies, conducted by university academics, cite and provide abstracts of academic journal articles, theses and dissertations, book chapters, reports and conferences (see ibo.org/research/research-resources/).

A review of these sources as well as cited sources found through educational database searches surface common strands of research on the IB. A number of studies take the IB

programs as a prominent exemplar of international education (for example, Hill, 2007, 2012); some studies more particularly engage the tension between the idealist and instrumental agendas or visions of international education in a context of globalization (Cambridge & Thompson, 2004; Gardner & McTaggart, 2016; Hill, 2006); relatedly some studies engage the (philosophical) mission or cultural affinities/translations of IB (Drake 2004; Hayden & Wong, 1997; Lineham, 2013; Rizvi et al., 2020; van Oord, 2007; Wells, 2011). A number of studies examine the trends and prospects of/for IB in specific geographic areas, such as Australia (Kidson et al., 2019) and China (Wright & Lee, 2014). One of the more developed strands of research employs sociological analysis to illuminate IB's use as a choice option with neoliberal school reform and how IB offers advantage or distinction for upwardly mobile (global) class making (Doherty 2009, 2012, 2013; Doherty et al., 2009) along the schooling to university trajectory (Wright & Lee, 2019). These strands make evident the multidimensionality of IB and the roles that IB plays in education and in educational markets worldwide, as well as the ongoing salience of IB as an object of scholarly research.

Most compelling, perhaps, is the IB organization's enduring viability and strong reputation as a non-state provider of progressive curricular programs for 'international mindedness' and its attendant teacher professional development and examination/oversight regimes operating for more than half a century (Tarc, forthcoming). Also striking is the character of IB's global geographic dispersion and significant entry into, and ability to work within or alongside, state-funded systems. How has the IB navigated such a complicated terrain, and for so long? How (well) does it hold to its "global dreams" (Tarc, 2009) of making a better world through education? How does it respond to the dynamic tensions that arise as the 'dream' enters the practical realities across different geopolitical and cultural contexts? As IB expands, how does it ensure quality of its programs (Charleson, 2010) as well as remain distinctive, and thereby desirable, in light of competition (Doherty, 2013)?

What are the current trends and prospects for IB (both functionally and aspirationally) in a still hyper-connected, uneven world, now in further global crises? (How) will/might IB (continue to) be a global agent, as well as a reflection, of educational reforms in the shifting geopolitics of education? These questions are very salient for current and future scholarly research on IB. Some of the historical and analytic terrain to support these prospective inquiries is offered in this section.

The following subsections focus more specifically on two research strands most relevant to this volume's focus on the shifting geopolitics of education. The first strand takes IB as an exemplar of international education under globalization and the second strand takes IB as constitutive of internationalization processes of K-12 schooling. My approach is to draw a distinction between international education and its variants as a long-standing set of educational ideals, practices and initiatives (Elvin, 1970; Good, 2020; Heater, 1980; Méras, 1932) and the internationalization of education as a more recent trend emerging from the 1990s under processes of neoliberalization (Tarc, 2019; Tarc et al., 2012). This distinction is useful to differentiate older and newer modalities of international education with their potentially different objectives and animating visions. It also parallels the distinction between the literal definition of international education as educational activities crossing or connecting across political borders and the ideal of an outward looking education for international understanding (Tarc, 2019). Internationalization of education as a recent trend entails both the literal and aspirational definitions of international education, but the larger neoliberalizing conditions that drive internationalization agendas from above, favour the literal and "instrumental" definitions over the "ideological" or "educational" (Stier, 2004). Consequently, IB's adoption may have more to do with 'international education' than 'internationalization' or vice versa; but the point here is that these empirical and normative differences matter. Considering IB as an exemplar of international education (as in educating

for international understanding) leads to a different set of questions (and critiques) than considering it as an exemplar of the internationalization of K-12 schooling (as supra-national presencing in state schooling). Of course, linkages need to be made as part of the analytic, but under-thought confluences risk clouding research aims and findings.

2. IB and the shifting geopolitics of education under globalization

This section presents two specific analytic strands most relevant to this volume's theme of "globalization and the shifting geopolitics of education." The first strand considers IB as an exemplar of international education and the trends and prospects for the 20th century dream of international education under the unfolding 21st century conditions. The second strand centers on the internationalization of K-12 schooling, where "IB is [taken as] an emblematic case of educational globalization" in terms of "de-nationalizing" state schooling (Resnik, 2012, p. 249) or "school internationalization" (Engels et al., 2019). For this second strand, I read Resnik's (2012) article, *The denationalization of education and the expansion of the International Baccalaureate*, with and against Bunnell's (2020) recent article, *The internationalisation of public schooling' in practice: A 'skeptical reality' approach*.

2.1. IB as a window on (Anglo-Western) international education

While the idea of an international baccalaureate was not new in the 1960s when IB came to life (Hill, 2002b), there was, at this time, sufficient practical demand for an internationally recognized secondary school leaving diploma, to facilitate expatriate families access to home-country universities in the West (Peterson, 1972). The practical necessity and logistics of developing an internationally recognized diploma for multilateral international schools was foundational to the development of the IBDP. However, equally foundational, were the "global dreams" of IB (Tarc, 2019)—the progressive educational and cosmopolitan visions of the creators and supporters of IB to develop an innovatory educational program for international understanding. For most of the 20th century "international understanding" was

the dominant signifier of the pedagogical goal of international education (Heater, 1980; Tarc, 2009). More than representatives of their own national systems, founding Director General (DG) Alec Peterson and his collaborators were largely educational reformers, critical of encyclopedic (and nationalist) approaches to schooling (Mayer, 1969). They envisioned an education for international understanding as a humanist “education of the whole person” (Peterson, 1972; Renaud, 1974), where students would study across the humanities, arts and sciences, engage a second language and experience social service and aesthetic activities. IB had a lineage to the Kurt Hahn-inspired service/outdoors movement, as well as to the relatively independent English private schools’ movement. Whilst a regime of centralized examinations would be IB’s method for ensuring a level of standards for university acceptability, the program was aimed at deepening students’ understanding of the world through disciplinary and interdisciplinary study which included the cultivation of the moral and the aesthetic (Peterson, 1972). In the founding period of IB, a classical progressive education in the internationalist milieu of multilateral international schools and their communities was the means to international understanding (Tarc, 2019). For this non-state actor, a multimodal examination regime would allow for the steering of a curricula for international understanding and be the accountability mechanism needed to gain acceptability from university admission offices (Tarc, 2009).

The following six books are particularly illuminative of the *time-space milieu* of IB’s creation and experiment in the mid-1960s to early 1970s: Leach’s (1969) *International schools and their role in the field of international education*, Mayer’s (1968) *Diploma: International schools and university entrance*, Malinowki and Zorn’s (1973) *The United Nations International School: Its history and development*, Renaud’s (1974) *Experimental period of the International Baccalaureate: Objectives and results*, Peterson’s (1972) *The international baccalaureate: An experiment in international education*, and Peterson’s (1987)

Schools across frontiers: The story of the International Baccalaureate and the United World Colleges. These books provide a glimpse of the ethos, motivating ideals, practical realities and concrete problems and logistics that represent the contextual features of the community of IB creators and supporters (many of whom were teachers) that brought the IB to life in a historical moment that is quite distinct from our current one.

The confluence of the idealist educational/cosmopolitan visions and the practical demands and logistics produced a set of tensions that have endured from the period of IB's creation and experiment (1962-73) to the present day (Tarc, 2009). In the historical moment when IB emerges, three core tensions constitute the 'international' of IB:

The structuring tensions of IB emerge from the interplay of the dream of international understanding and the functional operation of an international diploma at work in the world. The term 'international understanding,' on its own, is under tension as an educational aim in a historical period when a dominant purpose of schooling was to produce loyal national subjects. The educational ideal of IB as a progressive education of 'the whole person' is in tension with the need for IB to have internationally acceptable standards for university entry. And the ideal of IB representing a modern, forward-looking model of schooling, oriented to making a more peaceful and humane world in a historical period of democratization movements, becomes strained where IB was effectively used by a social elite. These three examples signal the core tensions of the 'international' of IB in the founding moment. (Tarc, 2009, p. 23)

The first tension of "citizenship," thus, centers on the IB's mission of developing international understanding when schooling is to foster national understanding and loyalties. Although international understanding was not contentious within the communities of the participating multilateral international schools, the IBO had to temper its internationalist

sentiments in seeking recognition and funding from national governments and institutions. In its policy statements, IBO's predominant focus is on the forms and aims of the IBDP education and assessment (Tarc, 2009). Where international understanding is discussed explicitly, the IBO emphasizes that students first must identify their national identity and later develop an openness to other nations and cultures (Peterson, 1972). Additionally, the IBDP is consistently described as a "complement to," or as a potential "laboratory" for, national schooling (Peterson, 1972).

The second and more consequential "curricular tension" is explicitly stated by Peterson (1987):

One of the problems which from the start face the IBO in developing an international curriculum was the tension between the academic requirements of university entrance procedures and these personal requirements of the whole human being growing up in an interdependent world. (p. 199)

Thus, as with progressive education more generally, the innovatory and progressive elements are constrained by demands for standards and accountabilities. In the case of the IBDP, deputy DG Gerard Renaud admitted that some university stakeholders working with the IBO had "dictated the content of some programmes. . . . and sometimes imposed a greater degree of conservatism than the promoters of the experiment desired" (IBO, 1972, p. 27).

Still, in these early years, the IBDP curricular structure and assessment regime were innovatory and potentially enabling of more progressive and internationalist pedagogies. In the first place, with the IBDP, senior secondary students in international schools were no longer required to be split up to study for national entrance examinations (Leach, 1969). Second, the examination system was nuanced and multimodal to mitigate the back-wash effect of teaching to the test and the use of rote learning approaches (Peterson, 1972). Moreover, the curricular design of the IBDP compelled students to study a range of subjects

and take an innovatory “core” that included the Theory of Knowledge course, a student-initiated “extended essay” and the “creative, aesthetic and social service experience” (CASS). Additionally, there was room for individual schools to create a school-based syllabus (SBS) to address local interests. One of the core international schools participating in the creation of IB, Atlantic College, designed and offered a Peace and Conflict Studies course, which represents an example of the (still under-used) innovatory possibilities of the IBDP (Tarc, 2009).

The third “operational” tension refers to the disconnect between the larger internationalist-egalitarian vision of IB (emerging in a time of political decolonization and the democratizing and massifying of secondary and postsecondary schooling) and the not-so-international character of the organization and program and with the elite social class backgrounds of the users of the IBDP. While the idea that international education could be massified beyond elites and that IBDP should be open for the “academically-able,” the schools that offered the IBDP in the experimental period served socially elite families (Tarc, 2009). Limited access to the IBDP thus represented one pillar of the operational tension.

In terms of its inter-national make-up or representativeness, the IBO and the IBDP curricula reflected specifically the positionalities and perspectives of individuals from a small set of wealthy Western nations. These were the voices of consequence in terms of university partners and of the development of the program, curricula and assessment operation. On the one hand, the internationalism of IB signals the inclusion of perspectives from a multiplicity of nations; but, on the other hand, the international refers to a “chain of equivalencies: West = democratically advanced = modern = international” (Tarc, 2009, p. 42). “Representation” thus represents the second pillar of the operational tension:

For the IBO, the structuring tension of representation in the founding period is produced out of the desire to include national perspectives and voices within a

hierarchy of [assumed] relevance and expertise. University entrance requirements in England, Switzerland, Germany and France, needs of Anglo-American international schools for the mobile elite and recommendations of funders and other liberal-minded enthusiasts magnify the influence of particular perspectives and voices over others. (p. 42-43)

Given the enormity of the task to secure funding and support to create and pilot the IBDP, the IBO seemed positioned to be able to respond to these tensions only with aspirational commitments to enlarge access and internationalize representativeness.

Analysts of IB in contemporary times will recognize that these tensions have endured, sometimes in the form of critiques of IB. For example, lack of access to the IB programmes continues to be a point of critique (Dickson et al., 2017). In response, the IB organization, continues to be actively and strategically engaged in broadening access to the IB, as I will detail below. Nevertheless, as the IB has moved through its phases of “creation and experiment” to “growth and sustainability” to “diffusion and diversification” to “branding and impact” over the last fifty years, dynamics of these tensions have altered (Tarc, 2009). Most obvious is that, for the most part, international understanding as an aim of education is no longer contentious; indeed, many governments advocate for it as a component of human capital development in a globalizing world (Green, 1997). For a more detailed analysis of the shifting dynamics of the tensions and how the IBO navigates them in a changing world, refer to the Global Dreams text (Tarc, 2009). In the remaining part of this section, I will outline the most significant continuities and discontinuities of these tensions precipitated by larger 21st century transformations and the attendant responses of the IB Organization.

First, amidst the ascendancy of neoliberal economic globalization in the 1990s with the breakup of the Soviet Union, international education begins to move from a potentially politically contentious and marginal activity to an expedient (Tarc, 2009; Tarc, 2013). For

example, governments want globally savvy/mobile citizens who can contribute to the national economy, universities seek out international students as a new generation stream under declining public funding, businesses want interculturally competent employees who can exploit niche markets globally, students want to build their resumes with international certificates and experience (Tarc, 2013). Often entangled with these pragmatic agendas of this neoliberal internationalization movement come the more idealist/aspirational agendas privileging the potential educational, cosmopolitan and ethical potentialities of international education (Tarc, 2019). In this sense the ‘citizenship tension’ of IB has largely abated. For only a fringe right, admittedly energized under the recent rise in strongman populism (Geiselberger, 2017), does international education remain contentious (in the U.S. context, see Bunnell, 2012). In terms of IB’s diffusion and acceptance into state-funded schooling, IB’s mission of developing international mindedness or global citizenship is either inconsequential or seen as an asset by schools and ministries of education also open to the internationalization trend. What this change means is that rather than trying to minimize its internationalist vocabulary, IB’s international, becomes a “value added,” a marker of distinction (Tarc, 2009); for upwardly mobile middle-class parents, cosmopolitan capital is increasingly recognized and pursued as a form of cultural capital (Forsey, 2017; Weenink, 2008).

Today, neither the vocabulary nor the liberal-humanist pedagogy of international education is contentious. However, the larger political tension of international education’s aims and uses remains. The expediency of international education is tied into nationalist agendas and strategic capital accumulation of mobile elites (Ong, 1999; Tarc, 2013). Nationalist internationalisms have long been critiqued (Leach, 1969) and remain dramatically present and problematically at odds with the ideals of equity, reciprocity and dialogue founding ethical internationalist engagements. In this sense, the citizenship tension has

merged with the operational tension (access and representativeness). For example, where IB is used to further social advantage by elites or where IB curricula remain Eurocentric and complicit with hierarchizing societal and human value, the aspirational (world) citizenship goal of (massifying) international understanding remains stunted.

The curricular tension has endured but with changing dynamics. First, the centrally examined IBDP remains a college preparatory degree and thus the tension remains between the development of the whole person through a general education and the standards or accountability mechanisms necessary to facilitate access to top universities. However, through the development of the younger-years programs (MYP, PYP), IB has moved forward in realizing its progressive educational visions. These programs are less academically content-rigid and therefore tend to better support the kinds of inquiry-based, thematic, interdisciplinary, progressive and innovative approaches to which the IB brand aspires. Given that IB still must ensure quality standards over the younger years program, there still exist constraints on innovation. However, it remains arguable whether the IB programmes or the (national) school and community contexts in which IB is enacted represent the ‘bottle neck’ to realizing more progressive, internationally minded or innovatory pedagogies.

As for the curricular tension within the IBDP, some studies have shown that many IBDP students find the IBDP program to be a very intensive and stressful experience (Hertberg-Davis et al., 2008); my colleague and I (Tarc & Beatty, 2013) found in one IB World school in Ontario, that some IBDP students had to limit or eliminate their activities in sports, arts and service in the school and community, in order to fulfill the academic requirements of the IBDP. Obviously, this sole focus on academics contradicts the goal of developing the whole person through a general education.

The IB is aware of this curricular tension in the IBDP and periodically have discussed alternatives to its high stakes culminating examination regime, but the role of the examination

regime in assuring IB's "high quality" standards has much inertia (Tarc, 2009). However, most recently, the IBDP's 2020 Spring examinations were cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic. In a recent interview, DG Kumari discussed the need to learn from the pandemic and IB's responses to it and specifically of "plans to shift focus away from end-of-programme exams." She is reported stating:

Before Covid, we were already designing our strategy for the next 10 years and as part of that we have been having these conversations about the end programme...where this heavy-duty summative experience does not reflect the real world anymore. (<https://www.tes.com/news/international-baccalareate-siva-kumari-exams-future-education-coronavirus>, accessed December 8, 2020)

It is possible that the pandemic pushes "these conversations" forward and catalyzes a change in the status quo. Perhaps the IB brand has a solid enough reputation to maintain its high regard with respect to the quality and oversight of the programs without the IBDP high stakes testing regime. Time will tell.

Another key shift over time has been the development of IB's focus on internationalizing IB curricula—supporting schools to be "internationally minded," beyond providing international schools with an internationally-recognized diploma. Initially the IBDP enabled national groups to study together on a single less nationalistic curriculum. International understanding was implicit to the milieu of multilateral international schools. In the mid-1980s as IB found financial sustainability via the diffusion of the IBDP into state schools in the United States in Canada, IBO realized that an international student body could no longer be assumed (IBO, 1988). From the early 1990s the IB made a more conscious focus to discuss the goal of international understanding (and later international mindedness) and integrate it into its curricula. In its current "branding and impact" phase in the 21st century, fostering international mindedness is an overarching goal. Although still tied to a set of

progressive learner dispositions of ‘open mindedness’ and “inquiry” the IB organization has become more explicit about its aim of fostering international mindedness and what that entails (IBO, 2017). In this important mission document with just over 6 pages of content, a full page is afforded to international mindedness. Significant also are recently conducted IB-sponsored studies, specifically focused on educating for international mindedness (Hacking et al., 2016; Singh & Qi, 2013; Sriprakash et al., 2014). Thus, IB now projects a more “positive” definition of international education (Tarc, 2009), that any school can engage.

The operational tension also remains significantly on the radar in IB’s rhetoric and reform policy (Tarc, 2009). As would be expected national/cultural diversity has expanded greatly in the make-up of IB policy actors and employees. New working languages have been added to the original languages of English and French. Curricular modifications have incrementally opened-up the Eurocentric beginnings of IB programs; for example, in 2015 indigenous ways of knowing was formally added to the “knowledge areas” in the IB DP Theory of Knowledge course. Also, of note, is a recent push from IB commissioned research toward “intellectual equality” and “multilingualism” (Sriprakash et al., 2014) to inform IB’s conception of international mindedness, as its overarching pedagogical ideal. The Western-centeredness of IB, which can be attributed to its foundations and from the still hegemonic global status of Anglo-Western education, must be assumed. However, my speculation, to repeat, is that the IB curricula itself (especially the more open PYP and MYP) is probably more open to epistemic diversity than are the (national) contexts of IB school classrooms and teachers. Thus, we might say that the tension of the inter-national representativeness of IBO and of IB curricula have at least diminished somewhat.

In terms of broadening access, the IB has expanded beyond the more elite private international schools of its foundational period and entered state schools in the West, developed more accessible younger years programs, entered inner-city schools in the United

States and the United Kingdom and entered partnerships with state schools in the global South (Ecuador). However, criticisms remain of IB as elitist, as inaccessible, and as (unintentionally) furthering educational inequality given its use as a choice option of neoliberal school reform. For its part, the IBO began to prioritize its commitments to broadening access to IB programs in its 21st century policy discourse (IBO, 2006; Tarc, 2009). Given the 21st century zeitgeist of inclusivity and equity and given IB's mission to massify international education, access and equity remains a key pressure point for the IBO today (see the 'E2' initiative, IBO, 2018). As they make explicit in their Growth to Access document: "Today, over ½ million students from all continents have graduated from our Diploma Programme but it is obvious that our goal requires millions of people worldwide to benefit from an international education (IBO, 2006, p. 2). In this key policy document, IBO makes it clear that despite a variety of their broadening access initiatives over the years, there remains very uneven access to IB, both geographically and in terms of social class. The policy document also includes a set of strategies and plans to mitigate this uneven access; while, the past decade has seen incremental and singular instances of broadened access, in the larger picture, limited and uneven access remains a core challenge for IB. For example, in Dickson and colleagues (2017) recent examination of the Australian context, they find that "whether private or public, IB schools in Australia are overwhelmingly located in higher-SES areas and enrol students from higher-SES backgrounds" (p. 75).

In his DG report of 1972, Alec Peterson directly responded to IBDP student charges that IB is elitist, Alec Peterson suggested that IB could foster "intellectual elitism" over "social elitism" (IBO, p. 17). Here he was signaling how one's education might overtake social status and familial wealth in a meritocratic society. Perhaps, at that historical moment, the feasibility of dis-entangling educational elitism from social elitism seemed more credible.

Despite schooling reforms for equality, catalyzed by the ‘new sociology of education’ of the 1970s, social class and educational attainment have remained tightly correlated; we now witness countless ways in which familial cultural capital and resources are applied to facilitate academic success for middle and upper families. As an education for distinction (particularly the IBDP) built on a “user-pays” model (Tarc, 2009), IB can little extract itself from these larger conditions of schooling and social class stratification. Consequently, the very neoliberalizing conditions allowing new models, as IB programs, into state educational systems, also steer the uses of IB education (as cultural capital) for social class advantage; and, given IB’s user/institution-pays model that necessitate uneven access to its product, it is thus difficult to imagine how the operational tensions can be resolved.

Historicizing the structuring tensions of IB, as outlined above, illustrates how IB articulates within and alongside state educational systems and private independent schools embedded in national settings. It also shows how the IB has been somewhat proactive in the internationalization of education as well as reacting to its flows and pressures. These tensions of IB, invoked by the encounter of its aspirational dreams with practical realities (structured by larger forces) are also resonant with internationalizing schools and universities, navigating the limits and possibilities for (citizenship) education in an interdependent and asymmetric world. The next section turns to the IB’s relations to K-12 school internationalization.

2.2. IB as a window on school internationalization

IB’s diffusion in state educational systems can also be studied as an instance of the internationalization of K-12 schooling. In her 2012 article, scholar Julia Resnik offers a most explicit analysis of how the IB’s insertion and expansion in state schools can be interpreted as a process of de-nationalizing education. From its foundation, the IB was designed and adapted to articulate with state systems for educational and qualificatory alignments and recognition, as the previous subsection illustrates. For example, as the IBDP expanded in

monolingual areas of North America, a beginning-level language course was added to its previously more demanding language course requirement (Tarc, 2009). However, state educational systems have also been changing under globalization and not only as passive victims to exogenous global forces. Drawing on Sassen's scholarship (2000, 2003), uncovering how globalization is advanced within national spaces and by state actors, Resnik asserts that "the theoretical significance of IB schools. . . is that they embody the denationalization of educational systems" (p. 249). Consequently, "certain national contexts and educational traditions encourage IB schools, while others hinder their propagation" (p. 249). I would add that since these contexts and traditions are also in flux, IB's propagation and prospective sustainability (see Beech & Guevara, 2020) within countries or educational jurisdictions also shift across time

The 'global' forces or actors interact with national systems, institutions and processes in what Sassen (2000) calls "frontier zones" as distinct "spatialities embedded in the national (Resnik, 2012, p. 251). Resnik offers a kind of spatial typology that is useful in breaking apart the different levels of global-local interactions that can be considered part of k-12 school internationalization. She lists them,

in ascending order of *thickness of the global*: (1) the IB international brand, (2) the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO), (3) IB regional offices, (4) international schools for mobile families, (5) private schools that recruit local children, and (6) public schools that recruit local children. (my emphasis, p. 251)

IB as brand is the most global, symbolic and least tethered to a national physical space, materialized with the IB logo stamped on all things IB. the IBO is a transnational entity, made up of individuals of different nations and working with multiple states; yet, it has a central headquarters in geographical space. The least global is the state school serving 'local' children of which the 'global' of IB has very little presence in relation to the totality of

the school operations and processes. In terms of focusing on school internationalization within state systems over the ‘global’ of IB, it is helpful to invert Resnik’s ordering. Under this inversion the thickest form of school internationalization is represented by the presence of IB programs in the ‘local’ public school, where students’ learning and subject formation is (at least subtly) being shaped by a supranational entity. And the thinnest and most symbolic manifestation, but much more widespread, is the IB brand recognized by wider national publics without tangible experience with the IB programs per se. The recent instituting of IBEC partnerships with state teacher education programs, mentioned above, also represents a new and somewhat thick form of school internationalization in the de-nationalized frontier zone of the global (IB) embedded in the national (teacher education). Thus, internationalization of K-12 schooling, as de-nationalization, is thickest where students receive a compulsory, state-funded education in the local school provided by a supranational entity. However, given the very small percentage of IB schools and IB students (and educators) within state educational systems, the breadth of this thickest level of de-nationalizing seems extremely narrow. On the other end, the thinner forms reach a wider audience and influence/represent internationalization (as de-nationalization) in more symbolic ways that are admittedly playing a role but more difficult to trace.

A recent article by Tristan Bunnell takes a more “skeptical” view of IB’s role and influence in “the internationalization of public schooling in practice” (p. 56), emphasizing just how narrow this thickest form may be. In his chapter, he “seek[s] to show that in practice the extent of contact between the IB and public schooling is relatively scarce, small scale and minimally funded and prioritized” (p.57). First, Bunnell emphasizes the uneven distribution, where public schooling activity is predominantly located in a minority of countries and in clusters of only “urban settings” within these countries; the government-funded growth in Ecuador is a case in point (p. 60-61). Further, while there are private international schools

where a majority of students take the IBDP, in many publicly funded schools in the other top three countries with public IB schools (United States, Canada and Australia), a minority of students are enrolled in the IBDP; for example, sometimes there exists a small cohort of 20-25 students taking the IBDP within a school of one thousand students (Tarc, 2009). In the case of Ecuador, its 270 IBDP public schools had an average of 22 examination candidates per school (Bunnell, p. 62). Thus, the IB brand(ing), with its ‘5000+ IB World schools in more than 150 countries,’ belies the relatively small number of IB students and teachers in public schools and the very small numbers of IB schools in many of these 150 countries.

Bunnell concludes his skeptical framing by consider governmental funding and IB’s reliance on “political champions.” There are a few countries, as Ecuador, Japan and the United States “led by an IB-government assemblage” (p. 63), indicative of a distinctive spacialization of de-nationalization (Resnik, 2012). However, Bunnell (2020) continues, “very few governments directly support the IB, and it tends to involve relatively small grants of money (p. 63). In the countries of the UK and the U.S., which have supported the adoption of IB programs through government funding, “funding is usually merely to cover the basic costs of applying for the accreditation process, i.e., there is no long-term funding available” (p. 63). Finally, IB’s diffusion has continued to rely on individual influential contacts (Tarc, 2009) including, more recently, political champions (UK, City of Chicago, Ecuador). Where support is contingent on individuals and political outcomes, such support maybe be quickly cut off.

Thus, Resnik (2012) illustrates dynamics of the denationalization of education via the propagation of IB in state schooling, across its thinner and thicker types; whereas, Bunnell (2020) provides cautionary statistics on the actual depth, scope and accessibility of the thickest type. Taken together we can see that the IB is indeed emblematic of transnationalizing processes, but the depth of these processes is questionable. My sense is

that it is useful to examine all the types/levels in Resnik's typology and particularly there many interactions, as they work together to produce denationalizing zones that constitute school internationalization. The IB branding works dynamically with the IBO's regional offices and the concrete manifestations of IB programs, to heighten the prominence and effect of IB. And while actual numbers of IBDP exam candidates, IB students and IB teachers remain low, in relation to the 'buzz' of IB, these actors have relations with expanded circles. For example, anecdotally IB teachers talk about how teaching IB has positively affected their teaching in non-IB classes.

Both Resnik (2012) and Bunnell (2020) articulate the positive potential secondary effects. Resnik discusses "percolation" as the influence of aspects of the DP program. . . on curricula and programs that are not related to the IB" (p. 263). She provides examples from two state-sponsored schools in London, England that adapt the IBDP's innovatory core elements to provide critical thinking courses, extended inquiry projects and volunteering to the larger majority of non-IB students in the schools. These percolatory effects are particularly significant given IB's "horizontal networks of governance," where "teachers are trained by other teachers. . . and a range of mechanisms for promoting the exchange of know-how and experiences among practitioners have been fostered" (Beech & Guevara, 2020, p. 104). This horizontality of governance and teachers' professional development explains why pockets of IB schools within certain geographies can be found, as in the country of Ecuador or the city of Chicago, and why the IBO seeks to develop these close clusters of schools. It also explains how private IB schools are influential actors in the assemblage of school internationalization in the public sector. Additionally, within the public sector, this horizontality and teacher collaboration may percolate into non-IB schools under board level initiatives, including non-IB professional development and educator collaborations.

Bunnell also elaborates on this “ripple” effect by discussing research on IB public schools in Spain, Ecuador and Japan. In summary these (potential) effects included: energizing learning and extra-curricular activities and positive school culture for non-IB students, showcasing high academic approaches, model pedagogies and internationally minded educational approaches for other programs, schools and system-wide reforms (p. 64-65). However, not all ripple or secondary effects are positive. Researchers have also raised concerns of the negative secondary effects of bringing IB into state educational systems. These potential negative effects, which connect to the stratifying uses of IB under neoliberal privatizing reform already discussed, include: the potential negative effects of ‘IB-choosing’ students exiting from local schools (Lauder, 2007); the funneling of resources to the already privileged mobile (Doherty, 2013; Tarc, 2009) and urban (Bunnell, 2020) middle classes; and the siloing of IB and non-IB students groups of student (Culross & Tarver, 2007).

On the one hand, from a state schooling perspective, IB is implicated in the de-nationalizing of education that, in recent decades, have been challenging idealizations and practices of schooling as a territorially bounded activity of the sovereign nation-state. At the very least, the propagation and growth of IB into state educational systems represents a window on these de-nationalizing processes constituted by the mix of transnational (educational) policy forces and flows, national/ministerial sovereignties and (flexible) citizenships inside, and stretching across, borders. In some respects, IB is itself a transnational force in school internationalization, albeit with its program provision having limited scope, depth and accessibility (Bunnell, 2020).

From a more multilateral perspective characteristic of IB in the founding period, the IB is a salient exemplar of international education and, analytically, offers a window on how ideals and manifestations of an education for international understanding (toward a more peaceful, egalitarian world) have evolved across the last fifty years. Such analysis provides

insights into the trends and prospects for international education and its variants under contemporary conditions. Both perspectives reveal how IB as implicated in the globalizing geopolitics of education.

3. Conclusion

To conclude, 'IB' is a longstanding, multi-faceted and study-worthy phenomenon, both as a particular manifestation of international/progressive education and as a window on the shifting meanings and uses of (international) education in global times and on school internationalization as a process of denationalization. IB is a compelling exemplar of the heightened expediency of international education in the 21st century (Tarc, 2009, 2019). For many students and families, IB has proven to be an enriched and value-added educational program. The IB organization has navigated relatively successfully across decades of global transformations beyond its own making, to govern its core mandate of providing an IB diploma on a school-by-school basis. It has also expanded its activities to include younger-years and career-related programs and to seek out other initiatives and partnerships to 'create a better world' through education. How IB has navigated, points to the larger conditions of globalization that have also animated the trend of internationalization of K-12 schooling. And IB is also an agent in school internationalization across its different levels of embeddedness in national schooling.

IB's continued success raises several new and old questions that will require re-thinking and negotiation as societies and institutions respond to the regressive and potentially progressive forces produced by the current (2020) covid-19 pandemic and its still uncertain aftermath. On the one hand, there will be pressures for IB to 'up' its (discursive) commitments to social justice/anti-oppressive and environmentalist pedagogy in the wake of the Black Lives Matter movement and global ecological crises. A turn to anti-racist pedagogies, for example, would represent a shift given IB's emergence from, and niche uses

in, the traditionally color-blind elite international schools culture (for example, David, 2020). On the other hand, the threat to liberal internationalism by the rise of populist nationalisms, border closings and trade-wars might mean that IB's viability finds more traction in the accrual of academic distinction and capital, over its promise of a humanist international mindedness or the facilitation of global mobility. As with other educational providers, IB will have to respond to a confluence of social justice desires, the pedagogical needs of the learner (progressive 21st century learning) and the continued dominance of neoliberal performativity. My sense is that, programmatically, it will continue to stick with its core foundation as a provider of a progressive liberal-humanist education, whilst, adapting rhetorically, to the wider conditions and cultural politics of a globalizing (and de-globalizing) world.

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