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International Baccalaureate schools as islands of educational resistance. A case study of Poland.

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ABSTRACT

This study discusses International Baccalaureate schools in Poland from the perspective of their educational function to serve as a resistance to counterbalance trends toward nationalisation in the Polish educational landscape. To address this aim, a review of the relevant legislation has been carried out, accompanied by interviews with teachers and students from 9 IB schools in Poland. Results show that during the 30-year history of IB in Poland, international schools seem to have become places where international education is not opposed to its national education programme, however, they do demonstrate their potential to break away from intra-national education in this country. IB programmes have come to represent a counter-revolutionary force that supports grassroots initiatives in schools. International schools potentially remain safe from any authoritarian interference from the government and become ‘islands of educational resistance’ against intra-national tendencies in education.

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Introduction

International schools share educational standards and practices to create and sustain global learning communities and can be ‘cosmopolitan enclaves’ that embrace ideals of cultural diversity and global mobility (Rey and Bolay 2020). Although International Baccalaureate World Schools (IBWS) operate globally, they do so within national educational systems and thus may be subject to greater or lesser pressure from the national educational policies currently in play. In the Polish context of IBWS, features of ‘cosmopolitan nationalism’ are visible – the concept applied to international schooling by Wright, Ma, and Auld (2021), first developed by Maxwell et al. (2020). The authors recognise with ‘cosmopolitan nationalism’ how global education trends are interpreted and taken up in national-local contexts where aspects of nationalism are present. By appreciating the interconnections of cosmopolitan forces and nationalistic tendencies, this study extends the Wright, Ma, and Auld (2021) concept of ‘cosmopolitan nationalism’ with a particular focus on how IB education in Poland supports global trends in international education, and at the same time, how global tendencies in education influence IB schools in Poland. These dual pressures within ‘cosmopolitan nationalism’ create the intended function of IB education in responding to global or national concerns and priorities. In this understanding, IBWS in Poland, from the perspective of their educational function, serve as a resistance to nationalisation tendencies in the Polish educational landscape of IB schools.

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Poland displays several features that make this country relevant to the special issue of the International Baccalaureate movement in a time of global crisis. Firstly, focusing on the limits and possibilities of International Baccalaureate (IB) programmes in a global context requires more research and knowledge about how educational policies come to life in the prevailing educational situation, particularly in Central and Eastern Europe where there is a tendency for ‘democratic backsliding’ (Cianetti, Dawson, and Hanley 2018). Over the past decade, a scholarly consensus has emerged that democracy in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) is deteriorating (Kochenov 2008; Sedelmeier 2014), with visible illiberal nationalism on the rise (Cianetti, Dawson, and Hanley 2018). Political leaders with illiberal programmes have entered government not only in Bulgaria, Slovakia, The Czech Republic, Hungary, and Serbia but also in Poland (Kelemen 2017; Mounk 2018). Keefer (2005) claims that education, together with other policy dimensions, is being particularly influenced by the governance of young democracies, as is the case in Poland. Secondly, studies on IB in Poland present a promising picture of IB as an alternative to the national programme (Leek 2020a) that affords a chance to promote leadership among teachers and in a more general sense, in the global context of education, advocates promotion of leadership in teacher pre-training within the national teacher training system (Leek 2020b).

The optimistic picture of democratisation in East-Central Europe and IB education is changing, and there is now a broad consensus that the region is experiencing serious democratic difficulties. There is also widespread agreement that these difficulties go beyond problems of poor democratic quality usually understood as legacies of communist or pre-communist authoritarianism, or the side-effects of transition politics (Cianetti, Dawson, and Hanley 2018). After an initial rapid transition towards democracy in the 1990s, East-Central Europe has shown worrying signs of de-consolidation and has in recent years, even been diagnosed as being on the edge of an authoritarian backlash (Bochsler and Juon 2020).

By following the scholarship that supports the sociocultural theory of education, where researchers are critically reconceptualizing the relationship between government, society, and individuals as dynamic and nonlinear (Shore and Wright 1997), this study aims to look at the processes operating in IB schools in Poland with particular emphasis on educational resistance to the education policy. This study follows Sutton and Levinson’s (2000) view on educational policy as ‘a complex social practice, [and] an ongoing process of normative cultural production constituted by diverse actors across social and institutional contexts’ (p.1). This theoretical approach emphasises the role that human agency, identities, values, beliefs, and lived experiences play in policy implementation processes (Sutton and Levinson 2000). Thus, individuals (in this study – teachers) act as active agents of educational change in incorporating policies into educational practice but with a reflective approach to these policies that has been moulded by their own unique backgrounds, motivations, and interests.

Educational resistance and indoctrination

In this paper, educational resistance is being considered in the understanding of Bojesen (2021) as a fact of dissonant educational experience that exceeds instructional educational imposition. According to Lyotard (1991), resistance is not inaction but a form of remembrance undedicated to remembering anything specifically identifiable or classifiable. It is more of a ‘technique’ and a ‘generativity’, a ‘set-up’ that allows thought to go beyond what has already been learned (Bojesen 2021, 3) when the opportunity for critical thinking occurs, for example, in the form of experience. The underlying reason for resistance is the awareness of factors or circumstances that raise resistance, such as barriers that stop progress. Resistance is being evoked principally by a negative situation, and approaches to resistance emphasise that resistance functions as a useful mechanism of acting, and not a reaction that should be prevented (Furst and Cable 2008). In this understanding, resistance is ‘intentional, and hence conscious, acts of defiance or opposition by a subordinate individual or group of individuals against a superior individual or set of individuals’ (Seymour 2006, 305). In

Foucault (1978, 3) language '[W]here there is power, there is resistance', with other words, as Seymour translates resistance, 'members of subordinate groups had to be given the capacity to challenge – that is, resist – the power of dominant groups' (Seymour 2006, 303).

Resistance in educational settings is usually considered in the context of change. In education, change is a process that occurs in educational institutions like schools, which is usually implemented by teachers (Furst and Cable 2008). In the face of changes, teachers do not generally have a choice and are forced to implement changes that derive from the policy. In the sense developed in this paper, educational resistance is being considered in terms of teachers resisting indoctrination. Indoctrination in the common sense of the word means to imbue with a usually partisan or sectarian opinion, point of view, or principle (Webster Dictionary). Indoctrination in the educational sciences can be perceived from two perspectives. The first meaning is of a pedagogical nature and comes from the Latin word *docere* [in English: to teach] without any pejorative or ideological connotation. In this understanding, in teaching there is the incorporated transmission of a norm, knowledge, or traditions in society. The second meaning of indoctrination refers to suppression, propaganda, and control. In the field of psychology, the closest term is manipulation or brainwashing (Ficeac 1996). In this understanding, manipulation is represented in the way that culture influences individuals or groups. The imposition of social values is used as an example of indoctrination or manipulation when referring to school curricula (Ficeac 1996).

Resistance to indoctrination can be also considered to be an activity that implicitly or explicitly questions educational impositions. In this sense, resistance to indoctrination is normative in the same way as Medina's (2013) epistemology of resistance, for whom,

[resistance] can feel more like being pulled in different directions from the inside, like being torn from within. Experiencing resistance can often be like feeling a rupture that one does not know what to do with (at least initially), like feeling perplexed. (Medina 2013, 16)

Resistance to indoctrination assumes Lyotard's notion of anamnestic resistance (Lyotard 1991, 57) which focuses on the recollection of specific experiences which effectively refer to externally imposed habit formation (Bojesen 2021). Bojesen (2021) translates anamnestic resistance in the context of education as 'a form of (educational) resistance to imposed education. Imposed education is being determined here as the subject formation of individuals in terms of their habit formations and memorisations' (3). Anamnesis as Bojesen (2021) claims resists the imposition of restrictive and preventative habit formation, as well as memorisation as a means of imposing knowledge limitation and hierarchical valuation. Such impositions, breachings and scannings are not only facilitated by educational institutions but also by cultural means such as the media, the market and also local, national or international groups of individuals or social organisations and institutions.

National education in Poland – the context for international schools

After regaining independence in 1918, the government engaged in the development of the public educational system. During the interwar years from 1918 to 1939, Poland's educational development followed trends in the education systems of Western countries, which was visible in its openness to international ideas of Western Europe and the United States (i.e. progressivism in education) and openness to criticism of the state's national policy (Wołoszyn 1998). In the times of the 'Polish People's Republic' (1945–1989), the post-war government's education was focused on building a new Polish society according to the soviet pattern. The socio-political changes at that time were imposed by the Soviets and they acquiesced to the demands of the communist authorities (Sliwerski 2020). Sliwerski (2020) claims that in Poland, both in the years 1945–1990, and even after 1990, contrary to the assurances of the idea of Solidarity, there was no resistance to the centralist management of education. Resistance in the context of a post-communist country is an attempt to wake up as a result of realising the limits of violating professional teaching dignity.

Sliwerski (2020) writes that the era of communism and socialism in Poland from 1945 to 1990, strengthened the central control of education. However, after 1990, the centralist management of education was maintained, and thus the subordination of education to the interests of ruling parties, and this situation has persisted until now, which means that the Polish school has been permanently stuck in a state of denial of constructivism in education since 1945. As a result, teachers' and students' autonomy is being suppressed and all kinds of leadership violated. Since 1945, permanently, as Sliwerski (2020) claims, the management of education has been abusing the bottom-up actions of teachers, students and their parents. This supports social passivity, limits freedom and is not conducive to resistance in education.

Following the political changes in the 1990s, teaching aims and content within national curricula were key reference points in the public debate over how Polish education should be redefined (Sliwerski 2012). At the same time, for the first time ever in Polish history, international programmes were introduced into the national educational system. Historically, the DP worldwide was offered initially by 'traditional' international schools that serve the children of mobile expatriates (Doherty 2009). This was never the case in Poland mainly because, in the 1970s and 1980s, Poland was behind the so-called Iron Curtain and due to the ideological aims of a socialist country, this region was not a popular destination for 'mobile expatriates' and in a more general sense, the international business community. In addition, socialists dismissed all international (western) influences not only on the economy but in all areas of social life like education. Similar to other countries behind the Iron Curtain, before 1990, there were no international schools operating in East Europe (Leek 2020a). With the fall of the Iron Curtain, the picture of international education in the Polish educational system changed completely. The first international schools introduced in Poland were the International Baccalaureate schools developed after the socio-political changes of the 1990s. In expanding education markets, the most significant growth in the IB context was noticed with the appearance of new types of 'non-traditional' international schools providing international programmes for affluent local families seeking a competitive edge for their children (Bunnell, Fertig, and James 2016). After opening the first IB schools in Poland, the development of international education continued to follow this global trend offering IB programmes to children from affluent families (Bunnell, Fertig, and James 2016; Doherty 2009). In other words, IB education was offered to a growing number of Polish students that were opting out of mainstream schools to take the DP in 'traditional' international schools and 'non-traditional' international schools or international divisions of higher-tier public schools that primarily serve local populations (Bunnell, Fertig, and James 2016; Hayden 2011). This trend was supported by the Ministry of Education which created conditions like financial support for IB 'branches' in public schools or incorporating amendments in the Education System Act (2009), where IB programmes have been listed next to the other programmes of foreign educational institutions (i.e. European Baccalaureate) that were officially acknowledged by the government as an educational alternative in Poland, co-existing alongside the national programme (Leek 2020a).

Examination of the numbers of IB schools reveals a markedly steady development in international education since 1993 when the first IB schools started operating in Poland. Up to the year 2005, 13 IB schools had been registered, 2007–32 schools, 2010–50 schools, 2014–55. In the year 2021, there were 63 schools (33 public and 30 private schools) that offered IB curricula at all levels. Thirteen schools offer Primary Years Programme (PYP), 15 – Middle Years Programme (MYP), 36 – Diploma Programme (DP). The PYP is offered only in non-public schools (there is not a single example of a public school in Poland with PYP). In the case of DP and MYP, there are both public (52%) and non-public schools (48%). Public schools are financed by local governmental educational authorities (students do not pay any fees that relate to the IBDP programme). In the case of private schools, referred to in Polish educational law as 'non-public' schools, the financing can be shared between the government and other institutions (international organisations) or by parents.

As a result of the socio-political changes of the 1990s, education in Poland went through a process of decentralisation, for example, with respect to the way schools are funded, however, certain

responsibilities were still held by the Ministry of Education. This ‘apparent’ decentralisation provided limited leadership opportunities for IB teachers in the centrally steered system of teacher training in Poland and demonstrates features of leadership developed according to the *Homo Sovieticus* model of the citizen (Leek 2020b). However, as Leek (2020b) emphasises, a strong emphasis on leadership within an international culture of IBWS does not permit the development of features and behaviours common to *Homo Sovieticus* [in English: *Soviet Man*]. *Homo Sovieticus* is a term used for the first time by Alexander Zinoviev in his novel ‘*Homo Sovieticus*’ (1986) which became the subject of interpretations in the context of social life. The term has become a grotesque-humorous idiom that describes a Soviet citizen, or one that comes from the Eastern Bloc in Europe, attempting to fulfil the aims of communist indoctrination. These people lack any ‘bottom-up’ initiative, simply acquiesce and are servile. Soviet Man was subordinated to authority, and led by the authority. According to Leek (2020b), IB schools with their strong emphasis on leadership in the Polish post-soviet educational landscape are steering an evolutionary path away from the stereotypical perception of teachers as passive *Homo Sovieticus*, and instead are developing leaders of school curricula.

Despite the fact that in a centrally steered education system the state maintains tight control and formulates laws in every sphere of school practices, in the case of IB public and non-public schools, the government has no influence over the curriculum. It does, however, influence practices by withholding the right to finance IB schools, including school books or exams. From the perspective of the national policy, international schools are less tightly regulated and they do not supervise the authorisation process. Although the basic fact of becoming an IB school needs to be submitted, there is no separate legislation dedicated to international schools in Poland. Similarly, in the case of statistical information, IB schools need to submit yearly evaluation data that include general quantitative information such as the number of students in IB classes, or IB teachers involved in IB implementation. The organisational solutions deployed by some private international schools in Poland (i.e. the renouncement of governmental financial support or affiliation by another educational institution like a university) are an indication of the current opportunities presently available in the Polish educational landscape to act independently free from national influences and supervision.

Research design

The teachers’ perspectives presented in the findings were a part of a larger multi-institutional case study (Stake 1995; Simons 2009) on IB programmes in Poland. More specifically, the study from which I drew the data used interviews to explore the functions of the IB programme in the educational landscape in Poland. One of the educational functions the following study highlights is IB teachers’ resistance to indoctrination. This paper aims to thoroughly examine this phenomenon, and in so doing, explain it.

For a closer examination of IB schools and educational policy in Poland, I posted the following research questions:

- (1) What is the educational function of IB education within national policy in Poland?
- (2) What creates the conditions for this function?
- (3) Why did this function develop?

Empirical data was gathered from interviews conducted at 9 IB schools (2 schools introduced PYP, 2 – MYP, 5 DP) with 36 teachers in two parts. Part one (pilot study) was conducted throughout the autumn semester of 2019 and part two throughout the winter semester of 2021. I used a purposeful sampling method to identify a variety of school types (7 were public schools, 2 – non-public schools), experience with IB (≥ 10 years), and geographical location (all in different voivodships [districts] because of a different local education policy). All schools were settled in cities

($\geq 200,000$ inhabitants). Teachers were selected based on their experience with IB programmes (I selected 4 teachers per school with the longest experience in IB implementation), and the subjects they teach (I selected teachers that teach different subjects). All the teachers interviewed have had experience implementing the Polish curriculum. In all 9 schools, the international programme was introduced parallel to the national programme, and catered for local students. In 8 schools, the IB school fees were paid by the local education authority or other body running the school. In 1 school IB education was fully financed by parents. It is necessary to point out that Poland also operates international schools where only international programmes are implemented with international teaching staff who cater mainly for the educational demands of international students. Those schools and teachers were not targeted by the study. In these schools, on-site interviews of one-hour duration were conducted with IB teachers ($N = 36$), 90% of the teachers ($N = 32$) were of Polish origin. The interviews were underpinned by the theory of practice architectures of Stephen Kemmis et al. (2014) which claim that what schooling stands for is the complex of practices in school focused around student learning, teaching, leading, professional learning, and researching. For this study, particular meaning was given to leading as a practice activity in IB schools. Thus, the focus of interview questions was classroom activities, resources, planning, interdisciplinary teaching content, cooperation within the school, and the knowledge and skills required for teaching.

Data analysis

In the qualitative data analysis, first, I became intimate with the data by reading each interview multiple times, marking important or interesting passages. In the second step of the interview analysis, I developed case study narratives of each school, looking more closely at teachers' perceptions of the IB programme, and their experiences with IB programmes, with a particular focus on policy implementation. Thirdly, a cross-analysis was developed, using a thematic analysis technique to analyse the interview data both deductively and inductively. Based on this information, I developed a coding scheme related to common and emerging patterns of policy implementation. Inductively, I reduced large amounts of the interview data into a smaller number of analytical units based on similar themes (Miles and Huberman 1994) that had been identified in the second phase to identify particularly interesting parts and used coding passages. Finally, I sorted data into categories and coded them. A code was given to each sentence that referred to 'national policy', 'programme implementation', 'function', 'national curriculum', 'international curriculum', 'international school', 'public school', and 'education in Poland'. This allowed for the identification of code segments which were then grouped by their focus group session. All the stories told by teachers were considered, regardless of whether they fitted the definitions of educational resistance in the literature, and included one-off events and recurring events. Incidents were further coded as acts of teaching and the learning of teachers. Based on similarities, these codes were organised into sub-categories (advantages, disadvantages, aims, motivations, personal development).

Results and discussion

There is a growing body of research into how teachers implement education policy as part of a dynamic process across IB schools. Studies on teachers as policy implementors have shed light on teachers' perceptions towards change in the IB programme (Walters 2007), how teachers define their roles, for example, curriculum and instructional specialists, learning facilitators, and catalysts for change (Killion and Harrison 2006), enjoying making educational decisions within school programme policy and implementation procedures (May 2018), or the professional identity of IB and non-IB teachers (Sturm 2017). One of the first warm-up questions in interviews was to describe the most surprising issues after starting to work according to IB. As mentioned already in the methodological section, the interviewed teachers had had experience with the Polish national programme before they started working with IB. Also, in most of the cases, they were working parallel with the national

and international programme (i.e. this solution is possible at PYP and MYP levels). Interviewed teachers with previous or current experience with national programme commented on how surprising it was for them to get used to planning teaching content and making decisions about how to evaluate students' work, a reaction which as I interpret it, is not supported by the national programme. Instead, the national curriculum is a very precise document with already prescribed approaches to planning and implantation procedures. For example, some teachers explained it in this way:

"My first experiences with IB? Hmm, you know what, it was the freedom. Yes, I felt free from requirements about how to teach and what to teach"; "I can't imagine going back to teaching according to the Polish curriculum. Do you know how difficult it is when your education policy tells you exactly what is to be done or what topic to introduce in the classroom?"

For Huttunen (2003), indoctrination refers to 'infiltrating beliefs, theories, and attitudes into the mind by by-passing their free and critical deliberation' (Huttunen 2003, 1). Snook (1972) named four criteria for recognising educational indoctrination: the content of the teaching, the method, the intention, and lastly, the consequences of the teaching. According to those teachers interviewed, and relying only on these general criteria, in the context of Polish education, the indoctrination present in the education policy is visible in the teaching content and teaching intention. What is interesting is that IB programmes do prevent indoctrination, and at the same time, support resistance against Snook's (1972) fourth criterion of manipulation, namely the consequences of teaching or (how I would name it) the consequences *for* teaching. Most of the teachers from Poland who were interviewed have had previous experience with the national education policy and curriculum implementation. During interviews, these teachers mentioned enjoying the freedom to choose methods and their own choice of recourses. The absence of *strong supervision* and *bureaucratic procedures that distract you from teaching* were cited as the biggest asset of IB compared to working according to the national programme. In the first months, the use of the IB curriculum is introduced intuitively and is accompanied by training provided by the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO). Although IB teachers in Poland acknowledge IB training, this initial time with IB is usually challenging due to the use of active teaching methods and the conducting of evaluations because as one teacher explained: the national programme *is rather focused on different learning methods*. It is evident from interviews with Polish IB teachers that despite years of being indoctrinated when working with the national curriculum, the change to the international one 'awakens' self-reflection about the meaning of their professional role. Thus, the consequences *for* teaching come from the reflective teacher who believes in his or her abilities and worth and is aware of the influences of the policy under which they are working. Also, this teacher perceives the international programme as a way to escape from constant supervision, which might constitute a form of resistance against what is happening in the national educational policy.

The distinctive feature of the IB programme in Poland, in the opinion of teachers, is the ongoing process of regular professional development of teaching activities in the classroom. Teachers described it in this way: *For me, when I teach, the IB is one permanent learning activity*; another said: *I have the feeling that I'm learning all the time when I am working with students*. To the question concerning what teachers learned or are learning when working with IB, they responded, *the readiness to be open to answers and the interpretations that our students make; I am questioning the way I was taught during my preservice training; I need to be in reflect on my what I am teaching, and why I am here; what is my role*. The reason why respondents perceived such things as leadership roles within IB education as challenging might be the result of their previous experiences as teachers who had worked within the national education system, where a teacher's leadership skills were not valued as a priority under Polish education policy. The education system, in general, demonstrates features of being centrally steered and has been developed in Poland under the influences left over from the communist era, where any law was developed to shape a *Homo Sovieticus*.

The current ruling party in Poland is similar to other former regimes since the socio-political changes of the 1990s in that it wants to limit decision-making rights for the purposes of ideological

indoctrination. To give a recent example, in August 2021, the minister signed off on a new list of books (literature) to be used in schools that is now compulsory reading (Regulation 2021). Contemporary authors have disappeared from the previous list, and instead, the names of national-Catholic writers have shown up. The school curriculum that is valid in the school year 2021/22 has been filled on a hitherto unprecedented scale with texts by John Paul II, or recent bishops of the Catholic Church in Poland, and with materials discussing the lives and thoughts of these prominent church figures. Pursuing a policy whereby teaching content including textbooks is kept in the hands of the Ministry of Education makes teachers that work in national schools feel permanently constrained and instructed from ‘above’, meaning from the Ministry, which might be perceived as a means of indoctrination. This feeling is not shared by teachers working in IB schools. In interviews, this group admitted enjoying having the freedom to choose textbooks and the ways they want to teach from them. In the first weeks of working with the IB curriculum, some of the respondents experienced enthusiasm, showing great appreciation as one teacher described it: for the *enormous freedom of teachers’ professional lives* now given to them, overturning all the years they had had to work without it. Another teacher described it in this way:

I am a history teacher. It is a new feeling for me to be able to plan a topic the way I want. I can plan information to be disseminated on historical events I think would be more useful than information that someone else prescribed at a national level.

I interpret this appreciation of IB education as a way of enjoying freedom that is an endogenous (is happening through the mind), and an exogenous process (coming from outside), caused by external causes which are experiences with national educational policy. The experience with the IB programme, which is characterised by a constructivist approach to teaching, and previous experience with the national programme, resulted in a resistance which is based on the pursuit of freedom understood as complete independence from causality ruling empirically. Immanuel Kant calls such freedom – freedom in the transcendental sense (Vilhauer 2014). Freedom in this understanding is a concept determined by negation, that is, by the negation of the submission to causality governing the world given to us through experience – a world in which, for example, the stronger dictates his will to the weaker. The form of this transcendental freedom, the conceivable freedom, is resistance induced by autonomy. Resistance acquires a great development potential, and freedom here because it results from a critical reflection on Polish educational reality. In this sense, resistance has two functions. It is an expression of disagreement with the relationship between power and subordination, and an expression of social action.

In the common understanding of the word, change means the act, process, or result of changing or replacing one thing with another (Merriam-Webster dictionary). Change according to Schatzki (2019) is part of social practices that comprise complex interactions of temporarily evolving, open-ended sets of sayings, doings and relatings between people, other beings and material artefacts. Change according to Schatzki (2019) includes various factors and developments and have been cited as motors driving the search for more convenience. According to practice theory (Schatzki 2019), changes ‘emerge through, or result from, events and processes’ (Schatzki 2019, 7). Under certain circumstances, different social practices constitute ‘bundles’ via common ‘elements’, something which would also initiate social change.

In organisations like schools, organisational change refers to actions by which an organisation alters an important component of its structure, such as its culture, its basic technologies, the infrastructure it uses to operate, or its internal processes (Stobierski 2020). The changing of practices in schools involves different changes made in approaching the curriculum, management structure, training programmes, students, and adaptation to these changes requires flexible school structures (Rosenblatt 2004). Interviews with teachers showed that when they consider comparisons between national and IB schools, some policy solutions introduced in national schools do not show features of change in IB teachers as they are the same, obligatory, and incorporated in both national and international settings (evaluation, educational plans). Also, student enrolment for pre-IB is being

conducted according to similar rules as the enrolment for schools following the national programme (this rule is valid only in national IB schools). The change, however, is noticeable in terms of school culture (i.e. change in acknowledging the role of school staff such as IB coordinators). Resistance and change are being portrayed in the literature rather more as resistance to change, and this reflects the negative attitudes and behaviours expressed by employees during times of organisational change (Ahmad and Cheng 2018). The employees either try to slow down the change process or terminate the change effort entirely. In this understanding, resistance to change is a psychological defence mechanism wherein a person rejects, denies, or otherwise opposes the efforts of a change. In the following study, the change in the context of resistance is not understood in the common sense of the word very often used in educational sciences as the *resistance to change*, but the *change for resistance*. In this understanding, the change is here understood as the change in the school programme (from a national to an international curriculum), the change in working environments, comparing how it was in the past before the change (when working with the national programme) and how it is now revealing the enjoyment and appreciation of the current situation with the IB programme, and the disparity between the national and international programme that triggered this resistance.

When a change within an institution like school is incorporated usually from a top-down perspective, teachers usually adapt to the change. In such cases, the success of organisational change primarily relies on the attitude and response of their employees toward change (Ahmad and Cheng 2018). This study expands the findings on change within educational settings and shows that the change can be also initiated by teachers (from a bottom-up perspective of change) where the curriculum builds circumstances of a change. The resistance is being triggered by the attitudes of teachers towards the subject of change which is an international curriculum. The glimpse of the need *for* resistance arises, however, within another opportunity or activity in the course of previous work with the national programme. The change brought about as a result of the decision to take on the challenge of implementing an international programme is not the beginning of educational resistance, but its effect, which is reflected in a change that proved to be the case with IB teachers interviewed in Poland that resulted in the decision to start working according to the international programme.

Boal and Nakamoto (2020) studied the impact on the atmosphere at IB public elementary schools in the US, which showed school policies' influence in supporting teachers' engagement, creativity, and powers of reflection. The role of teachers in policy implementation is also described in the context of how educators in schools made sense of top-down state, federal, or district-level policies (Heineke 2015; Grijalva and Jimenez-Silva 2012). Research on educators as policymakers has explored the role of classroom teachers in designing educational spaces that either support or restrict the opportunities for policy implementation that are often rooted in teachers' personal ideological leanings (Johnson and Johnson 2015; Palmer and Henderson 2016). When sharing their experiences with IB programmes, teachers from IB schools in Poland underlined the need, and at the same time, the amount of enjoyment they had cooperating with other teachers from their school and other IB schools in Poland, which was not necessarily the case when they were working according to the national programme, which functions in opposition to IB policy that supports teachers' out-of-school cooperation. In other words, the IB policy implementation is happening as a group commitment rather than something undertaken individually by one person. In addition, teachers interviewed perceived the national policy as competitive and something that inhibits professional cooperation as opposed to one that supports exchanging teaching ideas. One teacher explained it in this way:

IB builds a network of cooperation with teachers outside of our school; I do not cooperate with teachers from national schools here in [name of city in Poland] where the school is located a few streets away from this IB school.

Concerning other IB schools in Poland, the teachers also said that they stay in contact with their colleagues who teach the same subjects to share ideas. As one teacher explained, this openness

towards collaboration between teachers of different schools *is not that common among non-IB teachers*. Other teachers also said that they hadn't worked with other teachers that much, either at their schools or with teachers from other schools in Poland until they started teaching in IB schools. To the question about a possible reason for this, one teacher explained it in this way: *The reason might be competition between schools that is perpetuated by the national policy and which does not support inter-school co-operation. In the IB programme, I didn't notice it; we help each other and learn from each other*. I would interpret this network building as a form of group resistance. By sharing experiences, teachers support each other, exchange ideas, develop a common understanding of the priorities of IB, whilst at the same time, becoming more aware of how IB qualities and values are in contradiction to the priorities of national education, and how far the national education policy deviates from the objectives and content of international education.

Conclusions

Based on the prevailing circumstances in Poland, the paper identified some key issues concerning IB in this country that need to be taken into account when considering the function of international education currently serving as spaces of educational resistance.

Firstly, interviews with teachers from international schools in Poland showed that they moved away from the philosophy underpinning *Homo Sovieticus* to a more democratic approach in leading students' learning and in their teaching activities. This study illustrates the necessity for teachers working in international schools in Poland who teach students according to the international programme to make a shift in their understanding of their role. A centrally steered education policy employing the *Homo Sovieticus* philosophy might limit teachers' reflections on the role of teachers and the functions of education in youth development. However, the culture of international schools is offering spaces to formulate these goals and influence teachers' understanding of the meaning of international education and of their own responsibilities and duties.

Secondly, 'internationalism', in its commonly understood sense means promoting understanding and cooperation between different nations. *Inter-national* education is not opposed to national education in Poland, however, it has the potential to break away from *intra-national* education here. Although IB schools are not that popular in Poland, they do have the potential to be places where resistance against national indoctrination tendencies occurs, against *intra-national* tendencies in education (*intra* understood as inside; Poland becoming less amenable to developments in education with features of *intra-national* education; what I would call 'misplaced patriotism') and become a counter-revolution that supports grassroots initiatives. At the same time, IB schools have become schools of educational democracy that guard against indoctrination in a country with a centralised education policy.

Thirdly, as long as the IB programmes do not conflict with the ideological aims of the government's national education policies in Poland (with content and aims; learner profile, etc.), IB schools will remain safe from any authoritarian interference from the government. Interviews with IB teachers in Poland have yielded results which show that the progressive approach to education offered by IB has the potential to spread thanks to IB and non-IB teachers in Poland (IB is usually introduced in public schools alongside the national programme). The freedom of IB teaching activities, books, and evaluation procedures, represents the chance and hope for a change in national policy (i.e. openness for international education) and the creation of 'a better and more peaceful world' (at least in East-Central Europe). Interviews with IB teachers in Poland have revealed that teachers recognise an opportunity in the IB programme to change their interactions with students. At the same time, they re-interpret their role and professional activities, reaching compromises with the powers that control national education. I would interpret this to mean that when teachers give up their freedoms (as has been the case with teachers in national schools), they partially determine a similar state of affairs with their pupils, and this contradicts the idea of IB education. That is one of the reasons why IB teachers interviewed enjoy taking on leadership roles

and having the freedom to teach the way they want and not how the government prescribes it through policy.

Fourthly, to explain the educational resistance of IB teachers, reference may be made to the self-reflection of teachers appraising the challenges of the national policy versus the chances that the IB programme offers and the progressive approach to teaching adopted within IB, where teachers are self-determined leaders and creators in schools, versus the centrally steered national education policy. In other words, resistance is being created by oppositions or polarizations created in clashes of *inter*-national and *intra*-national tendencies in education within the country. This change in the mindset of teachers has awoken a resistance that is resulting in perceiving international schools as islands of educational resistance and offering an alternative for those that do not want to work surrounded by the indoctrination that comes from national education.

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