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Fabricating neoliberal subjects through the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme

Andrea Sunyol & Eva Codó

ABSTRACT

Neoliberalised capitalism, defined by flux and insecurity, engenders fear and anxiety. These affective dispositions discipline responsible citizens towards constant self-managing for capital appreciation. This chapter aims to understand the contours of neoliberal governmentality through the situated examination of the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP), a 50-year-old diploma organised by a Swiss non-profit and implemented in schools all over the world. We draw on data obtained from a one-year ethnographic engagement with the IBDP offered by a private ‘international’ school located in Barcelona (Spain), as part of its attempt to gain distinctive advantage in the local marketplace and attract transnational families. The analysis centers on (1) the examination of the IB learner profile, a key discursive artefact encapsulating the programme’s neoliberal rationality; and (2) the disciplining techniques put in place to enforce student self-transformation. We argue that the original IB humanist-liberal philosophy of educating the whole person has enabled a neoliberal co-optation of the programme. IB-commodified selves are protoworkers anxious to outperform in all aspects, brilliant academically but also excellent self-carers and disciplined affective selves. We show how the IBDP is a clear example of the dispersed, destatised and elitising forms of social governance prevalent under the neoliberal regime.

Keywords: neoliberal governmentality; international baccalaureate; international education; skillification of self; standardisation of education; commodification of pedagogy.

INTRODUCTION

Uncertainty is the word that describes best the contemporary phase of capitalism (Sennet, 1998), also known as neoliberalised modernity. Uncertainty is associated to instability, intensified insecurity and rapid change. Insecurity and the rhetoric of insecurity have become

powerful instruments of social control, because they create a societal mood defined by fear, anxiety and even helplessness (Anderson, 2016). These neoliberal affective dispositions compel all of us to work towards making our lives more secure, less unstable, more certain. This is how neoliberalism governs our conduct, i.e. by appealing to the disciplined, self-responsible citizens to act upon themselves in a specific direction: ‘managing their own human capital to maximal effect’ (Fraser, 2003, p. 168). This is the contemporary ‘care of the self’ that Foucault identified as normative to neoliberalism. The self-responsible individual is not only acutely aware of the need to produce value (Gordon, 1991), but s/he is also morally obliged to be ‘perpetually responsive to modifications in his/her environment’ (p. 43). This is why ‘*homo economicus* is *manipulable man*’ (Gordon, 1991, p. 43, italics in the original).

The defining feature of uncertainty is precisely that we do not know exactly the direction in which things will evolve. Therefore, our present courses of action toward tackling uncertainty can, at best, be more or less informed guesses. Yet there is a sense in which we all feel obliged to act upon those guesses, to be prepared (Gao and Park, 2015). In keeping with the culture of financialisation, neoliberal self-capitalisation is speculative (Tabiola and Lorente, 2017): one can never be completely sure of the future appreciation of capitals; there is always risk involved. What is certain, however, is that it is the practice of self-capitalisation itself, as a disciplined act of neoliberal self-governance, that will be valued (Codó and Sunyol, 2019).

Drawing on the concept of neoliberal governmentality (Foucault, 1991; Gordon, 1991; Fraser, 2003; Rabinow & Rose, 2003; Martín Rojo, 2018), this chapter dissects the logics and practices of self-capitalisation of a group of students following the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (henceforth IBDP) in a private school located near Barcelona, in the northeast of Spain, during the academic year 2016/17. These students enroll in the IBDP ‘to be prepared’ for their future (this is the actual school motto); in fact, they want to be more prepared than the rest. They decide to take the IBDP, alongside the national baccalaureate, to be maximally efficient (see also Martín Rojo, this volume). When they finish, they will have

obtained two educational credentials –unlike most of their classmates. But beyond qualifications, their IB experience will transform them into perfect neoliberal subjects; we will see how and in what direction this transformation takes place and with what effects. We will also discuss what possibilities of resistance there are. We will argue that the IBDP, run by the Swiss International Baccalaureate Organisation (henceforth IBO), is a perfect illustration of how neoliberal governmentality operates: it is dispersed and multi-level, that is, it governs populations “through flexible, fluctuating networks that transcend structured institutional sites” (Fraser, 2003, p. 168); it is driven by market competition; and it is segmented, that is, it aims to create a “hypercompetitive” elite that “coexists with a marginal section of low-achievers” (p. 169).

This chapter will contribute significant insights to ethnographic studies of neoliberal governmentality; it will also throw new light onto processes of commodification of educational programmes and pedagogies (Soto & Pérez-Milans, 2018); finally, it will add to the scarce critical literature on the IB programme (Bunnell, 2008) by examining its localisation in a specific school, Forum International School. We shall begin by providing a historicising account of the IB in order to understand when, why and how the programme appeared; what its initial pedagogical bases were and why; and in what ways and to what extent it has changed over the last 50 years.

THE INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

The International Baccalaureate (known as IB or IBDP) is a two-year internationally-recognised university-entrance diploma offered in over 140 countries. Created in 1968 by educators linked to the International School of Geneva, its global popularity has rocketed over the last two decades. There are currently over 3,104 schools in 147 countries offering the IBDP (as compared to 500 in 1994), according to data in Bunnell (2016). The universe of school types offering IB programmes has completely changed in recent decades, from the elite

international school profile of the early adopters (100%) to the growing presence of non-international state-funded schools of recent years (56% according to IBO, 2017a). In fact, attracting state schools has been a concerted strategy of the IBO to counter criticisms of elitism and facilitate expansion (Resnik, 2015). Some schools offer only IB programmes, while others combine the national curricula with IB education (as is the case of the institution analysed).

The IB emerged to fulfil a concrete practical need: facilitate home-country university access for expatriate children. Its geographical origins (in French-speaking Geneva), first director (Pettersson, a British educator) and pedagogical philosophy (with a strong Anglo-American bias, according to Tarc, 2009) defined the initial linguistic make-up of the programme, with French and English chosen as the only vehicular languages. Over time, further educational programmes for younger ages based on the same ideas and values as the IBDP were developed in what became the 'IB continuum' (Hallinger, Lee and Walker, 2011). Yet, the IBDP is still viewed as the 'flagship' (Tarc, 2009) of the non-for-profit IBO.¹

The IB philosophy and curriculum: Continuities and ruptures over 50 years

The IB has a highly adaptable curriculum that fits different educational contexts and institutional configurations. It presents itself as a progressive and forward-looking type of education against the background of traditional (national) schooling that is slow to innovate. It is sold as the ideal type of education for a globally-circulating and postnationally-oriented elite. This is no longer understood as the super rich (Ball & Nikkita, 2014; Weenink, 2005), but increasingly includes professional customer-families whose parenting style is defined by the strategically-planned nurturing of their children's capitals (see also Hidalgo & Fernández, this issue) to make sure that, as adults, they will be able to realise their full potential (Park, 2016).

As we mentioned, IB beginnings were defined by a concrete practical goal: creating an internationally-recognised university-entrance credential for expatriate school leavers. Yet, its promoters were also imbued with ideals of pedagogical and social reform. Their aim was not

to create a programme for the elites but for everyone, with the aim of bettering the world (yet, the elitist tension has always been there linked to the programme's elite origins and partially elitist philosophy –despite efforts of the organisation to present the IB as non-elitist). The IB first director was, as mentioned, A. Petterson, a British school teacher and headmaster, who combined a career in education with a career in the military. Petterson, the soul of the IB in its initial years and still a revered figure, was a strong defender of humanist-liberal types of education against what he saw as the over-specialisation of the British pre-university system. In line with Petterson's ideas, the IB aimed to educate 'the whole person' to create 'well-rounded individuals' that is, not only focus on students' academic performance, but also on the moral and aesthetic dimensions. The philosophy of the IB combined traditional humanist views of education for the elites (Williams, 1961), aimed at character-building, and cultivating taste and moral virtues, with progressive versions of humanism, centred on creativity, democratic citizenship and developing students' inner potential. As Hickox & Moore (1995) argue, these two trends do not encapsulate radically opposed views, but rather, they form two alternative poles of humanist-liberal education.

The IB curriculum tried to achieve 'breadth and depth' of education (Tarc, 2009). In other words, it shied away from a narrow and specialist/technical training, and gave philosophy, literature and the arts a significant place (this is 'breadth', but also a way of cultivating the aesthetic and the moral), while at the same time guaranteeing academic rigour and high standards (depth). Depth was also achieved through fostering conceptual learning (rather than facts and figures), transversal thinking and criticality. Pedagogically, the programme was defined by student-centred methodologies, experiential learning and a focus on learning how to think (later transformed to learning how to learn). Socially, inspired by the UNESCO policy discourse of intercultural understanding for world peace, the IB intended to advance ideas of internationality and cosmopolitanism in search for a better world. At the time, advancing these ideas was not straightforward, as many governments saw the IB (and

international education more generally) as treading on one of the state's key policy terrains, and even as challenging their sovereignty (Tarc, 2009).

Today, the IB curriculum still follows the founding principle of providing students with a 'general education'. All IB students take nine subjects throughout their two years of study. Most IB courses can be taken at two levels of expertise: standard or higher. Students need to take a minimum of three (and maximum of four) courses at higher level, which means that they receive more hours of instruction and cover additional topics. This allows them to specialise in a few subject areas (usually required by university entrance examinations), and at the same time, become acquainted with other disciplines that will expand their cultural capital. Out of the nine courses students must follow (of which they have a choice),² there are three *core* compulsory subjects, i.e., Theory of Knowledge, the Extended Essay and Creativity, Action and Service. These three courses encapsulate the transdisciplinary goal of the programme, and its search for a well-rounded individual who commits part of his/her time to creative, physical and social service activities.

The flexibility and adaptability of the IB curriculum have been indispensable for the global success of the programme, even though the current corporatization and branding strategy of the IBO (Tarc, 2009) require strong regulation and normativisation. In order to meet the company's growth plans, the DP curriculum has had to incorporate local realities into its globalist outlook. Making programmes available in more languages –such as Spanish (1983)– and adapting exam dates to match the southern hemisphere school calendar were strategic steps towards expansion in the Latin American and Asian markets. The determination to adapt to the local is also reflected in how course programmes can be tailored to meet the requirements of each national education system, and to the practicalities of implementation in each school (i.e., availability of resources, as we shall see later in the case of FIS). Courses allow for a certain degree of freedom for schools –even individual teachers– to decide on the actual content. One of the areas where this is more visible, history and geography aside, are the studies in language

and literature. Language A courses examine the literary production and linguistic features of the students' 'best language' (IBO, 2017b). The IB makes these available in 55 languages (Language A: literature) and 17 languages (Language A: language and literature), including a non-state language such as Catalan.

On the whole, the current structure of the IB curriculum and its general philosophy (both ideological and methodological) are fairly similar to the initial years. The rhetoric also continues to be one of tolerance and world peace (with the recent addition of the environmental discourse, as IB students are presented as 'guardians of the planet'). However, in the last decades there has been a key shift, which we argue aligns the programme with the neoliberal rationality. If previously, the emphasis was on the type of education the IB aimed to advance (sold as progressive despite its elite influences), now the focus is on the standard commodity the programme claims to produce: a type of student –imagined as a neoliberal protoworker (see also Urciuoli, this volume), as we will dissect later. Thus, the current IB mission statement devotes two (out of three) goals to describe the aspired characteristics of IB graduates (inquiring, knowledgeable, caring, respectful, tolerant, active, compassionate and life-long learners) while specifying nothing of the programme's pedagogical approach or view of education, except that is a 'challenging programme' with 'rigorous assessment' –see IBO, 2014a. In addition, we have observed the discursive (and practical) centrality of the learner profile, which we shall analyse later, a ubiquitous promotional document containing the 10 traits defining the standard IB person produced by the programme. For example, in the publication entitled *What is an IB education?*, the learner profile is presented on page 2, right after the mission statement just referred to. The neoliberal rationality of the learner profile and the ways in which students are made to conform to it will be discussed later. Let us now turn to a brief overview of the current appeal of the IB in Catalonia and Spain.

Evolution of the IB in Catalonia and Spain

In Spain, the growth of the IB in recent years has been significant. According to Resnik (2015), there were 49 schools offering the IB in 2009. In 2017, there were 108 (IB website). In Catalonia, where Forum International School is located, there are currently 21 schools offering the Diploma, four of which are state-funded. Although it was first offered in 1986, 66% of all Catalan schools implementing the DP have adopted it after 2010, due to the feelings of economic insecurity caused by the global economic crisis, which hit Spain in particularly acute ways (see also Hidalgo & Fernández, and Martín Rojo, this issue). Emigrating to more prosperous economies was seen by many as the only way of finding a job or maintaining class status, and obtaining an ‘international’ type of education, as the ideal way to self-capitalise. At the same time, this process constituted internationality as one of the main axes of distinction in the Catalan education system at present.

The 17 private schools that teach the IB in Catalonia are of different types: some are international/European schools; some others follow a foreign national curriculum (American or British); and some others are just private schools without an international profile. (All of the latter are religious.) Most schools offer the programme in Spanish. The IB taps on the discourse of excellence and innovation, and construes itself as fostering reflection and original thinking skills against what is regularly presented as a banking, teacher-centred, rote learning form of education (Barnés, 2016). Resnik (2015) attributes the success of the IB in Spain to its ‘international aura’, its focus on English (although, as we have mentioned, the programme is mostly taught in Spanish) and its promise of an easier access to the global work and educational marketplace. She also points out that the discredit of the system that began when compulsory education until age 16 was introduced (due to perceptions of lowering standards linked to the presence of demotivated and disruptive students) may have played a role. The arrival of large-scale economic migrants in the early 2000s (most of whom were schooled in the state system, see Martín Rojo, 2010), and the significant budget cuts on education during the economic crisis contributed to worsening the reputation of the system.

IB LOCALISATION: AN ETHNOGRAPHIC CASE STUDY

In this section, we ethnographically analyse the process of localisation of the IBDP in a school located in greater Barcelona: Forum International School (FIS).³ FIS is a rather large school (it hosts approx. 1500 students) that was founded in 1989. The school's fairly high fees, as well as its tradition of educating privileged families, engagement with excellence, extensive curricula, geographical location and outstanding facilities define an elite profile. FIS offers all educational stages, from nursery to baccalaureate and vocational training. In 2008, following school property changes, it became 'international'. This re-orientation and re-branding process (explained in more detail in Sunyol, 2017) entailed, among others, a change in language policy (Spanish and English became 'official' languages alongside Catalan, until then the school's preferred vehicular language), a reworking of the language programme (a non-European language such as Mandarin Chinese, which was already offered, gained curricular importance, see Codó & Sunyol, 2019, for further information), and a 'restructuring' of the teaching staff. In some cases, this meant downgrading long-standing coordinators and form teachers; in some others, replacing older Catalan-speaking teachers by younger ones who had studied abroad and were proficient in English. In 2012, a new international feature was added: the IBDP (shortened to IB in the school). The idea of the school was to try out the IB to later expand the offer to other IB programmes for earlier stages.

The introduction of the IB at FIS was part of the school's marketisation strategy; it was a process of external validation that legitimated the school's educational project, both academically, as the IB was presented as a marker of educational excellence, and in relation to its internationality. This was happening in two ways: first, through the adoption of an internationally-valued and internationally-oriented curriculum, and second, through the capacity to attract the children of transnationally mobile families. This was desperately needed by the school in order to create a 'truly international' atmosphere (constantly under scrutiny by

parents, students and even teachers, as some of them thought the school used the word ‘international’ as a mere branding strategy). In sum, the IB was and is a tool by the school to further capitalise itself, both symbolically and practically, in order to deepen its distinctive and elite profile in the competitive local school market (no other school offers the IB in this (upper)-middle class area) and increase enrolment rates (see Codó & Sunyol, 2019 for a more elaborate account of how FIS tried to distinguish itself from other schools, both private and public in the area).

Implementing the IB at FIS

We followed the IB programme closely from December 2016 until June 2017 (as part of a two-year broader sociolinguistic ethnography of FIS).⁴ The data we draw on for this chapter consists of ethnographic observations of classes and events (such as Christmas shows, Model United Nations conferences or language credential award ceremonies) carried out during this period. We also conducted individual and focus group interviews with 13 IB students, 4 educators (1 Spanish, 2 Catalan and 1 English language teachers), the IB coordinator and the school’s headmaster. As part of our ethnographic endeavour we have also examined textbooks, student diary entries, student Instagram posts, IB policy documents, the school’s website, and visual material from the school’s landscapes.

FIS students can choose among two IB itineraries, i.e. science, or individuals and societies. As the DP is offered as part of a double degree with the national baccalaureate (referred to as LOMCE in the school),⁵ and in order to maximise time and teaching resources, some subjects are shared. In practice, this means that some subject content is adapted or overlaps, and students do not have to fully complete both programmes. The IBO retains control over the curricular content, methodology and evaluation of the DP. It also offers training to teachers and administrative staff, and conducts periodical inspections. The school assigns the best teaching resources to the programme: the most committed and well-reputed teachers.

At FIS the IB is implemented in Spanish. However, the linguistic regime is flexibilised depending on the social composition of classes, and teacher preferences. When there are non-local students, classes are taught in Spanish. Otherwise, they are unofficially taught in Catalan because it is the habitual language of use among the student population at baccalaureate level (they were schooled before the internationalisation process began), although evaluation items (papers, exams, etc.) are always written in Spanish.

Doing a double degree comes at an extra cost for families (an additional 100€ monthly) and time investment for students. IB students spend 4 extra weekly hours at school, and have to manage a greater workload. Unlike their LOMCE schoolmates, their weekly schedule includes afternoon sessions in which they have lab sessions or extra classes for some of the subjects. This creates a general feeling of having very little or no free time, as we shall see later.

Despite that, in its five years of implementation the number of students has increased from 13 (2012) to 53 (2017). In 2017 almost 25% of all baccalaureate students took the double degree option. The school has increasingly hired teachers with previous IB experience –as both teachers and examiners– and with the changing demographics of IB students, that is, as there are more non-local students with transnationally mobile trajectories, the school has widened its linguistic offer. English A (as a first language) and Spanish B (as a second language) are now being offered.

Not all students can access the programme, and there are different access procedures for FIS and non-FIS students. FIS students are guided (or not) towards the IB at the age of 14-15 when they are on their third year of compulsory secondary education. Teachers recommend the IB to those students they think are motivated/curious to learn and mature enough (and in so doing make it difficult for parents not to follow the school's recommendation to enhance their children's potential). Selected students then enrol in a pre-IB course which is construed as a test to see if they are responsible and hard-working, by which they mean checking whether

they are self-sacrificing enough to be able to complete both IB and LOMCE. Those who are new to the school, and who mostly join FIS to do the IB, must have a personal interview with the IB coordinator. In general, they are students who are academically-oriented and value education. In addition to considering their academic file, the coordinator takes into account maturity, attitude and motivation. However, to our knowledge, no one has ever been rejected. The entry requirements and selection process are symbolic gatekeeping mechanisms to advance the idea of an elite community being created within the (elite) school, as we shall discuss in the following sections.

TRANSFORMING STUDENTS INTO IDEAL NEOLIBERAL SUBJECTS

The aim of this section is to, first, discuss IB rationality through the analysis of the, currently, most emblematic and widely-reproduced discursive artefact of the programme, the IB learner profile. This will be followed by the examination, through ethnographic data, of the disciplinary techniques put into practice by the school to (self-)transform IB students into desirable neoliberal subjects.

IB neoliberal rationality: The ‘IB learner profile’

In 2006 the IBO launched the ‘IB Learner Profile’. This was part of the organisation’s branding strategy and was accompanied by, among others, the development of a new corporate logo. The creation of the IB profile sought to enhance coherence across IB schools through standardisation (Bunnell, 2010). The learner profile is presented as the unpacking of the mission statement goal of creating ‘active, compassionate and lifelong learners’ (IBO, 2017a). It is one among a vast range of ‘communication (see promotional) materials’ (posters, flyers, booklets, etc.) containing the IB selling lines that the IBO offers to schools in order to ‘marketise themselves’ (IB website). The profile is, thus, clearly and primarily a school

marketisation instrument intended to sell the standard commodity produced by the IB: a specific type of person. Below are the key traits that define an ‘IB person’.

Extract 1

IB Learner Profile

The aim of all IB programmes is to develop internationally-minded people who, recognizing their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet, help to create a better and more peaceful world.

As IB learners we strive to be:

INQUIRERS

We nurture our curiosity, developing skills for inquiry and research. We know how to learn independently and with others. We learn with enthusiasm and sustain our love of learning throughout life.

KNOWLEDGEABLE

We develop and use conceptual understanding, exploring knowledge across a range of disciplines. We engage with issues and ideas that have local and global significance.

THINKERS

We use critical and creative thinking skills to analyse and take responsible action on complex problems. We exercise initiative in making reasoned, ethical decisions.

COMMUNICATORS

We express ourselves confidently and creatively in more than one language and in many ways. We collaborate effectively, listening carefully to the perspectives of other individuals and groups.

PRINCIPLED

We act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness and justice, and with respect for the dignity and rights of people everywhere. We take responsibility for our actions and their consequences.

OPEN-MINDED

We critically appreciate our own cultures and personal histories, as well as the values and traditions of others. We seek and evaluate a range of points of view, and we are willing to grow from the experience.

CARING

We show empathy, compassion and respect. We have a commitment to service, and we act to make a positive difference in the lives of others and in the world around us.

RISK-TAKERS

We approach uncertainty with forethought and determination; we work independently and cooperatively to explore new ideas and innovative strategies. We are resourceful and resilient in the face of challenges and change.

BALANCED

We understand the importance of balancing different aspects of our lives –intellectual, physical and emotional– to achieve well-being for ourselves and others. We recognize our interdependence with other people and with the world in which we live.

REFLECTIVE

We thoughtfully consider the world and our own ideas and experience. We work to understand our strengths and weaknesses in order to support our learning and personal development.

The IB learner profile represents 10 attributes valued by IB World Schools. We believe these attributes, and others like them, can help individuals become responsible members of local, national and global communities.

Extract taken from IB learner profile. Source: www.ibo.org.

As we can see, the profile consists of 10 features that ‘go beyond academic success’ (IB website) aimed to develop ‘internationally minded people who [...] help to create a better and

more peaceful world', as stated in the profile. How these attributes contribute to creating 'internationally minded people' is not apparent in the profile, which only contains passing mentions to 'issues and ideas that have local and global significance' and to appreciating 'the values and traditions of others'. In *The History of the IB* (IBO, 2017a) this international perspective is simplified to the IB offering 'multiple perspectives' instead of a 'national perspective', but the concept is not elaborated further either. This is in continuity with the traditional underspecification of how international-mindedness was to develop in the IB: as deriving from the general education/humanist perspective, rather than through the inclusion of specific content.

Although the profile is a *learner* profile (our italics), the relationship between adjusting to the profile and obtaining the diploma is left unspecified; this proves that the learner profile is not aimed at improving academic performance but at ensuring that students know what is expected of them: to rethink themselves along IB lines, assess their degree of fit (note that each attribute contains a number of assessable action-oriented descriptors), and self-transform (the use of 1st person plural 'we' instead of 3rd person 'they' is a rhetorical appeal to self-commitment). The profile is, thus, a technology of the self (Foucault, 1988), an explicit, normative exhortation to students to act upon themselves. The stated goal is 'to help individuals and groups become responsible members of local, national and global communities'. In fact, being a good IB student is equated with being a good citizen. In that sense, it is more than a technology of the self; it is a technology of citizenship (Rose, 1996), aimed to create a specific type of citizen: one which has a global orientation but is firmly grounded on the national. For Tarc (2009), this is related to IB's initial tensions with states (mentioned in an earlier section), which derived "in a version of internationalism that does not challenge the existing state-centered order" (p. 243). In that sense, it fits well with the (cultural) nationalist outlook of neoliberalism (Harvey, 2005).

But what is the nature of the profile 10 attributes? There are various visual representations of the profile, for the purposes of this chapter, we shall discuss one that we find particularly illuminating.



Picture 1. Visual representation of the IB learner profile in Spanish. Photo by Andrea Sunyol.⁶

Both the round shape and the jigsaw are recurrent tropes for visually displaying the profile. While the round shape reminds us of the globe (the IB aspirational spatial context) and of a holistic type of education, the jigsaw describes a person made up of separate (and separable) parts that, together, make a coherent whole. These separate parts, the IB aspirational personality traits, are, in fact, skills, defined by Urciuoli (2008, p. 212) as ‘a disparate set of practices, knowledge, and ways of acting and being’. Most of the aspirational student attributes in the profile (inquirers, risk-takers, open-minded, reflective) are in fact ‘soft skills’, that is, forms of sociality (see Urciuoli, this volume) or ‘aspects of personhood with exchange value’ (p. 211). As we shall see later, that is in fact how students are asked to self-imagine, i.e., as sets of (soft) skills that are distinct, measurable and subject to improvement. Interestingly, in the figure under analysis, binding all these traits-skills together, is the key soft skill of the contemporary workplace: communication (interestingly translated into Spanish as ‘*good communication*’). Without communication, the IB subject falls apart, ceases to exist. But the centrality of communication is not a mere representational issue; we observed how

communicating adequately and regularly was one of the defining criteria for students to be classified as 'IB' (or 'non-IB') at FIS. This will be further discussed in the following section.

So, what we have seen is that the humanist idea of educating the whole individual, defining the IB since its beginnings, has easily enabled a neoliberal co-optation of the programme. But the well-rounded IB individual is no longer one who develops aesthetically, physically and morally, but one which moulds him/herself to advance a series of traits/dispositions that are 'sellable' parts of themselves. As Urciuoli (this volume) also discusses, IB students are conceptualised as simultaneously costumers and products. In the next section we will discuss how the neoliberal rationality of the IB in general, and of the learner profile more specifically, is inculcated into students.

Transforming IB students

As we have said, the IB is not just an academic training scheme; it is a disciplinary apparatus aimed to transform not only students but the whole school community ('they [the human capacities described by the profile] imply a commitment to help all members of the school community...', reads the preamble to the learner profile contained on the IB website). In line with this objective, the IB learner profile was visually very salient at FIS. The school had it posted in full colours in the IB corridors and in every classroom; it was also on the opening page of every IB textbook. In fact, the 10 traits of the profile had transcended the programme's physical spaces: posters strategically hung all over the school, most visibly in key areas such as the reception hall, or there was a word cloud in the general dining room (see pictures below), for everyone to see. The profile clearly sought to transform, not just IB students and educators, but the whole school by constantly reminding each of its members of the goals that they should work at and work for.

04 Al: =all\
 05 M: =sitting/
 06 Al: =working [() of work/
 07 M: [wo::rking/ and then/ suddenly\ I get up and say\ (.) [does anybody see
 08 L: [what's with us/
 09 what's going on/ [I mean\
 10 L: [what's going on with us/ guys\
 11 Al: ((laughs))
 12 M: two years [earlier/
 13 L: [they were all sitting [in si::lence/
 14 M: [we wouldn't have ima::gined this/

Martí, in lines 7-9, is struck by the silent atmosphere in his class, and prompts his classmates to notice their out-of-ordinary and exemplary behaviour. Asked about what makes the IB different from the national baccalaureate, Martí chooses to tell us this circulating anecdote that has become a sort of shared, group-defining identity story. Martí narrates how despite the teacher's absence, the class of 16-year-olds were all sat, working silently and focusing on their tasks; they knew it was their responsibility to finish the work assigned to them. He points out how unthinkable this behaviour would have been only two years earlier, when they were still in compulsory secondary education. As they are co-telling the story, Laura and Martí summarise the morale of the story in two slightly but significantly different ways. Martí's 'what is going on' (*què està passant* in Catalan) becomes Laura's 'what is going on with **us**, guys?' (*què **ens** està passant, nois*). Laura's reformulation points to the sharp realisation that something within them has changed: they have become different people. The IB programme has turned them into self-responsible, hard-working and self-sacrificing individuals, but also individuals always ready to reflect on and discuss their transformation. Two years earlier they would have preferred to chat among themselves or rest, unaware of their conduct. They would have needed to be externally guided, supervised, policed. This is not necessary anymore; they have become reflexive self-governing individuals focused on being efficient (through good time management skills) in order to 'be prepared' for their future.

However, self-transformation is not easy; it requires effort. The word 'strive' in the profile indexes this. Becoming this new person is a fight to better oneself. But that effort is worth it; it is the key to becoming a 'developed' person. In the highly moralised discursive

regime of the IB, adjusting to the normative IB subject is equated with ‘developing as a human being’ and ‘developing positive traits within oneself’ (website testimonials). These key ideas were appropriated and retold by FIS students whenever we asked them what the IB did for them. ‘It helps you develop as a person’, said Alexia, another IB student. These students seem thus to imagine themselves not only as positively transformed but as having actually been ‘saved’ from remaining ‘underdeveloped’ by the IB (note that this echoes the the pastoral logic of governmentality, discussed by Foucault, oriented to the ‘salvation’ of individuals, Rabinow & Rose, 2003, p. 132). It is in and through the repetition of these key phrases that they embodied being good students and indexed their total alignment with the IB philosophy.

But who were the ‘underdeveloped’ students? If we recall Fraser’s words (2003, p. 168), neoliberal governmentality is segmented, that is, unlike fordist regulation, it does not ‘aspire to universality’ (see also Pujolar, this volume). Instead, it aims to discipline only those that are worth investing on. ‘Working largely through population profiling, it separates and tracks individuals for the sake of efficiency and risk prevention” (p.169). This is exactly what happened at FIS. ‘Ideal’ IB students, meaning motivated and hard-working ones, were advised to opt for the IB-LOMCE combination rather than just follow LOMCE. Martí, featured in Extract 1, was one of the chosen few. After selection, he joined the preparatory pre-IB group, but when it was time to finally decide (at age 16), he enrolled in the national programme. After a week, he requested to go back to the IB. He missed his friends from the previous year, but allegedly, he was also feeling out of place, as he longed for the ‘better’ working atmosphere of the IB and its charismatic teachers. Going back to the LOMCE programme had somehow been ‘a step backward’ that he wanted to undo. So, what we are trying to say with Martí’s example is that at FIS the implementation of the IB did not simply mean a broadening of the educational offer; it meant altering the socio-discursive order of the school. It became a tool for streamlining students (and teachers), and creating and naturalising hierarchies based on programme choice.

A great deal of discursive effort was put into positivising not only the IB programme, but basically, IB students, while negativising their LOMCE counterparts to the point of *othering* them. Indeed, the latter were systematically stereotyped as lazy, weak, unruly and non-motivated (and imagined to remain as such), whereas the former were hard-working, well-behaved, norm-abiding and extremely motivated (and constantly working at self-betterment). In such a discursive regime, IB students could not possibly cease to improve themselves to (IB) perfection. To act otherwise would have turned them into students unfitting for the programme, that is, non-IB. IB was, in fact, regularly employed as an identity label. Students, teachers but also comments or jokes could be *very* IB, IB, or simply not IB. Marta (one of our focal student participants) and her classmates labelled conversation topics as ‘very IB’ when they required them to think and inquire, or to elaborate complex arguments, linking ‘being IB’ to intellectual challenge. However, being in the IB programme did not necessarily grant IB status. In one of the interviews, Marta explained how she did not like her language A teacher because ‘he is not IB enough’. His teaching style resembled that of the national baccalaureate. Lessons were teacher-centered and based on memorising concepts, and he was always late for class. He was not identified as the self-bettering, self-sacrificed, creative and up-to-date worker that the IB coordinator defines as ‘the prototypical IB teacher’.

This moralised dichotomy (IB *vs* non-IB) was precisely one of the key disciplinary techniques employed by the IB teachers, who, not surprisingly, systematically referred to the ways of behaving they were intent on eradicating as ‘non-IB’. This placed IB students under constant (self-) surveillance. What were these key IB traits? We shall focus on the three student dispositions that we ethnographically identified as distinguishing IB from non-IB students, and which to us, encapsulate IB rationality, as it was implemented at FIS: communication; open-mindedness; and respect and compassion.

Communicating ‘adequately’ was central to IB life. This was particularly salient to us (and the students) because such a strong emphasis on oral communication is unusual in

Catalan/Spanish schooling. When students contributed to lessons (which they were always encouraged to do), teachers paid special attention to form; content corrections were rare. Students were expected to structure their contributions well –contextualise their ideas and provide coherent arguments– and employ precise vocabulary and a formal register. One Language A exercise, for example, consisted in the discussion of a literary work. One student presented on the piece, and the class engaged in a critical evaluation of it. In their contributions, students were asked to refer to excerpts, make quotations explicit, polish their vocabulary and provide a logical reasoning for their thoughts. What mattered seemed to be inculcating in students the value of effective/adequate communication, as a central IB soft skill, as we have seen, but also a distinctive capital in the local marketplace. Martí, one of the students, mentioned ‘learning how to talk’ as one of the advantages of following the IB. Interestingly enough, ‘appropriate’ communication skills were not associated with a given language. In fact, FIS students made a point of emphasizing that the IB was not taught in English, an assumption that, allegedly, many of them had had to counter when talking to friends and relatives about the IB. Although the reasons why the IB at FIS was taught in Spanish were pragmatic and economic, that is to ensure higher marks for students and increase enrolment rates, it is true that the IB language policy at FIS somewhat challenged the hegemonic linking of innovative, quality education and English so prevalent in the Catalan/Spanish public discourse (see also Hidalgo & Fernández, this volume). Yet, at the same time, it reinforced the idea that modern, internationally-minded education was incompatible with Catalan, the local minority language in which the national baccalaureate was taught.

Apart from their communicative abilities, IB students were regularly flagged as being open-minded. This meant nurturing superficial cosmopolitan dispositions à la Hannerz (1996), that is, appreciating and being positively pre-disposed towards everything foreign. Alexia, one IB student, summarised the international distinctiveness of the programme as ‘teaching you about the good things that there’re abroad’.⁸ Open-mindedness meant developing and

displaying a genuine interest in the world. In one of the classes we observed, Judit, the English teacher, urged students ‘not be oblivious to what is happening in the world anymore (class observations, 9/12/2016.)’. ‘As IB students you have no excuse,’ she continued. ‘You have to know what’s happening, be smart.’ Being smart meant, to Judit, ‘making intelligent decisions, based on facts, things that you know, things that you read, and then making your own choices,’ as, for example, when casting their votes. In order to become engaged adult citizens, IB students were expected to read the news, travel, and learn about everything, ‘history, geography, politics, religion and gastronomy,’ in Judit’s words. As IB students, they could not afford to act otherwise.

Finally, the third attribute (by which we mean one of three, not ranked third) that was foregrounded was respect. Respect was mostly (though not completely) articulated around good manners: teachers insisted that IB students should say please and thank you (as one trilingual poster hanging on the walls had it), and be poised and well-behaved with their teachers, classmates and parents. In the words of Pere, the Catalan language teacher, ‘they [IB students] don’t make you tense or nervous [...] I even rest when I teach them’. Yet, there was more to ‘respect’ than good manners. In the poster we just mentioned, students were also expected to apologise to one another –if necessary- (also a form of regulation of communicative conduct) and be happy (*somos felices*, in Spanish); in sum, create a positive and ‘caring’ atmosphere (recall that ‘caring’ is one of the IB learner profile attributes). Their normative relationship was referred to in the same poster as that of ‘one big family’. As part of a ‘family’, we observed how students regularly engaged in a great deal of affective labour with everyone, including the researchers. They explicitly showed concern for others’ well-being and were always supportive and understanding towards one another (also towards their teachers, as the IB coordinator made a point of emphasising in the interview). Given the amount of extra work the DP meant and how stressful the situation was for some, students regularly organised informal group therapy sessions in which they discussed their worries and anxieties, and

comforted their tearful classmates by expressing their shared suffering. These compassionate selves echo the normative moral subjects identified by Muehlebach (2013) in neoliberal Italy.

She claims that,

The science of *homo oeconomicus* has begun to include the science of *homo relationalis*: of humans who relate to one another not through self-interest but through dispositions –moral styles- that are, to return to Putnam et al. based on trust and reciprocity. It is not just material wealth but vibrant social relationships and even happiness (Wali 2012) that are now considered key to the wealth of nations. The post-Washington consensus, although firmly wedded to methodological individualism and rational choice, nevertheless exhibits a tendency that attempts to capture and harness the powers of the relational and the interpersonal. (p. 461, italics in the original).

This moral neoliberal (compassionate and loving) is, according to Muehlebach, not a way of compensating for the excesses of neoliberalism or challenging neoliberalism’s structural features, but a changing type (and ethics) of neoliberalism, what she calls “benign” third way neoliberalisms’ (p. 460). This ‘warmer’ version of neoliberalism or ‘Catholicized neoliberalism’ (as opposed to ‘cold’ Lutheran neoliberalism based solely on profit and market logics), is a more robust version of neoliberalism because it ‘weds markets to a specific moral form’ (p. 456) and produces ‘the disembedded individual and the embedded person at once’ (p. 461). This combination of market and morals, calculation and care, is exactly the kind of neoliberal we saw being created at FIS. Let us now turn to one of the key spaces through which IB neoliberal governmentality was enforced, i.e. the Creativity, Action and Service course.

The Creativity, Action and Service subject: Developing self-expertise to become balanced individuals

Creativity, Action and Service (CAS) is one of the singularities of the IBDP. It is one of the three core subjects that all students must take. The IBO refers to CAS as the course more clearly cultivating IB learner profile attributes, as being ‘at the heart of the DP’ (IBO, 2015); FIS students and educators systematically employed CAS to illustrate *how* the DP was different. CAS encapsulated the idea that the IB was a programme of ‘general education’ aimed to educate ‘whole individuals’.

The course is structured in three strands: *Creativity, Action* and *Service*. For two years, students must undertake weekly or one-off activities related to at least one of these three areas, and write a final reflection paper. Engaging in these activities should contribute to the creation of a well-rounded individual, one who can ‘think out of the box,’ according to Judit, the English teacher.

The expected learning outcomes of CAS (IBO, 2015) reflect the skillified personhoods we discussed in relation to the profile and focus exclusively on students’ personal gains. They include ‘identify own strengths and develop areas for growth’, ‘demonstrate that challenges have been undertaken, developing new skills in the process’, ‘show perseverance and commitment’ and ‘recognize and consider the ethics of choices and actions’. In sum, reflexivity, perseverance and self-expertise for self-betterment. This is what CAS aims at. Let us now turn to the examination of how this specifically happens, in what directions CAS disciplines students, and what its effects are.

The case of Alexia, an IB student, is particularly illuminating. The first semester in the IB was chaos for Alexia. She could not manage to combine studying with ballet and the intensive rehearsals for the Christmas show that she starred (both activities part of CAS). She used to get home at 10pm, and still had her homework to do. She felt stressed out and under a lot of pressure. In the second semester, she pulled herself together and decided to bring change to her life. From this moment on, even if she did not have specific tasks due the following day, she habituated herself to advance work every afternoon to avoid it snowballing. She learned how to manage time adequately to be able to cope with IB work pressure, which in fact meant disciplining herself to work all the time. In fact, time management skills have become one of the IBO newly incorporated selling points, as they prepare DP students for ‘further education and the working world’ (IBO, 2014b). What seems clear from this story is that CAS led Alexia to personal growth: she self-reflected, got to know herself better, and took action to improve her time management skills. In sum, she transformed herself through self-discipline.

Claudia, in turn, praised the ‘obligation’ she had to do sport under CAS because it made her ‘unwind’ and ‘feel happier’. ‘If it weren’t for action I wouldn’t do sport because we have so many things to do but since it’s compulsory it’s actually good that they oblige you because you need to do sport,’ she stated in the interview. What we see is a student who has normalised (academic) productivity and hard work, but who has to continue self-sacrificing to adjust other parts of herself to become the *balanced* IB student of the profile, one for whom well-being is (another) ‘obligation’ to be internalised (Del Percio and Flubacher, 2017). This echoes contemporary corporate interest in enhancing employees’ well-being (through, for example, coaching sessions or courses on mindfulness) to make them more productive. The balanced individual that was the ideal of the humanist-liberal education of the early days has become a product attractive to the corporate world, and a self-branding strategy for IB graduates in the labour market. As balanced individuals, Claudia, like Alexia in the previous vignette, will make better, i.e. more productive, workers. Marta, another IB student, actually drew on this self-branding discourse when she stated that the IB made them more ‘complete’ because ‘hobbies count’ and that is ‘something valued when applying for higher education abroad (unlike in Spain)’. She conceptualised CAS as a tool for converting hobbies and pastimes into quantifiable –and certifiable– assets, and her becoming self as more attractive and sellable thanks to CAS.

When discussing CAS, most students foregrounded the *Service* strand, because it encouraged them to step out of their ‘bubble’ and see harsher realities (social diners, nursing homes, etc.). Despite a seeming concern with social inequality, the way students talked about *Service* revealed that they conceptualised it as a tool for self-improvement. *Service* helped them be more adaptable in heterogeneous social spaces. Alfred, one of the students, described the benefits of *Service* as ‘enabling me to be creative and contribute things to people’. Rather than a focus on the community, what we see is a focus on himself. Through *Service*, Alfred was developing his creativity and his ability to identify how *he* could become an asset for others.

In broader social terms, CAS also worked to normalise a neoliberal perspective on social welfare, which rather than address the causes of social injustice, commodified volunteer work. In fact, in line with observations by Windle and Stratton (2013), we see CAS as yet another strategy of marketisation and legitimisation by IB schools. The *Service* in CAS enables IB schools to appear as more ‘socially-minded’ than the rest, something certain middle-class families may be on the lookout for, to counter what for some may be an excessive emphasis on success, self-interest and competition in elite schooling. But this was delusional since, as we have seen, *Service* was conceptualised as yet another tool for neoliberal self-governance.

Resisting IB transformation (or maybe not?)

Despite the multiple micro-techniques of power (Foucault, 1977) put into place to transform the IB elite, some students reported resisting these forms of subjection (Foucault, 1982). In the extract below, from the focus group discussion, Martí summarises his more laid-back attitude as ‘not fighting like the rest’ (line 07), his word choice underscoring the extent to which the IB was constructed as a race to become the most self-sacrificing, and thus, the ‘best’ IB person. Not studying ‘a little bit more’ to reach perfection –a 10– is ‘his problem’ (line 04).

Extract 3

Participants: M (Martí), Al (Alexia), R (Roger), I (Irene), students; An (Andrea), researcher.

- 01 M: =er::/ (.) you can study::/ just enough/ to pass::/ and you can get a good gra:de\
 02 if on top of that you have/ (.) the capacity\ (.) but\ then if you study just enough\
 03 and a little bit more::/ in order to\ for example\ if you have an eight\ (.) to reach a
 04 ten::/ I::\ I don't do this\ [and I think this is my problem\
 05 Al: [(laughs))
 06 An: =okay\
 07 M: =I don't::\ I don't fight li:ke/ like the rest\
 08 R: there's people::/ also\ who::/ (.) me for example: / (.) well\ and::/ (.) that is\ who/
 09 devote a lot of time to the IB:: but::\ we also have a life outside::\ and::/ (.) we
 10 also like to enjoy life\
 11 M: =I mean\ it's not/ [we are not saying/ that people who devote a lot of time to it\
 12 An: [I see::
 13 do not have a life::/ (.) but::\ we::/ (.) it seems like like:/
 14 I: =but it depends of the day:/
 15 M: =yes::\ of course::/ we [are not\ we are not as well organised\ probably\
 17 R: [well\
 18 I: =no::\
 19 M: =because we could organise ourselves better\ and have::/ both things::/
 20 R: =but in my case for example::/
 21 M: =but::\ we prefer to waste our time\

Martí and Roger feel the need to justify their non-fighting attitude, and though initially they say it is because they also want to ‘have a life’ (line 09), they end up converging to the IB discourse that it all boils down to having good time management skills. They have not undergone Alexia’s transformation to make both compatible; they prefer to ‘waste their time’ (line 21). Wasting their time, in Martí’s case, means, as he clarifies later, being on the computer, on his phone or watching TV. He then goes on to explain that these activities are a waste of time because ‘they do not count’. What we clearly see is how, despite Martí’s confessed partial misalignment with IB values, he has also interiorised the commodifying and calculative neoliberal logic of the programme institutionalised by CAS. In fact, afterwards, he retraces his words and proudly tells his classmates how his English grades have improved because he watches series and films in English; he has turned his hobby into educational capital. So, even though he is resisting IB governmentality by refusing to work to the limit, he is aware that he is swimming against the current, and that sooner than later he will ‘give in’ (a bit later in the interview he uses the adverbial ‘yet’ to indicate that this is just a matter of time). The IB logic has permeated the whole of these students’ lives. Ultimately, this extract is an exercise in self-reflexivity in which both Martí and Roger analyse their behaviour and talk about it as *experts*, identifying their *weaknesses* and how they should ‘strengthen themselves in order to survive competition’ (Martín Rojo, 2018, p. 550).

CONCLUSIONS

Just as neoliberalism is constantly reinventing itself (Anderson, 2016), so is the IB programme. What was initially a curriculum designed for and aimed to attract a specific population (i.e. the children of expatriate families) has, over time, become a much-desired educational credential for post-nationally-oriented national elites (Resnik, 2012a). In a context where consumption practices –including educational ones– have become increasingly status-oriented, the IB is regarded as a ‘positional good’ (Bunnell, 2010, p. 167) and IB credentials as convertible into

the types of economic and cultural capital that grant students better positions in their never-ending race for brilliant futures.

The selling line of the IB (and what most families look for) is for IB students to receive the type of training that will ease their circulation in global spaces, be they educational or work spaces. This is allegedly facilitated both practically / bureaucratically, through IBO agreements with universities and national education systems that have centralised regulations for university access, and educationally, through the inculcation of desirable ways of learning, and of doing being (good) students. Yet, as we have seen, IB governance goes far beyond that. The IB humanist-liberal goal of educating the ‘whole person’ (and not just students’ intellects) has been the ideal breeding ground for the gradual metamorphosing of the programme into a neoliberal technology of citizenship aimed at subjectifying students to embody neoliberal selves. Essentially, what this boils down to is the creation of citizen-workers always anxious to outperform in all aspects, to become not just ‘A students’ but ‘A people’, brilliant academically but also excellent self-carers and disciplined affective selves. The ultimate goal, as we have seen, is for them to become agents of (neoliberal) change, people who can transform places into positive environments in which everybody can feel happy to work more and better, that is, to enhance efficiency and productivity. These individuals are inculcated the values and dispositions of the corporate world; they are encouraged to imagine themselves as separable pieces, as sets of mainly soft skills, which they should ‘strive’ to improve to perfection, no matter what it takes. The IB helps you to ‘know your limits’, as students repeated at FIS. Working ‘to the limit’ was actually what was expected of them; that is why it was important to know one’s limits. But also because out of self-knowledge came strategies for self-betterment and for pushing oneself further by taking a step beyond (*‘anar més enllà’*, in Catalan), a phrase students employed over and over again to express the distinctive identity trait of the IB ‘elite’ (see also Martín Rojo, this volume).

If we go back to Fraser (2003), we can see how in contemporary forms of social regulation, there is no clearly identifiable ‘governing’ source; governmentality agents, such as the IB, are networked, ‘flexible’, ‘dispersed’ and ‘multi-levelled’ (p. 167). In that sense, globalised governmentality is de-statised and profoundly marketised. In fact, we have discussed how the IBO formally sets out to cooperate with national school systems to actually enter into competition with them for students, resources, power and influence. If, previously, schooling was one of the state’s key apparatuses for moulding the (national) social body, currently, this role is taken over by different non-state actors, ranging from private and non-profit organisations, like IBO, to contemporary technological forms of governance of the self, such as that exerted by algorithms (Just & Latzer, 2017). Finally, we have seen how globalised governmentality increasingly works through hierarchisation and elitisation, that is, through taking care of and perfecting the ‘transformable’ few and dismissing (and problematizing) those that refuse to enter the race.

Communication and discourse are fundamental instruments in effecting all of the above. As a competitive 21st century organisation, the IBO is not only a powerful discursive machine; it is a discursive regime. The IBO aims to ‘take over’, erase, any previous discourse existing in the school. The IB promises a new beginning, a way for schools (as well as for students) to reinvent themselves. The learner profile, with its 10 attributes, is one of the IB’s communication totems; as we have seen, it is a key instrument for subjectifying students into the logics of the standardisation of the self and in the specific directions desired and made desirable by the corporate neoliberal regime. We have seen that transforming oneself entails not only communicating adequately with others, but also telling oneself differently. The IB speaking subject is, above all, a reflective self-expert ready to discuss himself/herself with others (see also Martín Rojo, this volume).

Finally, the IB language policy articulates the logic of standardisation with the logic of expansion and pragmatism that is at the core of the IB enterprise. While students’ A (best)

languages (including Catalan) are made part of the programme and, if different from French, English or Spanish, enable students to obtain a bilingual mention on their diploma, only one of the three languages mentioned above can officially be medium of instruction (and assessment) in the rest of the subjects. The reason is standardisation of materials, teacher support and assessment. This language policy has proven most successful, because it allows the IBO to handle the tension between a transportable type of education, and situated communicative needs and contexts of learning. At the same time, this language policy naturalises linguistic hierarchies (the inclusion of A languages is limited to one course), and links major European languages to educational quality and modernity. However, our ethnography revealed that the picture was more complex. Despite its global reach, the choice of Spanish in the school investigated (and in many others in Catalonia and Spain) was in tension with the language indexicalities of the word *international* in contemporary Catalonia/Spain, i.e. English-speaking. For this reason, it needed intensive justification, as it questioned the value of the programme in the local educational marketplace. However, the ‘aura’ of the term international, in Resnisk’s words (2015), still allured many families, anxious for their children to further self-capitalise by adding (international) ‘extras’ to the official curriculum (another contemporary example is the double French-Spanish baccalaureate, *batxibac*, increasingly popular among Catalan middle-class families). But unlike *batxibac*, the IB at FIS was not a programme of linguistic training (English language credentials had to be obtained separately). This brought its (trans)formative goals into sharper focus: the fabrication of an elite of globally-minded, outward-looking protoworkers ready for the transnational corporate market.

Transcription conventions

PART: participant name	- self interruption
(.) short pause (0.5 seconds)	= continuation of utterance after overlapping
(:) long pause (0.5 – 1.5 seconds)	\ falling intonation
() incomprehensible fragment	/ rising intonation

AA loud talking

(()) slowly

a:: lengthening of vowel or consonant sound

[] turn overlapping with similarly marked turn

¹ According to the IBO webpage, the fees IBO charges schools are meant to cover its functioning expenses.

² The rest are grouped under 6 areas of knowledge: studies in language and literature, language acquisition, individuals and societies, sciences, mathematics and the arts. Students must choose at least one course from all areas (except arts) and decide which courses to study at standard level of expertise and which ones at higher level.

³ All names appearing in this chapter are pseudonyms to protect the anonymity of informants and of the institution.

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⁵ LOMCE is an acronym which stands for Ley orgánica para mejora de la calidad educativa (Organic Law for the Improvement of Educational Quality), which is the legal framework regulating the current version of the Spanish baccalaureate. It was passed in 2013 under conservative PP rule (not without controversy and major opposition from the educational community).

⁶ An English version of this image can be found, among others, on www.nordagliaeducation.com.

⁷ All the extracts presented in this chapter were originally in Catalan and have been translated into English by the authors for reasons of space.

⁸ In fact, Resnik (2012a) argues that the current IB discourse in relation to (multi)cultural issues has moved away from the ‘civic multiculturalism’ of the second half of the 20th century, aiming for peace and reconciliation after WWII and based on the respect of difference, to become what she calls ‘corporate multiculturalism’, consisting in the commodification of culture to increase productivity and competitiveness.

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