

Bilingual Education Planning through Free School reform in England: a case study of new institutional development.

By

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I, Katya Saville, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

Abstract

This study explores the extent to which free schools reform in England can facilitate innovation by considering how, and how far, parents and advocates of bilingual education have used this to establish state-funded bilingual primary schools. Currently little is known about either free schools or how markets foster language planning and the present thesis highlights not only the opportunities afforded to planners, but also the significant constraints encountered due to the compromises demanded by schools' quest for legitimacy.

Four case study campaigns were followed for six to twenty-one months, generating qualitative field notes, public document analyses, parent, leader and sponsor interviews alongside quantitative analysis of intake using the Annual Schools Census. Thematic analysis was informed by abductive engagement with the data in parallel with neo-institutionalist literature. Initial codes were clustered to form four analytic research strands, leading to four main findings. Firstly, institutional entrepreneurs and bricoleurs with significant networking skills and capital are key. For language communities without this, state-funded bilingual education is a distant dream. Secondly, for successful schools, the compromises needed mean such limited use of freedoms that they cannot be considered to offer bilingual education innovation. Despite this, founder parents' power over language and location decisions means their language planning does appear innovative in the English context. Finally, to guarantee public legitimacy, campaigners carefully balance distinctiveness and mimesis by borrowing practices of the 'best' (often private) schools, leading to potentially socially segregating practices. However, early quantitative analysis of intake is inconclusive. The thesis ends by recommending that, to support innovation, the government should shelter new schools from statutory testing pressure. Sponsors should also be encouraged to support groups with less capital, in order to avoid the continued dominance of English monolingualism and reinforcing the perception of bilingual education as serving a niche elite in high status languages.

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List of Abbreviations

ASC	Annual Schools Census
ASP	Anglo-Spanish Project
BFS	Bilingual Free School
CBS	Central Bilingual School
CIDB	Church local Diocesan Board
CLIL	Content and Language Integrated Learning
CofE	Church of England
DfE	Department for Education
DGA	De Gaulle Academy
DL	Dual language
EES	English Educational Services
EFA	Education Funding Agency
FSM	Free school meals
FSMe	Free school meals eligible
IEs	Institutional entrepreneurs
IoE	Institute of Education
LA	Local authority
LII	Language Immersion Institute
LP	Language Planning
LPP	Language Planning and Policy
MFL	Modern Foreign Languages
NAO	National Audit Office
NPD	National Pupil Database
NSN	New schools Network
OfSTED	Office for Standards in Education
OHS	Old Haningfield School
PE	Physical Education
PEs	Policy entrepreneurs
PTA	Parent teacher association
SABS	St. Alcuin Bilingual School
TBE	Transitional Bilingual Education
TWI	Two way immersion

Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction

This thesis explores the extent to which educational quasi-markets are able to unleash new opportunities for bilingual education within the broader institution of state-funded primary schooling in England. Unlike most existing research on either language planning or educational quasi-markets, which tends to focus on the perspectives of one stakeholder at a time, the thesis uses a case-based approach, involving multiple stakeholders, to examine the establishing of primary bilingual free schools in England since 2010. Currently, almost nothing is known about either free schools or state-funded bilingual education in England, but the study also has wider relevance for those interested in the potential of educational quasi-markets in general to afford opportunities for curricular innovation, particularly in language learning.

In this introductory chapter, I first explore the background to the study, noting how the arrival of bilingual free schools in England appears in contrast with both existing language learning provision and the experiences of market failure in similar contexts. From this, I pinpoint the aims and overarching research question of the study, before outlining the rationale for a case-based emergent design and the conceptual framework. The uniqueness of the present study is emphasised in three arenas: its understanding of parents as language planners; its in-depth case approach to understanding emerging free schools; and its use of neo-institutional concepts to examine the micropolitics of local bilingual education planning. Thereafter I briefly outline the thesis as a whole.

1.1 A brief background to the study

Learning an additional language in English state schools lags behind almost all other European countries and many others globally (Tinsley, 2013; Burge, Ager, Cook, Cunningham, Morrison, Weaving & Wheeler, 2013). Although learning an additional language was recently made compulsory in 2014 from ages seven to eleven, this amounts to just 30 to 45 minutes a week, increasing little between eleven and fourteen (Board & Tinsley, 2015; 2016). Thereafter, it is no longer compulsory, resulting in fewer than half of sixteen year olds gaining a qualification

(DfE, 2016), with both lower uptake and test performance by students eligible for free school meals (Tinsley, 2013, p18).

This is despite almost 1 in 5 primary pupils and 1 in 6 at secondary speaking English as an additional language (DfE, 2015b). Indeed, the vast majority of schools struggle to support and build on home languages (Board & Tinsley, 2016, p13). It is therefore principally assumed that only in non-state-funded complementary or a few independent or international schools are students supported to achieve levels of communicative competency which allow them to function in two languages¹.

Although some state schools have experimented with content and language integrated learning (2.4) these schemes often do not last (Euridyce at NFER, 2005). Other than a few schools in London who offer French/English bilingual streams, largely in conjunction with the fee-paying French lycée, there has been essentially no state-funded bilingual education in England which aims to build and maintain fluency in two languages. Until very recently, that is.

In 2010, the newly-elected Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition government announced an expansion of the academies act introduced by their Labour predecessors in 2000 which had been intended to allow schools to be established independently of local authorities, with private sponsorship, albeit without profit, in areas of persistent underachievement (Walford, 2014). There has been a history of attempts to liberalise provision of (principally) secondary education in England since the 1988 Education Act (ibid). However, the 2010 Academies Act went further in opening up education to greater market forces by encouraging groups to apply to either establish completely new ‘free schools’ or convert existing private schools to free school status, allowing them to enjoy a limited range of freedoms over curriculum, admissions, finance and staffing and be answerable directly to central government rather than the local authority. The intention was to allow *“every school to be able able to shape its own character, frame its own ethos and develop its own specialisms free of either central or local bureaucratic constraints”* (DfE, 2010, pp11-12)

Despite being originally intended to *“promote innovation and diversity in the school system”* (Cirin, 2014, p9), research on free schools’ predecessors and cousins in other marketised systems with parental choice consistently shows that markets in

¹ Although see p26 for an exploration of what ‘bilingualism’ is understood to mean in this thesis

education are highly constrained (Waslander, Pater & van der Weide, 2010). Indeed, the chief innovations utilized by such schools are ultimately often aimed at targeting similar middle-class families, with the result that curricular offerings are often traditional and very similar (ibid; Lubienski, 2009, p23). The little research which exists on free schools appears to show a similar lack of innovation (Cirin, 2014; Higham, 2014; Wiborg, Green, Taylor-Gooby & Wilde, 2017) and some signs of social segregation (Green, Allen & Jenkins, 2015; Morris, 2016), particularly by ability in primary (Green et al, 2015) and by restricting approval to those with more traditional ethos and models (Higham, 2014).

Of the several hundred free school approvals, nine have been for a bilingual primary school, aiming to offer up to 50% of curricular time in a language other than English, which we noted above is in stark contrast with previous provision in state primary schools. Therefore, it appears that primary bilingual free schools' emergence challenges the assumption in the research literature that markets are unable to foster significant pedagogical or curricular innovation. A state-funded primary free school offering a bilingual curriculum appears to be innovative in the English context and this thesis aims to understand why this might be the case when other innovations have often failed to materialize through similar charter or free school legislation. The thesis therefore seeks to understand how the stakeholders involved in establishing bilingual primary free schools have managed to navigate the considerable constraints in order to realise this innovation, but also any costs involved. In addition, have they also therefore managed to overcome an association between language learning and elitism?

1.2 Research aims

The purpose of this thesis is therefore to explore how language planning agents are establishing bilingual education through the opportunities offered by free schools legislation in England. The aim is not to evaluate the outcomes of these schools, as they are only just starting. Rather, the aim is to investigate the processes by which these schools appear to be countering two key assumptions from existing literature. Firstly, how they are countering a lack of language learning in England and, secondly, how they appear to challenge the understanding that educational quasi-markets fail to lead to innovation. In addition, a secondary

aim of the study is to describe what kind of bilingual education appears to be emerging as a result of the processes involved, thereby proposing future areas for research and critical reflection. Therefore, the overarching research question is: *How are stakeholders navigating free schools legislation in order to provide bilingual education in England?*

1.3 Approach to the study

The study adopted a multi-case study approach to answer the overarching question, following four campaigns² for a primary bilingual free school in England over six to twenty-one months during 2013 to 2015. The main data generation³ involved taking field notes at recruitment and promotion events; leader, parent and sponsor interviews; and textual analysis of documents, publicity, websites and online forums. A case study approach was chosen for several reasons. Firstly, it allowed the perspectives of multiple language planning agents to be considered within one case, unlike most existing language planning studies, and findings to be triangulated from multiple sources as a result. In addition, by focusing in on a small number of cases, rich depth of description was made possible, facilitating both engagement with the readers' phronesis (see 4.2) and checking of rival hypotheses. A multi-case design was preferred to the single case in order to facilitate knowledge construction about the wider 'quintain' (Stake, 2006) of bilingual free schools as an emerging institution in England. Finally, a case study approach offered significant flexibility of design, useful given the unpredictable nature of both free schools and bilingual state schools as emerging institutions in England (see Chapter 4).

² In this thesis, I refer to proposing groups as 'campaigners' and their project as a 'campaign' for two reasons. Although most studies on free schools use 'proposers' (Wiborg, 2015; Higham, 2014) and Hatcher (2011) reserves 'campaign' for those opposing the reform, Walford (2014) provides a historical precedent for my use when describing pressure groups for CTCs and grant-maintained schools. However, Hatcher's use indicates how the term is often reserved for minoritised groups, so its use may be more justified in referring to other studies of establishing bilingual education for minority speakers in Chapter two. Nonetheless, my main rationale comes from my participants' use of 'campaign' (see 8.1 and 6.1) and, rather than switching between terms, I chose to use [e](#) campaigners consistently throughout. While I acknowledge the implication this presents that all cases were somehow oppressed, I also balance this by showing how, in chapter seven, this was simply not true.

³ I refer in this thesis to data 'generation' rather than collection, as the former term recognises better the active construction of data by the researcher, and participants (see Mason, 2002, p52).

The study therefore followed a logic of abduction (4.2), with both literature and data generated within individual campaigns acting as “*critical dialogue partners*” (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2011) throughout the iterative and reflective process of progressive focusing (Stake, 1995) during the key months of data generation. This process is described in detail in 4.3 and 4.5 but, in brief, this involved several steps: the development of tentative research questions and theoretical framework concerned with parent choice following initial encounters with a BFS campaign; refining the questions and framework after piloting with an additional campaign to consider the role of school leaders, then government agents, which led to engaging with literature on organizational and institutional theory (see chapter 3); and, finally, tweaking research questions in response to both emic concerns about survival and etic literature on legitimacy.

Informal first-stage analysis was therefore interwoven throughout data generation, facilitated by reflective use of document summary forms (Appendix 2) and within-interview analysis (see 4.4). Thereafter, the main thematic analysis involved, first, the abductive determining of overarching themes in line with emerging research questions and conceptual framework after transcription and reading of the entire data set, followed by close reading and development of coding trees using NVivo within these themes using the data generated through interviews, field notes and documents for one case, before checking and fine-tuning this with each additional case.

The resulting four-strand conceptual framework (Chapter 3) used for analysis is largely built on neo-institutionalism and, in particular, the twin use of mimetic isomorphism of other, established, schools coupled with compromise of peripheral values while protecting core values in order to gain legitimacy with both parents and regulators (3.3). Chapter 3 will outline this framework in greater detail, alongside the concepts of policy entrepreneurship, advocacy coalitions and the Bourdieusian concepts of linguistic capital and habitus in explaining the potential for social reproduction of linguistic privilege through the emergence of bilingual free schools.

Following analysis and writing up of each individual case study according to the four themes, a cross-case analysis (Chapter 9) allowed findings common to all cases to be crystallised, while still highlighting exceptions and the particularities of

each individual case. In particular, the inclusion of a failed campaign (Chapter 8) raises significant questions about which stakeholders might be under-represented and constraints on quasi-market opportunities. The type of bilingual education which may be emerging as a result of the compromise of values in order to gain legitimacy may mean the exclusion of many, which is also discussed briefly in order to facilitate critical reflection and highlight future directions for research.

1.4 Uniqueness of the present study

This thesis offers a unique contribution to existing knowledge, both in terms of understanding emerging fields where little is known and also theoretically, in stretching the boundaries of both what is understood by language planning and the potential of quasi-markets to foster innovation.

As noted above and in 2.4, very little is currently known about free schools and only one published study about bilingual state schools in England exists (Meier, 2012). In particular, there is currently no published research on free schools offering the richness of the case study approach chosen and this thesis therefore offers unique insight in to the complexities of the processes of establishing free schools. This is particularly pertinent given the intense political and media scrutiny of free schools where much is presumed, but little actually known, with the result that a lack of nuanced data often leads to politically biased narratives.

Literature on language planning increasingly recognises micro-level planning, including that by parents or teachers in schools (Liddicoat & Taylor-Leech, 2014; see 2.2). However, it usually fails to consider a range of stakeholders within the same study. Using the case-based approach described above therefore affords a unique opportunity to analyse stakeholder interactions in the process of language planning in education. The role of parents is also largely assumed to be either as choice agents or as those planning languages outside of school. The data presented here challenges this view by highlighting how founder parents are intimately involved in setting the values of a school serving many outside their family and community.

There are also no studies of language planning which explicitly consider the role of quasi-market legislation in facilitating or hindering language planning opportunities. Although Lubienski (2009) acknowledges that the very similar US charter schools have seen somewhat more successful use of innovations than other

schools of choice, their use for realising bilingual education is underexplored (see 2.2). Other than government-commissioned audits (National Audit Office (NAO), 2013; Cirin, 2014) and one very recent study (Wiborg et al., 2017), there is no published research on the ability of England's free schools' legislation to realise innovation, which this study also sheds light on.

Theoretically, there has also been little application of institutional theoretical concepts to explore the processes involved in bilingual education planning. Taking a neo-institutionalist lens allows interrogation of the internal, political life of the school as an organisation within its wider institutional contexts. Thereby it not only allows multiple stakeholder perspectives to be embraced, but also their interactions, which contributes to a more holistic understanding of how bilingual education institutions emerge.

1.5 Organisation of the thesis

In this chapter I have: given a glimpse of the theoretical framework; provided a brief background of the emergence of free schools and lack of primary language learning and bilingual education in England; and introduced the aims of the thesis and how I approached data generation and analysis to meet these aims.

The remaining chapters are organised as follows. Chapter two contextualizes the study by providing a 'road map' of related research on bilingual education, language planning, free schools and language learning in England and provides definitions of key terms employed in the thesis. From this literature, I show how four principal assumptions can be drawn about how different stakeholders contribute to the building of bilingual education systems. These are then articulated as tentative hypotheses about how stakeholders may be establishing bilingual free schools, despite constraints. These hypotheses are then posed as four research questions, which contribute to answering the overarching question posed in 1.2. In Chapter three, I outline the four-strand conceptual framework. I show how this is constructed using theoretical concepts from institutional, social capital and organizational theory which help to shed light on the four assumptions outlined in chapter two. These four strands, in turn, are then re-articulated as tighter hypotheses about how stakeholders may be navigating free schools legislation in order to secure bilingual education in England.

Chapter four is an account of the research methodology, exploring in greater depth the reasons for selecting a case study approach. It also explains the philosophical basis for this approach in the logics of abduction and phronesis, which I show to be consistent with a moderate constructionist understanding of reality. The reflexive approach to data generation and analysis is outlined, from which I also reflect on ethics and my own positionality. The emergent nature of the research project through piloting and additional phases, selection of cases and participants, data generation methods and analysis is also detailed. The research questions are then re-articulated in the context of the emergent design at the end of 4.3. Finally, the limitations and significance of the study design are considered.

Chapters five to eight explore each case of a bilingual free school campaign in turn. Each chapter is divided in to four key sections relating to the four strands of the conceptual framework and research questions. Chapter nine then considers the quintain of bilingual free schools as an emerging institution and considers which stakeholders might be under-represented, particularly through the inclusion of a failed case. Chapter ten concludes the thesis by clarifying the main research findings. The limitations of the the findings are discussed before considering directions for future research. After considering how findings challenge existing theorization of educational quasi-markets and bilingual education planning, the chapter closes by outlining implications for policy makers and language planners at multiple levels.

Chapter 2: A 'road map' of existing research

Introduction: principles of selection and overview

Following the brief overview of the thesis as a whole in chapter one, this chapter turns to what existing research tells us about how stakeholders may be establishing bilingual free schools. Therefore, the review offered here aims to present a 'roadmap' (Luker, 2008) of relevant studies pertinent to understanding the establishing of bilingual free schools. The criteria for inclusion of studies evolved during the course of the research, from initially including all studies of bilingual education, to careful sifting focusing principally on the ability to shed light on the research questions. From this potential bank of studies, studies were selected for inclusion which either:

- a) Offered original empirical evidence on one aspect of establishing bilingual schools; and/or
- b) Were conceptually or methodologically original in their approach to researching the establishing of bilingual schools.

Consideration was also given to the quality of the research, particularly methodology and sampling, using the framework offered by Savin-Badin & Major (2013, pp123-4). However, some studies in more niche or less-researched areas were included despite methodological shortcomings, which are outlined where possible, because of their unique contribution to the field.

In this thesis, I do not aim for a large-scale review of the highly interdisciplinary field of bilingual education research (but see Baker, 2011; Garcia, 2009). I am also largely unconcerned with the myriad of evaluations demonstrating the academic and social successes of already-open bilingual education programmes (e.g. Lindholm-Leary, 2001). Indeed, this traditional focus on outcomes means that the process of establishing bilingual education has received little analytic attention (see 2.2). Instead, the 'road map' presented here will show that a key component of established bilingual education reforms globally is the recruiting of skilled and well-networked advocates, and that compromises are often necessary, giving rise to potential aggravation of social segregation (2.2). In considering the literature on language planning (2.3), although the agency of individuals in determining language planning and policy is increasingly emphasized, calls for more multi-

agentic studies have rarely been heeded. In 2.4, we see in England that there is little state-funded provision of early language learning or bilingual education due to uncertain funding and lack of stakeholder involvement, although this is increasing. We also see how research on English free schools highlights a highly limited use of mainly administrative, rather than curricular, freedoms. Although there is some evidence of social segregation in free schools' neighbourhoods, the origins and processes involved in establishing free schools is still under-researched. Before exploring this literature in detail, however, I will clarify what I understand by some of the key terms in the literature for the purpose of the present thesis.

2.1 Key definitions and terms

Bilingualism and forms of bilingual education

Many scholars concede that the terms 'bilingual education' and 'bilingualism' are highly contested, as the prefix 'bi-' was traditionally associated only with high proficiency in two discrete high-status languages (Bloomfield, 1935). Many scholars now prefer multilingualism (Cenoz, 2013; May, 2014) or plurilingualism⁴, the preferred term in the EU (Council of Europe, 2001), to emphasise both the multiple 'linguistic repertoires' people draw on (Gumperz, 1964) and the transferable linguistic, metalinguistic, social and cultural competencies developed. Such terms emphasize what Baker terms the "*fuzzy boundaries*" (2011, p94) between formal language learning and more naturalistic language acquisition, so that "*a distinction between a second language learner and a bilingual will be arbitrary and artificial*" (Baker in Byram, 2000, p84).

Bilingual education programmes therefore may not only be for learners already highly proficient in more than one language. Garcia (2009, p17) categorises these programmes according to who they intend to serve, using Ruiz's 1984 framework of orientations towards language. Those withdrawing language minority students (e.g. US transitional bilingual education (TBE)), considered by Baker (2011, p21) as a 'weak' form of bilingual education, reflect a '*language-as-problem*' orientation

⁴ Cenoz (2013, p5) notes that, whereas multilingualism may refer to both individual's and societal use of languages, plurilingualism tends to refer exclusively to the former

through their subtractive aims, aiming only for competence in the dominant society language. From the 1980s onwards, however, indigenous groups and educators sharing a '*language-as-right*' orientation, contested TBE, leading to 'indigenous immersion' programmes. According to Tedick, Christian & Williams Fortune (2011), immersion programmes demand separation of languages across different curricular areas with at least 50% in the societal minority language (less constitutes partial immersion; more than 80%, one-way immersion (Baker, 2011, p243). Teachers should be highly proficient in their languages, with peer-to-peer communication in both languages an ideal. In addition to indigenous immersion, such a description fits much elite, or prestigious, bilingual education (De Mejía, 2002), which serves as 'enrichment' for majority language students in an additional language. Although Baker (2011) notes that the percentage of time spent often decreases over time, Fortune & Tedick (2008) note that the aim of immersion is never to transition fully to the societally dominant language, so it has additive aims.

In the USA, immersion for Spanish speakers began to attract monolingual English speakers too, resulting in two-way immersion (TWI), or 'dual language' (DL) (in USA) programmes, which aim for a 50/50 split in curricular time and language dominance of students to facilitate peer-to-peer communication and integration of students from different cultures. De Mejía (2002) therefore distinguishes these programmes from others, as they serve both as entitlement for linguistic minority students and enrichment for language majority students simultaneously. This aim, and associated intercultural and societal benefits, therefore reflects Ruiz's final '*language-as-resource*' orientation. Additionally, elite international and European schools often teach in multiple languages, although this may be for far less than 50% of time, which raises the question of whether this counts as 'bilingual education'. However, if we consider that the principal feature of all the programmes mentioned is the use of at least two languages across the curriculum, rather than as a specific subject, it does. Therefore, in many EU countries, the use of content and language integrated learning⁵ (CLIL) in many secondary schools also blurs the 'distinction' (p26), although CLIL is usually more concerned with

⁵ Coyle, Hood & Marsh (2010, p1) define CLIL as "a dual-focused educational approach in which an additional language is used for the learning and teaching of both content *and* language" (emphasis theirs)

methodology and content than any social justice goals as it is intended to serve more as enrichment rather than entitlement.

For the present thesis, I will take a broad view of what can be considered 'bilingual education', namely one which recognises emergent bilingualism⁶ (Garcia, 2009) in a second language. However, I also wish to avoid what Block (2007) terms a 'romantic view' of bilingualism, namely one which fails to recognise the importance of assessing and building levels of proficiency in two or more languages. I therefore consider bilingual education to involve teaching and learning in more than one language across multiple curricular areas, with the primary goal of developing learners fluent in two or more discrete languages, alongside secondary social and cultural goals. Therefore, the CLIL, immersion and dual language programmes described above would be considered to offer bilingual education despite an occasional lack of balance between languages. However, TBE would not be considered bilingual education using this definition, due to its subtractive aim which seeks proficiency only in the societally dominant language.

Language policy and planning

Bilingual education has long been recognized as a form of language planning, which Cooper (1989) defined as "*deliberate efforts to influence the behavior of others with respect to the acquisition, structure or functional allocation of their language codes.*" Multiple categorisations of language planning activities exist⁷ but, for Cooper, they ultimately all concern who plans what for whom & how. So, the goal might be a change in language status, the corpus of speakers or the nature of the language itself, all achievable in many ways, including within the mainstream classroom. Language planning research has always been a problem-oriented field, arising as newly-emerging states in the postcolonial era attempted to 'solve' the problems associated with nation-building (Fishman, Ferguson & Gupta, 1968). Therefore, the focus was on governmental agency. However, Cooper (1989) was one of the first scholars to highlight teacher agency, with families' agency interrogated still later (see King, Fogle & Logan-Terry, 2008; Spolsky, 2012). Spolsky prefers the term 'family language policy' and, although Baldauf & Chua (2013) distinguish policies as "*statements of intent*" from planning, indicating

⁶ Gregory (2008) prefers the term 'new language learner' to emergent or incipient bilingual.

⁷ See Hornberger (2006) for an attempted integrated framework of language planning

action, they are constantly conflated in the literature⁸. Although some therefore prefer to use the catch-all ‘language policy and planning’ (LPP) (Tollefson, 2008), I will use language planning here because of its implicit focus on action and less formal settings, which allows for less conscious processes, for example, when parents or teachers codeswitch, by drawing interchangeably on two languages, in classroom interactions (see Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997 pxii).

Educational markets and ‘quasi-markets’

It is important to note that the concept of markets in education is widely contested. As Waslander et al. point out in the introduction to their extensive review of markets in education, ‘markets’ in education *“can be seen as a form of governance, a mindset or even a value system”* (2010, p7), although all such definitions borrow the vocabulary and concepts involved in the supply and demand of goods or services by consumers within defined local, global or virtual marketplaces. Like the authors of that review also decide, in this thesis I will not be dedicating substantial space to a full exploration of the ideological basis for, and arguments against, talk of markets in education⁹ but will focus, rather, on the empirical results of market-based reforms in education. In the state-funded sector, at least, there is no state-funded education system where all the features of a ‘pure’ market in education (as defined here by Coulson, Gwarney, McCluskey, Merrifield, Salisbury and Vedder for CATO, 2006) exist:

“We define an education market as a system that provides the freedom for producers and consumers to voluntarily associate with one another, as well as the incentives that encourage families to be diligent consumers and educators to innovate, control costs, and expand their services. It is a system in which schools can offer instruction in any subject, using any method, for which families are willing to pay.”

Why then even aspire to introduce market mechanisms or reforms into state-funded education? The reasons given by proponents include improvement of educational quality, equality, efficiency, freedom of choice, social cohesion or innovation (Waslander et al., 2010, p64). Indeed, the basic premise of the

⁸ See Kaplan & Baldauf’s 1997 unidirectional understanding in discussing governmental language policy alongside their actions as planners

⁹ One example can be found in Gorard (1997) where he considers, like Gewirtz, Ball & Bowe (1995), markets to be *“a ‘hands-off’ policy by the government, attempting to pass responsibility for the quality of education to the individual as consumer.”*

argument for greater marketization of state-funded education, first outlined in full by Chubb & Moe (1990), is that the state holds a monopoly in most public education systems and it is the state's bureaucratic processes which are largely responsible for persistent underperformance, since individual schools are inefficient and unable to cater for differing needs and preferences. In a marketplace, however, families as 'consumers' are able to select from multiple 'providers' – different schooling options – and move if dissatisfied with their choice. Liberating supply by allowing diversity of providers and limiting accountability to the government should, in theory, allow schools to diversify their offerings to appeal to different families. Being accountable primarily to the consumer, schools that offer successful packages will survive, while others will be forced to close or change.

However, as noted above, such a system does not exist in any state-funded system. Therefore, LeGrand (1991) referred to market reforms in the welfare state sector (including education) as 'quasi-market' reforms, which he defined thus:

They are 'markets' because they replace monopolistic state providers with competitive independent ones. They are 'quasi' because they differ from conventional markets in a number of key ways. The differences are on both the supply and the demand sides. On the supply side, as with conventional markets, there is competition between productive enterprises or service suppliers. Thus... there are independent institutions ([e.g.]...schools) competing for customers. However, in contrast to conventional markets, these organisations are not necessarily out to maximise their profits; nor are they necessarily privately owned. Precisely what such enterprises will maximise, or can be expected to maximise, is unclear, as is their ownership structure. On the demand side, consumer purchasing power is not expressed in money terms. Instead it takes the form of an earmarked budget or 'voucher' confined to the purchase of a specific service. Also on the demand side... the immediate consumer is not the one who exercises the choices concerning purchasing decisions; instead those choices are delegated to a third party.

Therefore, this definition also begins to highlight numerous theoretical constraints on realising the potential benefits of markets outlined above, which we will examine further in 3.2. Gorard (1997) points out that private schools represent more a market-based institution than other quasi-market reforms in the state sector. Nonetheless, there are several market mechanisms which have been enabled through free schools legislation, which we will consider now.

Free schools and other ‘schools of choice’

Free schools in England, according to Cirin (2014, p9), like academies, are *“independent state schools which are directly funded by the government. They provide greater freedom and flexibility to heads and teachers; promote innovation and diversity in the school system,”* but differ because they *“open in direct response to parental and employer demand”*. However, some free schools were originally grammar or fee-paying schools and ‘converted’, although these are excluded from the present study (see 4.3). Though heavily influenced by Swedish free schools, free schools in England may not be run for profit (Wiborg, 2015). Finally, ‘free school’ in this thesis refers only to the new, independent government-funded academies and not the radical ‘free schools’ which arose in the second half of the 20th century (Wright, 1989)¹⁰. Free schools share similarities with US charter schools but a comparative analysis of the two forms is beyond the scope of this thesis. Nonetheless, charter schools enjoy similar freedoms as *“schools that are publicly funded but run under a charter by parents, educators, community groups, universities, or private organizations to encourage school autonomy and innovation”* (Berends, 2015, p160), although legislation varies somewhat between states. Charters are accountable only to their boards and parents, and not their local districts, like English free schools, but they may be run for profit, to maximize competition (Lubienski, 2006, p270). Magnet schools are a predecessor of sorts, used by school districts to promote voluntary integration through diversifying curricular offerings and widening catchment areas to stimulate parental choice. They, however, remain accountable to their local district and must follow all local regulations. Both charters and magnets fall under the oft-used umbrella ‘schools of choice’, although Berends (2015, p160) rightly states that many types of programme, including use of vouchers involve school choice.

Therefore, free schools in England may be considered as more closely related to charter schools than magnet schools. They are, in essence, a form of charter school, albeit without the capacity for organisations to realise profit through their ‘charter’, which also distinguishes English free schools from their Swedish counterparts.

¹⁰ For a useful exposition of the evolution of free schools from antecedents, see Walford (2014).

2.2 Existing research on setting up bilingual education programmes

In section 2.1 I outlined the key terms used in this thesis and, in so doing, highlighted a number of programmes which fall under the umbrella of ‘bilingual education’. Now, in order to shed light on the overarching research question, namely how stakeholders may be navigating legislation in order to secure bilingual education, we will consider what existing research tells us about how these various programmes in 2.1 were planned and established. It is worth remembering, though, that most studies focus little on these processes, preferring to focus on outcomes. This section therefore will consider first the origins of the pioneering modern bilingual ‘immersion’ programmes established through local authorities, initially in North America, before considering how similar programmes were then rolled out in other countries, limiting the focus to studies where the processes involved are given due attention. This will establish a number of opportunities and constraints and the importance of networks of advocates with significant capital. Thereafter, we will focus in on studies which examine the use of market-led reforms in state education to foster bilingual education reform, such as charter and magnet schools, highlighting that they also offer additional opportunities and constraints for bilingual education planners.

The origins of modern bilingual ‘immersion’ programmes

The St. Lambert ‘experiment’ in Quebec, Canada is widely seen as the pioneer of modern immersion (Mehisto & Genesee, 2015, p43; Lambert & Tucker, 1972). This was a French immersion programme lobbied for by English-speaking families (and supported by local academics) concerned about a cultural divide between French-speaking and English-speaking communities (Fortune & Tedick, 2008, p5), alongside availability of jobs for the families’ monolingual English-speaking children (see also Olson & Burns, 1983). This highlights the importance of influential parents able to garner significant expertise, but also the linguistic sociopolitical context which gave a publicly justifiable rationale for the campaign.

Meanwhile, in the U.S., Cuban refugees in Florida campaigned successfully for a Spanish-English bilingual stream, which Ovando (2003, p7) attributes to the group’s significant capital, including well-trained Spanish teachers. This demonstrates that a linguistic minority group, with enough capital, can also achieve similar bilingual education goals. Slow replication of the group’s bilingual

model across the US was facilitated by federal initiatives (with funding) to develop bilingual education (ibid, p8), particularly as TBE was seen to be failing many Spanish speaking learners. Therefore, legislation and activism play key roles too in fostering state-funded bilingual education.

Further afield from North America, bilingual education also started moving beyond serving either the traditional international elite in fee-paying schools, or subtractive bilingual programmes for new arrivals. In Finland, parental advocacy groups were supported by universities to campaign for, and establish, Swedish immersion (Björklund, 1997; 2005) facilitated by the high relative status of Swedish, and, like in Canada, increased job prospects for bilinguals. Again, bilingual government funding and legislation also helped. The importance of legislation is further demonstrated by the growth of CLIL in the EU more recently (Pérez-Cañado, 2012). The desirability of English as enrichment has also no doubt facilitated implementation of EU legislation committing member countries to offer all children fluency in their mother tongue plus two additional languages (Council of Europe, 2001). The importance of legislation and societal openness ideologically to bi/multilingualism in addition to capital resources is also reflected in Mehisto & Genesee's 2015 framework (see Table 2.1 below). This framework was developed by examining the forces and mechanisms involved in establishing bilingual education programme case studies in fourteen different countries.

Mehisto & Genesee conclude that the key to building bilingual systems which underpins use of all the below is effective stakeholder engagement to create passionate advocates. This, they say, demands leaders' ability to synthesize multiple interests and support advocates' learning. Therefore, leadership skills and knowledge are key, particularly the ability to build 'stakeholder relationships' inclusively, by identifying overlapping interests of parents, government and academia (ibid, p271). Timely, clear leader communication is also important, with the use of research evidence to inform decision-making. However, the authors talk of 'reciprocal co-evolution' of the factors involved, so the local and national socio-political context is key, with ideologies around national security and national identity bound up in the ability of advocates to convince other potential stakeholders to support their plans. Furthermore, advocates with skills are insufficient of themselves. The availability of legislative, human resources and

financial mechanisms are also vital: supportive policies and teacher training and supply are two examples.

Forces (ideational)	Mechanisms(material)	Constraints &	Counterweights
Clarity of vision	Central leadership	Stability/ resisting change	Justification & planning; pilots
Valuing bilingual education/heritage languages	Agreed terminology, goals, values	Many priorities	Stakeholder- agreed planning
Desire for social cohesion	Local/international agreements	Results-based planning	Planning iteratively
Respecting research evidence	Financing	Pressure to deliver	Agreed priorities
Power sharing	Political & social capital	Lack of experience	Expert advice; desire to learn
Social justice	Qualified teachers	Naïve faith	Use of research findings
	Training, assessments, learning resources		
	Networking opportunities		

Table 2.1 Factors in establishing bilingual education (abridged from Mehisto & Genesee, 2015)

Mehisto & Genesee's work is a comprehensive study of many of the factors involved in establishing bilingual education programmes. However, the breadth of the study precludes interrogation of the complexity of the stakeholder relations they highlight and the processes by which inclusion is ensured when planning. Furthermore, although their study includes programmes which have emerged as a result of market-led reforms to education, the authors do not highlight this as a unique force or mechanism. If we consider the above framework, markets might facilitate and constrain various aspects of the establishing of bilingual education systems, but the authors do not isolate them for analysis.

Many of the studies above highlight a variety of factors involved in establishing and developing bilingual education programmes, with advocacy networks a key feature. However, the ways in which market conditions influence how different stakeholders interact in order to establish schools is rarely interrogated.

Therefore, the next section focuses on the few studies from the USA which interrogate how specific aspects of market reforms have been used to establish bilingual education programmes.

Using market reforms for bilingual education planning: magnet and charter schools

In this section, we will see how the introduction of market reforms to education systems has afforded bilingual education planners a number of opportunities as well as additional constraints.

Globally, many bilingual education programmes have originated in systems with a degree of market liberalization, but the use of market mechanisms is given little analytic attention. For instance, although bilingual education programmes exist in the other nations of the United Kingdom, where school choice has been used to introduce a degree of marketization, Lewis' 2015 account demonstrates that the story of Welsh bilingual education expansion has little to do with the utilizing of choice legislation. The majority of research which mentions such utilisation has emerged within the USA due to the freedoms presented by first magnet, then charter school reforms (Met, 1993; Martin-Beltrán, 2012).

Met (1993) highlights that magnet schools allowed not only a proliferation of bilingual education, but also increased the "*racial spread*" in immersion programmes by drawing students from wider areas. Bilingual magnets have also been created to increase access for more widely-dispersed language-speaking communities who might not be in catchment otherwise¹¹. Since the 1990s, new charter schools offering immersion in Spanish, Chinese, Arabic, French, German, Hmong and Native American languages have also opened in many US states (Martin-Beltran, 2012), allowing advocacy groups to circumvent unsupportive or underachieving school boards and even overcome state-wide bans on bilingual education (Astorga, 2008; Lazarín & Ortiz-Licon, 2010). Therefore, using market-led reforms appears to offer opportunities to bilingual education planners.

Constraints presented by using market reforms: potential social segregation

However, what can be an advantage for some may present obstacles for others. Three cases in Lazarín & Ortiz-Licon's study appear to function as what Eckes (2015) calls niche 'haven' schools, which she questions legally as, although intended to shelter communities facing discrimination in other schools, they limit integration. Although Eckes acknowledges that not all bilingual charters segregate in this way, she does not analyse why some do and others do not and this area

¹¹ Personal correspondence with Chapel Hill Carrboro City School District, North Carolina, USA.

lacks research. Where social segregation in bilingual programmes in general has been suggested, ethnicity is usually the focus, but socio-economic segregation may also be pertinent in TWI/DL charters as they are often highly desirable for middle class families, thereby creating competition for places. Schools sometimes take advantage of this, for instance, in the highly competitive post-Katrina New Orleans, by selecting a French specialism (Jabbar, 2015).

Therefore, the opportunity afforded by school choice and charter status to some planners comes at the cost of potentially aggravating social segregation. Potential freedoms include creating a bilingual curriculum and targeting intake through choosing a location and admissions requirements. However, this can also constrain social justice aims. As one Chicago bilingual magnet, IAMS, became more popular, its admissions policy had to be rewritten often in order to continue targeting the Spanish-speaking population (Potowski, 2007, p33). Gebhard's 2002 study about a new bilingual charter also shows how hiring under-qualified teachers (a freedom only charters enjoy) meant some were overwhelmed, leading to greater control by administrators and behaviour systems which excluded the very students who had been failed by public schooling. This shows that in addition to potential social segregation effects, there are constraints inherent to choice school status, particularly in underestimating what it takes to set up a new school.

The need for compromise and the costs for language planners

The demands of setting up a new school therefore present a significant constraint, with planners often needing to compromise parts of their vision in order to achieve their goals. Giles' 2010 autoethnography of setting up the first charter school in Georgia (also bilingual) painfully documents a lack of authority support and even local racism, despite building a considerable network in the Latino community locally. Doors only opened when another local authority stepped in as sponsor, requiring Giles to compromise when he ultimately realized that local authority sponsorship freed the school from the bureaucratic and financial instability that independent charters often face. Although both Giles and Gebhard (2002) highlight the importance of leader compromise, other stakeholder perspectives are lacking and most accounts of bilingual school origins are principally retrospective leader interviews. Nonetheless, the studies highlight that establishing advocacy networks with considerable capital are key for charter and

magnet schools, even if this entails significant compromises, including original social justice goals.

Magnet schools may not have the same degree of concerns over their survival, given that they are already part of the local authority. However, the process of campaigning for them can therefore be lengthier than setting up a charter school. This can mean that only the most active, resourced and tenacious are able to overcome potential delays. Potowski (2007), for instance, shows how IAMS relied on other federal and state-wide grants and resourceful parents to establish a private pre-school, then kindergarten, before Chicago schools finally put out a tender for a new magnet school, which they then successfully applied for.

Throughout section 2.2 we have seen that the ability to recruit passionate advocates with skills in leadership is key. Although there is some evidence of new opportunities presented by charter and magnet school reforms, these have not always led to successful implementation of bilingual education reforms. Where programmes have succeeded, significant compromises were necessary to integrate varying stakeholders' interests. However, it still appears to be the case that many bilingual programmes may inadvertently be exacerbating social segregation. To understand this more fully, we have to go beyond existing research on establishing bilingual education programmes, which may highlight the importance of stakeholder relationships, but fails to examine the processes in detail. Therefore, section 2.3 now turns to what the wider literature on language planning has to say about stakeholder inter-relationships.

2.3 Agency in language planning research

Having established the importance of networks of advocates with significant capital when setting up bilingual programmes, section 2.3 seeks to go further in understanding the bilingual education planning process by asking what the wider literature on language planning in bilingual schools reveals about different stakeholder roles and relationships. In doing so, we will see how, although teacher agency has been shown to be key in determining language planning and policy, parental agency has been less often considered in language planning studies.

From macro to micro to a 'messy ecology' in understanding stakeholder LP agency

Despite an initial preoccupation with governments as language planners (2.1), the move towards 'bottom-up' micro language planning research has resulted in a far greater recognition of teacher agency (Hogan-Brun 2010). Gebhard's (2002) study mentioned above shows that teachers are not just implementers of language policy but themselves shape classroom-based and wider policy and values around bilingual education through their day to day decisions around, in this case, inclusion. However, despite Spolsky's 2012 highlighting of the key 'domain' of family language policy (at the micro level), parental agency in choosing bilingual education is less often interrogated, let alone the interplay between teachers, parents and administrators in determining language policy.

Several studies highlight the importance of stakeholder inclusion in bilingual education planning, particularly involving parents, although these studies are few in number. Freeman's 1996 comprehensive case study of planning at Oyster bilingual school is one exception, which traced the emergence of positive discourse around bilingual/bicultural education by teachers, parents and different community groups. However, it did not appear to question which stakeholders may have been under-represented. Dorner's 2010 study is more questioning, showing how English speaking parents' local, school-based conception of 'community' dominated local debate, leading to TWI programmes in several schools, rather than the one magnet school favoured by many Spanish speaking families. Shelby-Caffey's 2008 thesis also pinpoints a failure in communication between administrators, teachers and parents prior to the rushed opening of a TWI programme, which led to much uncertainty, resentment and instability as they created policy on the go. Therefore, we must be careful about speaking of 'parents' as one stakeholder group, as some groups may be less represented. Furthermore, stakeholder communication should not be understood at face value, as the amount and timing of information provided for each group is also significant (Dorner, 2012).

Such studies demonstrate a more ecological understanding of language planning agency as being distributed between stakeholders. However, this biological metaphor demands that we should consider all relevant stakeholders forming part of the 'ecology' as well as the wider 'environment' in which these stakeholders find

themselves in. Indeed, although micro language planning studies such as those in Liddicoat & Baldauf (2008) increasingly recognise what the authors call the 'messy ecology' of societal and political contexts, very few still give equal attention to multiple stakeholders within the same study. This means that there is still a lack of understanding of the complexity of roles stakeholders can take on at various points in the planning process. Parents are generally under-represented in these studies and are sometimes assumed to represent one homogenous group with similar interests. The exception is those studies which focus on one particular aspect of their agency, namely parents' choice to enrol children in bilingual programmes, to which we now turn.

Parental agency: who chooses bilingual education and why?

Despite a lack of research on the roles of parent campaigners, studies do exist which consider parents' role as choice agents in bilingual education, principally examining reasons for selecting a bilingual school. Several North American studies have found that economic rationales predominate for the majority English-speaking family participants in Canada, (Olson & Burns 1983) and in the USA (Lindholm-Leary, 2001; Parkes, 2008; Whiting & Feinauer, 2011). In the USA, however, participating 'Hispanic' families gave more intrinsic, integrative reasons for their choice, although Lindholm-Leary clarified that higher socioeconomic status, higher education level and longer length of time in the country, rather than ethnicity, were better predictors of economic rationales. Parkes (2008) also noted that his study's 'active choosers' (defined as those not local to a particular bilingual school) had more formal education qualifications, although no socioeconomic information was gathered. However, these survey-based studies were able to uncover little about the process by which parents may have chosen, beyond Parkes (ibid) noting how enrolled families with less English were also more likely to depend on friends' recommendations or personal contact with school staff.

Studies using interviews and ethnographic fieldwork reveal greater detail about the processes of choosing and indicate that group homogenisation based on income level, ethnicity and immigration status may not always be accurate. Dorner's 2012 study highlights the importance of, in her case, recently immigrated Hispanic families' ability to access networks through institutions such as churches and pre-schools when deciding whether to enrol in a bilingual programme.

However, in Canada, Dagenais' (2003) interviews with a group of immigrant parents highlighted how they saw immersion in French (as a third language alongside English) as an investment in securing their children's future. Therefore, it is not just affluent majority language speakers who seek the additional capital provided by bilingual education and economic rationales appear to predominate for many different groups of parents.

Beyond North America: parents securing advantage through bilingual education

Like the above studies in North America, many parents choosing bilingual education in other countries similarly appear to be focusing on the economic advantages, although several studies also highlight the importance of the social capital a bilingual programme brings. Smala, Paz & Lingard (2013) found that parents considering two secondary schools with immersion programmes in Queensland, Australia named the small class sizes and perceived high-status peers as much as the bilingual goals. Furthermore, despite offering open admissions, the authors noted that the intake was as wealthy as neighbouring schools, which the authors attributed to lack of transportation and perceived extra fees for school trips.

Other studies highlight the gain that increasing social capital therefore brings to the school as a result. In the Netherlands, the growth of bilingual international streams has been attributed to schools actively seeking parents who would help them maintain or regain a position in their local school hierarchy (Weenink, 2009). Additionally, although very little has been researched about state-funded bilingual education in England, Meier (2012) found one school had established a bilingual stream with their neighbouring private French school and became more popular with middle-class parents, creating a 'virtuous cycle' which further increased its popularity locally. It is worth remembering, however, that other bilingual schools still seek to prioritise those less privileged using active campaigns (Dorner, 2012) and admissions preferences (Potowski, 2007, p33).

These studies all show that bilingual education is often perceived to offer additional capital and, as a result, the evolution of a school offering bilingual education and the relationship between parents as choosing agents and school leaders (or campaigners pre-opening) cannot be understood from just one

perspective. Dorner's 2010 study and Potowski's 2007 ethnographic account are the closest we come to multiple perspectives in one case, with only the former explicitly concerned with setting up a bilingual programme. However, it is also rare to find studies highlighting that not all parents are alike, particularly in terms of access to the same resources when decision making.

Despite mainly focusing on teachers and governments as LP agents, parents have considerable LP power, especially over their enrolment choices. However, not all parents are alike and some groups experience considerable barriers to choosing. In many countries, bilingual education programmes have become associated with additional economic and social capital and therefore have an increasing reputation as serving an elite. In all the above studies, however, there is a notable lack of an ecological understanding of LP agency, especially regarding parents' roles beyond those as choosing agents. Finally, although there is much we can learn from studies involving schools of choice, the English legislative context is also unique and only one study has touched on parental LP agency of state-funded bilingual education (Meier, 2012). The context of free school legislation is also different from charter and magnet school reforms. Therefore, the next section turns to relevant literature from England on implementation of new language learning and bilingual initiatives, before considering the emerging research on how free schools are emerging in order to understand better the LPP ecological context of England's bilingual free schools.

2.4 Research on bilingual education and free schools in England

Section 2.2 established that that little literature exists on how bilingual schools are established as schools of choice and 2.3 showed how rarely it examines the multiple perspectives of different language planning agents. Therefore, it is unsurprising that very little relevant literature exists from England, especially since there are no longer any indigenous minority languages in England, unlike the rest of the UK. Even other Anglophone countries mentioned above have either indigenous minority or dominant second languages. England's language planning ecological context is unique. Nonetheless, given the inclusive definition of bilingual education outlined in 2.1, section 2.4 highlights how research in to other early language learning programmes in England shows that they, too, struggle to

survive, with high staff turnover and instability of funding and underutilization of parental agency. Thereafter, we will examine how emerging research on free schools shows potential for social segregation and little innovation, although currently no research has examined in depth the multiple processes involved in the establishing of a free school.

Research on state-funded bilingual or early language learning in England

The only literature on any state-funded bilingual or immersion stream in England is Meier's 2012 study. Although this highlighted the extra-linguistic advantage to the school of improving its intake and therefore its local reputation, little is revealed about how it was established and, in particular, how this process was negotiated and perceived by different stakeholders. We do know it is unique, as it had already leased out part of its building to a fee-paying French school, and is therefore not replicable. Although Meier mentions difficulties merging the different ideas of two stakeholder schools, this is not explored in detail, nor the process by which values were compromised and by whom.

Although a few other bilingual schools have opened (and most subsequently closed) they are only briefly mentioned in the literature, such as Baetens Beardsmore & Swain's 1985 attempt to counter claims of the elite status of the European School in Culham, Oxfordshire. It is worth noting that this particular school later converted to free school status, but, as a converter, it is not included in the present study (see 4.3). Nonetheless, by the 1990s, fee-paying and international schools were not the only schools experimenting with using different languages as a means of instruction. Walford & Miller (1991) briefly mention a city technology college¹² which initially offered Spanish immersion, although this is no longer the case. Similarly, the subsequent rise of specialist colleges in the 1990s under New Labour led to some schools using CLIL methods (Euridyce at NFER, 2005). Pérez-Milans' 2015 study of an inner-city school selecting a specialism in Mandarin, in part to increase its popularity, shows both how the local school hierarchy is important (theirs had been near the bottom) as well as the ability of schools to compete with each other. However, it is the only study which has

¹² City technology colleges (CTCs) were state-funded but centrally regulated schools supported financially and materially with links to industry (see Walford, 2014)

covered in any way the process of deciding on, or implementing, a language specialism.

Until 2000, the majority of second language learning research in England's schools was focused on secondary schools¹³, as learning another language had never been compulsory at primary age. The nearly 300 secondary schools with a designated language specialism established under New Labour's specialist schools scheme had a mandate to diversify languages and reach out to the community (Anderson, Kenner, Gregory & Hélot, 2008), so often linked with primary schools in their areas, but only rarely did this lead to any primary immersion-style projects (Euridyce at NFER, 2005). A systematic review of effective primary foreign language learning in England, however, did not include any of these CLIL and immersion programmes (Driscoll, 2004). Although a few recent action research studies highlight successful implementation of CLIL methodology (Mearns, 2012; Kirsch, 2012; McElwee, 2014), these projects were small-scale, have not been widely replicated and the planning processes were not discussed.

A few individual studies do cover aspects of the implementation of language learning innovation more generally. Muijs, Barnes, Hunt, Powell, Arweck, Lindsay & Martin's 2005 evaluation of the government-funded 'Pathfinders' pilot language projects noted some attempts to immerse in Music or PE. However, these attempts at immersion were axed due to stakeholder perceptions that the subject matter itself was being compromised by the over-focus on language goals. In addition, Enever & Watts (2009) and Cable, Driscoll, Mitchell, Sing, Cremin, Earl, Eyres, Holmes, Martin, & Heins (2012)'s evaluation of pioneering primary schools using modern foreign languages (MFL) ahead of compulsoriness highlighted the constraints such projects face due to a lack of long term concrete vision and high staff turnover in many schools. This supports Hunt et al.'s 2005 finding that strong leadership at the coordinated project, and individual school, level is key, consistent with Mehisto & Genesee's 2015 findings about establishing bilingual education (p34). Interestingly, Enever & Watt's surveying of parental attitudes towards primary language pilots revealed that many would have wanted more involvement, especially as some had resources they could have used to support the

¹³ See Martin (2000) for some exceptions.

school (2009, p227). Therefore, in the literature from England, the LP agency was viewed principally as belonging to the school and its staff.

Early second language learning in England's primary schools has become increasingly common, with a third commencing language learning at age four or five now, despite it not being compulsory (Board & Tinsley, 2016). However, the authors note that there is little cross-curricular work and they mention no CLIL or immersion attempts.

Utilising home languages in schools is also under-explored in most schools (ibid). Although Anderson et al. (2008) highlight many local grassroots projects using home languages under New Labour, these were never implemented more widely and, like Bourne (1991), the authors recognise the dominant approach in England is subtractive provision towards English, using bilingual assistants, rather than maintenance of both languages. Where these projects and the Pathfinders projects mentioned above (Muijs et al., 2005) did experiment with 'community languages' the focus was also on using children's bilingualism for their peers, rather than developing proficiency further. Of course, there are over one thousand supplementary, or community schools, most of which teach an additional language and share buildings, but little communication, with their mainstream hosts (Department for children, schools and families, 2010). Their funding is also uncertain, despite far greater parent investment and involvement than that found in mainstream language provision. In addition, once again, parental involvement is not equal, with cultural (Lytra, 2012) and class (Archer & Francis, 2006) divides.

Tinsley & Comfort's 2012 review of language learning in other countries for a UK audience concedes that implementing language learning reform in England faces unique challenges compared to other EU countries. Their review stresses therefore that borrowing policy wholesale from other countries, such as widespread use of CLIL, can not be the key approach. But, while the picture above highlights limited, patchy provision of early second language learning England, with uncertain funding and little parent involvement, in the mean time, bilingual free schools have been opening, and there is currently no research on what these schools are doing or how they are being established. But, before outlining how the present study fills this gap, we will briefly review what is currently known about England's free schools.

Research on free schools in England

Given the relative youth of free schools, there is a paucity of research. However, in this subsection we will see how government evaluations highlighted early on both a lack of transparency and unequal distribution of free schools. Thereafter we will examine more recent evidence that this is contributing to potential social segregation using analysis of proposer types and early intake data, before considering the lack of evidence of both competitive and innovation effects as a result of introducing free schools legislation.

Although primarily concerned with value for money, NAO's 2013 report notes that the distribution of free schools has not been in the areas of the highest need, which they link to the expense of these locations. Furthermore, the DfE is failing to monitor either the demographic intake of free schools sufficiently or how schools are using their 'freedoms'. A lack of transparency over the criteria used to assess applications is also criticised. The first academic studies have also highlighted a lack of transparency and potential indicators of social segregation in the schools approved and their intake. Investigating the nature of the emerging 'market', starting with the 'supply' side, Higham's 2014 survey and in-depth interviews with 50 free school proposers revealed that those approved were unlikely to be in deprived areas; more likely to be modelled on 'traditional' fee-paying schools; and mostly comprised teachers and parents with significant social capital and networks. Where school aims appeared novel, they focused on being small scale and using outdoor or extended day initiatives, so were not curricular. Although founders claimed to be inclusive, plans for targeting those outside their own middle class community were vague, with some admitting deliberately targeting their own networks in admissions. Higham concluded that the pattern of approving traditional schools in wealthier areas could lead to social stratification over time as both middle class parents in affluent areas, and the DfE as approvers, limited the opportunities for proposers and parents with less means.

So is there any evidence of social segregation? As data on the first intakes of free schools has become available, analysis has shown mixed evidence. West's 2014 study found little evidence of increased segregation due to the academies programme (of which free schools are a sub-type) in England, unlike Swedish free schools. Although Miller, Craven & Tooley (2014) found that schools' own

perceived pupil intake indicated little concern, self-reports have limitations. Morris' analysis using the Annual Schools Census (ASC) (2015a), however, confirmed that, overall, although the earliest secondary free schools were unrepresentative of their areas, they became more like their neighbouring schools in terms of their intake of children eligible for free school meals (FSMe). Nonetheless, some schools were still extremely unrepresentative and it would have been useful to see whether the free schools' neighbours were similarly skewed, in order to fully understand the effects of individual free schools.

Primary free school data appears to indicate more evidence for potential social segregation. Green et al. (2015) found that, although free schools were, overall, located in areas with slightly higher FSMe intake, primaries did not take their 'fair share' of FSMe children. They also took far higher ability students than their neighbours, and more children from diverse ethnic backgrounds (which the authors attributed to the large number of non-Christian faith free schools). Interestingly, the opening of a free school had no statistically significant effect on the intake of neighbouring schools, possibly due to free schools' small scale at the time of conducting the research and their wide catchment areas, although the authors expected this to change as multiple free schools open in some areas¹⁴. Although Green et al found no impact on the intake of neighbouring schools, Higham's most recent research (2015) shows that headteachers of schools near free schools have perceived a competitive impact on their intake. Although a third of these participating schools reported only a minor impact, many of these very successful schools had since considered becoming an academy themselves. However, two thirds of Higham's schools reported a marked impact, citing loss of pupils to their free school neighbours, which the ASC confirmed. Some of these were concerned that they were becoming the "needy school" in the area, exacerbated by locations of free schools changing at the last minute, leading to local micro-markets with a surplus of school places.

Research has also begun to investigate potential reasons for this social segregation, focusing on the competitive nature of local markets. Some of Higham's (2015) head teachers mentioned above noted that the free schools' traditional focus on discipline, uniforms and classical subjects was particularly attractive to many

¹⁴ One example would be Bromley, Kent, where several free schools operate within a couple of miles' radius.

parents, so the neighbouring schools also sometimes implemented these, and all participating schools mentioned targeting their marketing towards retaining the 'right kind' of students. There is also evidence of free schools targeting intake by selecting the right kind of sponsor, as Higham also reports that faith group or independent school sponsored free schools appear to take the lowest percentages of FSM students in their local areas compared with other types of free schools. Although independent schools' entrance to the state sector as sponsors is under-researched, Wilde, Green, Taylor-Gooby & Wiborg's 2015 research on the 'public benefit' provision of private schools found that sponsoring a free school not only widens opportunities for current pupils at fee-paying schools, but also helped to attract future potential pupils, particularly when this involved feeder state-funded primaries. Most importantly, sponsoring a free school is one way that a fee-paying school can demonstrate they are bringing 'public benefit', allowing them to retain charitable status.

In addition to a targeted ethos, Morris (2014) noted that secondary free schools' ability to set their own admissions could also contribute to potential social segregation. Although free schools only occasionally prioritised faith adherents, and only one a small percentage reserved places for aptitude in a named area, guaranteeing places for founders and prioritizing feeder primaries and action zones outside of catchment was more common. This could help explain segregation effects, given previous research showing families with less means are less likely to consider schools further away (Burgess, Greaves, Vignoles, & Wilson, 2009). Morris (2015b) subsequently found that, although parents were reluctant to discuss social composition in interview, they often cited academic quality and even 'results' (of what are actually brand new schools) with several parents equating the free school's traditional ethos and uniform, for example, with grammar and fee-paying schools. However, many still chose based on convenience, and it would have been interesting to know the ethos and admissions policies of the schools concerned in order to understand parents' decisions more fully.

Both admissions policies and application policies therefore present considerable constraints for many who are planning to attend or establish a free school and the research indicates this is harder for those with less means. For providers also, the 'market' in which free schools find themselves is highly constrained and appears to lack the freedoms intended. Even Miller et al.'s 2014 study which, unlike Higham

(2014) only focused on successful proposers, still noted considerable constraints in establishing a successful school, particularly the constantly changing bureaucracy, lack of resources and lack of relevant, especially financial, expertise. Local opposition, Miller et al. noted, particularly pre-opening, was also a significant constraint, even in Conservative-run local authorities. However, Higham's research (2014; 2015) shows that the right type of proposer provides a way to overcome some of these, particularly material, constraints. Additional emerging micro-level case studies (Pagden, 2015; Mason, 2015) and macro-level comparative studies (Wiborg, 2015; West, 2014) confirm that even the degree of liberalization of the quasi-market represented by free school legislation is highly constrained by both local and national politics. Wiborg (2015) has shown that England's consecutive changes in ruling party, and resulting policy, have allowed market reforms and choice in education to be more incrementally built in England than in Sweden, as England's left-right swings in power bring a strong opposition ensuring England has experienced neither the rapid expansion nor flourishing of for-profit or private interests experienced in Sweden.

In particular, despite the competitiveness of free schools, there is a lack of evidence of any curricular innovation in free schools. Although free schools appear to be exploiting their freedom to target their admissions, most appear to be offering a very traditional curriculum and ethos, despite the claim that free schools would "*promote innovation and diversity*" (Cirin, 2014, p9). Although Cirin's report noted most primary academies were planning to implement new curricula, at the time a pared-down national curriculum was being introduced anyway, which meant many community schools would have responded similarly. Cirin concluded that the ability of free schools and academies to contract services outside of the local authority, and bring new interests on to governing bodies through sponsorship were ultimately the only freedoms leaders found significant. More recent research (Wiborg et al., 2017) found that free school headteachers perceived that they had been innovative in management practices, particularly over hiring, length of day and marketing. However, curriculum innovations were less often reported and the authors question that many of those mentioned were truly innovative in the English state school context, rather than merely different to what other local schools currently offered. Interestingly, 'standalone' free schools were far more likely to claim curricular innovation than those belonging to a

cluster or 'chain' of free schools who had a sponsor in common. The authors highlight that the key constraints on innovation appeared to be three-fold: the need to satisfy regulators such as Ofsted; parents who prefer more conservative forms of schooling; and the need for 'incubation space' as part of a strong network of schools, which most free schools are unable to currently access.

In summary, although existing research on free schools highlights a limited use of freedoms over admissions and marketing, there are numerous constraints on both establishing themselves and offering innovative products. Furthermore, although the research above also indicates some competitive effect on the wider education market as a result of free schools' introduction, the nature of these changes still requires greater interrogation. However, every study above acknowledges that much is still unknown about how free schools are being established, partly due to a lack of government transparency and the high stakes involved for many participating free schools. What is interesting is that, given the lack of evidence of any substantive curricular innovation, bilingual free schools appear to be an exception. In addition, the processes by which they are navigating the constraints faced has not been explored in the literature. Indeed, the processes involved in establishing free schools has not been explored in detail beyond leader interviews. One exception is unpublished research from Pagden (2015) of two in-depth case studies of the establishing of two new free schools. Although her findings mirror those above in noting the reliance on the social capital of founders and the disabling effect of unsupportive local authorities, she also details how the constant pressure to please regulators is preventing planned innovations from being implemented. The present study in to bilingual free schools and their establishment will therefore extend this work and add to the current literature on how the introduction of free schools is changing the nature of the education market, both locally and nationally.

Conclusion: summary of findings from the literature review

This chapter has taken us through three principal areas of literature which can assist in understanding the development of BFS in England. These were studies on:

establishing bilingual education programmes (2.2); language planning agency (2.3); and early language learning programmes and free schools in England (2.4).

2.2 highlighted how few studies focus explicitly on the process of establishing bilingual schools. Nonetheless, the studies included, and particularly Mehisto & Genesee (2015), highlight that developing a tight advocacy network with a clear vision, comprising parents with significant capital and expertise are usually prerequisites. Government funding is accessed in different ways, including through bilingual magnets and charters in the U.S. Therefore, market legislation appears to offer some opportunities to expand bilingual education provision. Bilingual schools of choice in the US appear to experience similar constraints as free schools (2.4). Indeed, charter schools still need to navigate unsupportive school districts (Giles, 2010; Gebhard, 2002) and face unexpected bureaucratic burdens and skill deficits, demanding compromise in order to guarantee survival. Nonetheless, many of these bilingual schools of choice were able to gain legitimacy with local parents as bilingual advantages were marketed to the middle classes. This meant, for many parents, choosing bilingual education was a way to gain significant additional capital. This has resulted in some evidence of social segregation, favouring the more privileged, although some bilingual schools of choice have used their freedoms over admissions to try to mitigate this. Nonetheless, it is clear that choice legislation and competitive pressure are forces not easily regulated. Therefore, on the one hand, schools of choice have allowed new possibilities for bilingual education. On the other hand, however, there are significant constraints presented by these freedoms too, although the literature's pre-eminent focus on stories of 'success' means these difficulties are often glossed over, with a preference on proving outcomes, rather than processes. This study aims to build on work which rectifies this imbalance.

This thesis also builds on and extends much existing LP literature (2.3) by actively incorporating multiple stakeholder perspectives in the planning process. Although Genesee (2011) concludes that *"to be effective, advocacy efforts must include a dedicated group of parents, local politicians, and businesspeople"*, the studies included here rarely examine the perspectives of anyone but leaders. This is surprising, given that many bilingual programmes, as new schools, actively require parents support to open. Therefore, early parents often influence the values of an emerging school in a way in which is less possible in an established institution. A

full 'ecological' understanding of LP agency also demands knowledge of the local hierarchy of schools in order to understand, for example, how far parents, other schools, authorities and any surplus of school places might be contributing to segregation effects but this has also not been researched. Understanding how language planning stakeholders communicate and respond to each other is therefore key in fully understanding how bilingual schools are established in markets, but only a handful of ethnographies have achieved this depth. Again, the present study aims to rectify this somewhat.

In 2.4 we noted that the state-funded bilingual or early immersion which does exist in England is dependent on funding opportunities (meaning uncertainty of staffing), or proximity to a secondary specialist or private French school. With little stakeholder involvement, particularly by parents, and a lack of clear leadership and long term planning, any kind of pioneering language learning initiatives have struggled to take hold. BFS appear to be a counterexample to this picture, however, and the present thesis seeks to examine how. It also aims to build on existing literature on free schools in England, from which we know that many different types of proposers are emerging, with the most successful having significant capital and expertise and a traditional ethos, allowing free schools to act as proxies of private schools. These are attractive to many parents, who conflate the resulting ethos, uniform and demographics with established results. Therefore, it may not be surprising that there is some evidence that primary free schools in particular are attracting a more privileged, more able intake, possibly linked to the freedom to target admissions in order to favour the often middle-class communities establishing the school. As government transparency is limited, the processes of negotiating opening are under-examined. However, a supportive, often Conservative-led, local authority appears key, despite the fact that free schools are intended to be free of local authority control. Lack of parental support and a need to please regulators also appear to be severely limiting the potential to innovate. This leaves the principal freedoms exercised being those over management practices such as hiring, greater financial control and recruiting sponsor-recommended expertise onto the governing body. Therefore, BFS' curricular innovations once again appear to offer a counterexample to the 'norm' from existing literature and a study highlighting how they are navigating opportunities

and constraints in order to attempt to bring innovation in language learning would add a fresh perspective to the current literature on free schools.

From the existing literature, we can therefore deduce several assumptions about how BFS may be navigating free schools legislation in order to secure bilingual education, namely:

1. A tight network will be gathered around a clear bilingual vision, drawing on considerable capital through its members.
2. Use of freedoms will be largely limited to recruiting networks of families and a sponsor with desired capital, although financial freedom may also be important. Admissions freedoms may be used to achieve this.
3. There may be considerable local opposition leading to compromise in order to please national and local governments and community groups. Schools might therefore emphasise or adopt a more traditional curriculum and ethos to please regulators, which will also target their offering at middle class families in turn.
4. Two main outcomes may result. Social segregation may be evident as middle class parents outcompete others for the linguistic and additional capital offered by the school. Furthermore, if they adopt a traditional focus due to parent pressure, we may also therefore see a limiting of the bilingual curriculum.

If we are to turn these in to research questions, under the principal research question posed in Chapter one: *how are stakeholders navigating free schools legislation in order to secure bilingual education in England?* we should therefore ask:

1. Which networks and resources are campaigners able to deploy?
(*namely, how are they recruiting these and who or what might be missing?*)
2. How far are campaigners and parents able to utilise legislative freedoms?
(*namely, which freedoms are they utilizing, and which not? Why not?*)
3. How are campaigners gaining legitimacy with regulators and parents?
(*namely, how are they marketing and responding to feedback and opposition?*)
4. What kind of bilingual education is emerging as a result?

(Who are the schools serving, and to what extent is this bilingual education?)

The following chapter therefore introduces a conceptual framework, informed by market and institutional theory, which will help to understand the processes involved and support data analysis in order to answer these questions.

Chapter 3: Conceptual framework

Introduction

At the end of chapter two, four assumptions were drawn from the literature about how BFS may be navigating free schools legislation in order to secure bilingual education. Before we approach the collection and analysis of data to answer the resulting four research questions, in this chapter we consider more deeply how theorists have conceptualized what is happening in similar settings in order to develop a conceptual framework for subsequent analysis.

Following Savin-Baden & Major (2013, p139)'s definition of a conceptual framework as "*a model for thinking that is the direct result of a systematic process of reviewing and synthesizing information from a related body of knowledge,*" the concepts¹⁵ presented here emerged abductively (see Chapter 4) as I reflected on what I witnessed during fieldwork while I broadened my reading of theory in turn. Initially, this reading concerned markets and school choice, particularly in bilingual education, leading me to consider Bourdieusian theories of social capital (De Mejía, 2002; Ball, Bowe & Gewirtz, 1996) to help explain differences in parent choice. However, little literature explored the processes involved and it lacked a multi-agentic perspective. I therefore turned to works on public policy and language policy to understand schools' and authorities' roles better, which led me, in turn, to organizational analysis and institutional theory to seek explanations for the occasionally paradoxical data which was emerging from my cases.

The four final themes presented here therefore utilise concepts drawn principally from institutional literature, but also my earlier reading in relation to the four research questions outlined at the end of chapter two. These themes thereby form a structure for the subsequent analysis of individual cases and multi-case analysis, while still allowing exceptions to be highlighted. The framework is not intended to develop new theory, nor to exactly test theory but, rather, provides a theoretically-informed lens with which to make sense of the complex data generated in order to understand better how BFS are being established and with what constraints. In particular, why bilingual free schools appear to be potentially innovating when

¹⁵ Thomas (2010) argues for the use of concepts 'informed by theory' rather than testing or building a theoretical framework as this assumes the aim of theoretical generalisation. Case study research, however, appeals to the phronesis of readers (see 4.2).

other schools of choice have stuck with what is known (2.4). Therefore, within each section presented below, the theory supporting the emergence of such curricular innovation will be discussed in addition to potential theoretical constraints. Before presenting the four themes, however, I wish to briefly introduce institutional theory and, in particular, neo-institutionalism, in order to justify its utility in understanding the emergence of new forms of schooling.

Institutionalism and neo-institutionalism: a basic background

In this sub-section, I will briefly introduce institutional theory and, in particular, neo-institutionalism. Social scientists have long sought varying models to understand collective organisations such as schools, exemplified by the multiple strands of organizational analysis (Morgan, 2006). But what differentiates an institution from an organisation? The concept of ‘institutions’ goes at least as far back as Durkheim who saw them as structured sets of human relationships constituted by both cognitive and moral symbols, potentially formalised in strict rules, or simply through a handshake (see Bidwell, 2006 p34). Both these extreme examples (rules and handshakes) predict and fix patterns of action beyond individual choice and behaviour. This is what makes them institutions, namely being: structural features of a society; with some degree of stability over time; affecting each individual’s behaviour; and reflecting and building a core set of shared underlying values (Peters, 2005, pp18-19). Such institutions, therefore, have considerable power over individual action. In this vein, I argue in this thesis that the quasi-market of free schools and academies in England as a whole is itself an emerging (and constantly evolving) institution, as their unique characteristics, such as freedom over admissions, become accepted as new norms or values. These values (see p59), in turn, define the institution (see 3.4) and, over time, will make them a stable structural feature of the educational landscape.

There is a long-standing debate over whether schools should be considered as only organisations or as institutions as well (Scott, 1989). It is not the purpose of the present thesis to explore this in detail, but to note that there are a number of features that set them out as institutionalized settings, principally their commitment “*to a set of values beyond the transmission of knowledge and skills, as well as to breadth in education and the importance of continuity and a degree of stability*” (Glatter, 2015). However, whether this description fits an individual

school as opposed to schooling in general is more arguable. Therefore, I consider it more pertinent to borrow Peters' (2005, p117) understanding of schools as organisations being 'teams' formed to 'play' in environments made stable by institution formation. Individual schools, then, are organisations nested in multiple overlapping institutional contexts, principally those of the educational quasi-market. However, these contexts also include the institutions of primary schooling, the 'community', the 'state' and the 'family' too, to name a few.

Having established that individual schools can be considered to be part of multiple overlapping institutions, we now turn our attention to briefly highlight what the study of institutionalism is concerned with. Since the days of Durkheim, the broad field of institutionalism splintered in to different branches as scholars became interested in different facets of the power of institutions¹⁶. Despite a predominant focus on institutions' power over individuals, Bidwell (2006) highlights that early scholars recognized that emergent institutions were neither fixed, nor blind: elite interests are still key in the process of institutionalization. Indeed, by the 1970s, institutional research began to be dominated by a view of individuals and organisations as rational agents seeking to exploit their contexts (see Greenwood, Oliver, Sahlin & Suddaby, 2008, p3). These scholars became increasingly drawn to understanding the utility of institutions to realise personal, vested interests using rules to regulate behavior. This 'rational choice institutionalism' is therefore far more interested in how individuals become incentivised by the desire to maximise gains through institutions, rather than the more 'blind' processes described by Durkheim above.

Other institutional scholars, however, felt rational choice approaches underplayed the structuring ability of institutions on individuals themselves. Historical institutionalists (e.g. Krasner, 1984; Pierson & Skocpol, 2002) focused their attention instead on how institutions traditionally create 'path dependency' through their early decisions by setting limits around conceivable future development. This approach, however, is limited in its ability to theorise how institutions later change or adapt. In parallel, sociological institutionalists also rejected an over-focus on the individual's rational choice within institutions

¹⁶ Several categorisations of types of institutionalism exist. Here I have used both Peters (2005; 2012) and Hall & Taylor (1996). I have selected those branches which have contributed most to either the evolution of neo-institutionalism, or those pertinent for the current research questions.

(Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Giddens, 1976). What united them was a pre-eminent focus on how institutions shape individual behaviours through a process of habituation to its norms or values (Peters, 2005, p118). Peters (2012) also distinguishes out the work of discursive institutionalists (Schmidt 2008; 2011) as that which focuses on the how ideas are shaped by, and shape, institutions in turn. Such a focus on ideas, Peters argues (2012, p126), can be useful in complementing other forms of institutional analysis. Indeed, it is this sort of eclecticism in analysis which is ultimately evidenced by the renewing of interest in what became known as 'new institutionalism' (March & Olsen, 1984).

New, or neo-, institutionalism emerged as many institutional scholars increasingly faced empirical examples which one approach alone could not understand (Campbell & Pedersen, 2001). In particular, Meyer and Rowan's (1977) study of American public schooling found that schools were highly resistant to change, with changes in classroom practice only 'loosely coupled' with ongoing policy changes at administrative levels. Rational choice theory appeared insufficient to explain this pattern, which Meyer and Rowan attributed to the stabilizing action of broader societal norms over what schooling 'should' entail, which conditioned individual teachers' behaviour to stick with what was known. These wider values or norms of the 'institution' of schooling therefore constrained the ability of any individual school to enact change.

New or 'neo' institutionalism sought to attempt a synthesis of focus on both the structuring and structured nature of institutions as social constructions. A key part of this work was explaining change as that which conforms to the 'logic of appropriateness' (March, Olsen & Hill, 1996, p249) of the socially determined norms of the institution, with which individual agents must comply. Many of these changes may only be symbolic bureaucratic ones, designed to gain legitimacy (see 3.3), while protecting the status quo of the 'technical' core, such as classroom teaching methods (Meyer & Rowan, 2006). Nonetheless, there is still room for agentic action leading to change in a neo-institutional perspective. However, the logic of appropriateness determines that successful changes are those reinforced principally through trial and error over time as new institutional norms (Nee & Oppenheimer, 2015). Therefore, although neo-institutionalism is concerned with the actions of different agents, but the principal focus is still on the norms of the institution as a whole. Unlike a rationalist institutionalist view of change, which

regards any change as being designed to serve specific interests, a neo-institutionalist view also recognises that rationally planned changes may be undermined by other, nested and overlapping institutional contexts (for instance, in schools, the values or norms of childhood). In addition, it recognises the importance of the response of institutional members to these multiple institutional contextual constraints, meaning that *“the adaptation of identities and institutions to an external environment is shaped and constrained by internal dynamics”* (March et al, 1996, p256).

Therefore, a neo-institutional analysis is one which concerns itself with the mutually constituting relationship between individuals and the institutions in which they find themselves. In particular, it is concerned with the way in which individual behaviour is conditioned by the logic of appropriateness to the institutional norms but also allows for individual agency within this, particularly in bringing new ideas in to the institution. Such analysis can incorporate multiple domains within an institution, such as different stakeholder groups, but it is often focused on the collective as a whole and the values or norms which it embodies. Therefore, it is useful for the present thesis which is concerned with a multiple stakeholder analysis as a means to understanding the norms of the emerging institution of bilingual state-funded primary education in England and both the enabling and constraining factors influencing its ability to realise innovation.

It is also worth noting that it is beneficial to use an institutionalist approach in combination with other wider sociological and organizational theoretical concepts. In particular, given a somewhat under emphasis on the agency of institutional stakeholders (see below), I draw on the Bourdieusian concept of capital, advocacy coalitions and policy entrepreneurs in order to understand better individual action within the emergence of bilingual free schools (see 3.2).

A note about ‘values’ in institutional theory

Before presenting the theoretical framework in detail, it is important to discuss the institutional concept of ‘values’ as it contributes to several parts of the framework presented below. In this thesis, I stick closely to the institutional use of the term ‘values’, where they are considered in a broad sense to be those norms, or rules, goals or conventions of an organisation which *“become infused with value”* (Bidwell, 2006, p38) and become entrenched as they become unquestioned and

highly regarded by the social actors inside the organisation. These values therefore “*become institutionalised*” (Selznick, 1949, pp256-257) and come to define the institution itself. In this definition, values are not necessarily explicitly concerned with morality and ethics and the focus is more on the ability of emergent values to define an institution to insiders and outsiders and, thereby, set the boundaries for what is considered to be permissible within that institutional setting (p75). This differs noticeably from the field of study concerned explicitly with values in education (see Haydon, 2007), concerned not only with the teaching of values, but also, increasingly, the values brought in to the classroom and values about education in general, which may be reflected in multiple ways (Haydon refers principally to the 1988 National Curriculum’s ‘statement of values’ on the self, relationships, society and environment, for example). Therefore, it is important to note, in the present thesis, the term ‘values’ may, more broadly, encompass many facets or aspects of an emerging institution, with the quintain of BFS in the present thesis representing, I argue, one such emerging institution. The values, or norms, of this BFS institution may appear to be more mundane than a more ideals-focused view of what ‘values’ are, but their role in institutional emergence, change and setting path dependency (p57) make them important analytically nonetheless. In addition, consideration of values borrowed from overarching institutions will also be important to consider in discussions of legitimacy (3.3).

Having outlined the roots of institutional theory, we will now examine these concepts alongside several key institutional concepts in more detail. First, in 3.1, I consider the tension around stakeholder agency and power relations, which institutional theory has never quite resolved, and how the broader organizational literature on advocacy coalitions and sociological concept of capital help to understand individual action in the emergence of new forms of schooling. In 3.2 we examine in more detail what institutional theory brings to the study of educational quasi-markets, before focusing in on the importance of gaining legitimacy (3.3) in shaping values in newly emerging institutions (3.4) such as, potentially, bilingual education in England.

3.1 Advocacy coalitions, institutional agents & the social reproduction of capital

Greenwood et al (2008, p3) note that the pioneers of the ‘new institutionalism’, attributed the rise of bureaucracy, particularly in public schooling, to both the institutional context *and* the complex social networks in which organisations functioned, although far less attention was given to the latter in subsequent work. Generally, more focus has been on institutions’ power over individuals than the agency of individuals within institutions, as most institutionalist literature has preferred to focus on persistence rather than emergence or change. Therefore, in this section, in order to understand the process of institutionalization better, we need to consider literature on the networks (or alliances or coalitions) that exist within institutional fields or contexts and individual roles within these. This involves turning slightly away from the core arguments of institutional theory towards the broader sociological and organizational theoretical concepts of advocacy coalitions, policy entrepreneurship and Bourdieusian capital.

Advocacy coalitions and their role in organisational change

Unlike institutional theory, the field of language planning has become increasingly concerned in recent years with understanding agency (2.3). However, frameworks are still lacking (Liddicoat & Taylor Leach 2014). Sloboda, Szabó-Gilinger, Vigers, & Šimičić (2007) show how Sabatier’s concept of different advocacy coalitions as groups of people from varying sectors who ‘*share a set of normative and causal beliefs*’ and coordinate in ‘*a non-trivial degree of coordinated activity over time*’ can be helpful in understanding language policy change. The authors show that advocacy coalitions interact in a ‘policy subsystem’ and incrementally influence policy change through their mobilisation of different resources in institutional arenas, including numbers of ‘troops’, skilful leadership and formal legal and financial capital in response to external events (Sabatier & Weible, 2007, pp. 201–203). Of particular interest is how scholars of advocacy coalitions explain how these changes are enacted.

Change can occur through ‘shocks’, leading to coalitions’ learning and gradual change in individual and collective beliefs (Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith (1999), with benefits for the late adopter who can learn from early ‘mistakes’ (Haunschild & Chandler, 2007). Competition and imperfect copying may also lead to change within an organization (see 3.3) but Haunschild and Chandler note that

institutional forgetting may undermine institutional learning. If the turnover of people or groups in a coalition is high, this is particularly true and this can erode the power of an institution to influence members and outsiders overall. However, Mintrom & Vergari (1996) question the ability of the advocacy coalition framework to explain why some external shocks lead to rapid change, when others do not. It appears that an advocacy coalition framework underestimates the impact of internal power relations, particularly since this framework arose to challenge rational institutionalists' preoccupation with elite interests. Sabatier & Weible (2007), however, have, in more recent work, recognized the need to understand the role of different stakeholders within coalitions. Therefore, investigating internal dynamics and multiple stakeholder analysis may go some way to understanding why some changes are successful and others not. We now turn, therefore, to examine agency and power within coalitions and alliances, which will also clarify how coalitions are formed and changed.

The role of institutional entrepreneurs and bricoleurs

Lawrence (2008) highlights that, although the initial preoccupation of institutionalists was with how the logic of appropriateness created the norms which regulate institutions, institutions both wield power and are tools to wield power for individuals within them. This dialectic between institutions and agency results in the enactment of power and interests in three ways: institutional control (namely dominating others' behaviour through rules); institutional agency (namely how individuals create and transform institutions through their influence); and institutional resistance (where agents try to limit the domination or influence of others over the institution or members). Lawrence highlights that, although social movements can achieve any of these collectively, there is also space for individual agency, particularly through institutional entrepreneurship and, I would add, bricolage (see below; Peters, 2012, p12).

Kingdon's 1984 work on policy entrepreneurs (PEs) highlights how, when policy problems arise, politics occurs in parallel to those actually offering technical solutions, and it is the entrepreneur who spots the 'window of opportunity' to 'couple' the streams of action (Sabatier, 1999). Mintrom and Norman (2009) add that, If PEs are purely outsiders, change often fails, as they lack a deep understanding of local 'norms', but PEs can form alliances with insiders who may

also benefit from an outsider's critical 'edge'. PEs identify individual desires and target potential solutions, even manipulating events to accentuate crisis, rather than just responding to external 'shocks' (Mintrom & Vergari, 1996). PEs must also have high levels of technical and market skills (Lawrence, 2008), as well as being deft at assembling networks of the talented and resourced and interacting with decision-makers outside the advocacy coalition (Mintrom & Norman, 2009). Lawrence (2008) adds that institutional entrepreneurs' use of social skills to establish and maintain collective identity is key: through brokering; using ambiguity; or presenting multiple options (in order to achieve just one) to aggregate interests.

Institutions also grant power to new actors: by creating new organisational sectors to manage their bureaucracies; and by the controlling of both leader succession and general membership socialization (Bidwell, 2006, p39). PEs/IEs play a key role in these processes and often possess intimate knowledge and persuasive abilities to influence the form the coordinative discourse takes (Peters 2012, p116; see 3.3). This allows their own interests, or those of a small subgroup, to theoretically dominate. Bricoleurs, who effect change by building a collation incorporating potentially competing discourses, may similarly have their own policy goals (ibid, p120). Power may also shift between different stakeholders naturally and openly over time, as Pagden's 2015 study of shifting temporal agency due to differing technical requirements in the various stages of establishing free schools demonstrates.

It is clear that understanding the role of entrepreneurs and bricoleurs is key analytically. However, overemphasizing their role may inadvertently end up enshrining their abilities, skills and resources, without considering the capital that they bring with them. Given that entrepreneurs and bricoleurs' ability to assemble networks with sufficient capital has long been considered a limiting force on organisations' survival (Stinchcombe in Bidwell, 2006, p39), we should consider the different forms of capital which individuals in institutions may be drawing on and seeking. Therefore, we turn briefly to Pierre Bourdieu's work on the varieties of capital, how language may represent these, and their role in social reproduction.

Language as capital and its social reproduction

Above, we noted the importance of understanding the different forms of capital which individuals may be bringing to organisations like BFS. Bourdieu (1986) distinguished four principal forms of capital¹⁷: *economic* (or material); *cultural* (taste, language, forms of knowledge); *social* (networks, family, religion, heritage); and *symbolic* capital (where, for example, educational credentials act as a proxy for other forms of capital). Language, however, in its widest sense, functions not only as cultural capital. Bourdieu (1977) showed that ‘linguistic capital’ is often a symbolic proxy of economic capital, which can be exchanged, for example, through credentials such as formal examination-based qualifications. In addition, the value of a particular form of language is defined within a social ‘marketplace’ of interactions and, therefore, its use provides access to further social and material resources which “*acquire a value of their own and become sources of power and prestige in their own right*” (Heller, 1994, p7).

The concept of different forms of capital is useful in the present study, then, as the language chosen by schools may be attractive to groups seeking not only the cultural capital of the language itself, but also the additional potential resources that come with interacting in it, namely economic and social capital. New bilingual programmes may therefore provide students and families access not only to the economic and symbolic cultural capital which fluency in a (presumably high status) language brings, but also membership of what Smala et al. (2013) highlights is the elite institution of bilingual education itself, being closely related to prestigious private (and, I would add, international) schools. This is true of both founders and later choosers and Bourdieu’s concept of habitus¹⁸ is also useful when considering how campaigners gain legitimacy, and the outcomes in terms of intake. Although such schools might claim to be open for all, Bourdieu highlights that all schools tend to reflect the ‘habitus’, or taste, of the already privileged, linguistically and socially, and, therefore, become sites of social reproduction of privilege as they attract and reward those accustomed to the same habitus (see Harker, 1984). Therefore, in analysis, attention will be drawn to the ways in which

¹⁷ Here I understand capital as any “*resource that can grow with investment and use*” (Owen-Smith & Powell, 2008, p604).

¹⁸ I take here Sweetman’s definition, following Bourdieu, of habitus as “*referring to our overall orientation to or way of being in the world; our predisposed ways of thinking, acting and moving and through the social environment that encompasses posture, demeanour, outlook, expectations and tastes*” (2003, p532)

choice legislation may be a constraint and how the habitus of the case study campaigns may be at odds with local choosers.

By combining institutional analysis with the concepts of varieties of capital and habitus, I seek to analyse the actions of institutional stakeholders, including bricoleurs and entrepreneurs, as both “*structured and structuring*” (Bourdieu, in Grenfell, 2012, p50) of their institution. The differential ability of stakeholders to access the various forms of capital required to establish, or join, an organization such as a bilingual free school may, in theory, be related less to inherent skills and abilities than to the habitus of the institutional context. Therefore, we should now consider some analytical implications of stakeholder power in new bilingual schools.

Summarising 3.1: stakeholder agency and power in emerging institutions like BFS

In summary of 3.1, the organizational concepts of political entrepreneurship and advocacy coalitions allow us to see how institutional learning and adaptation to shocks as well as copying is facilitated by key entrepreneurial figures within the coalitions and bricoleurs. Their skill sets are particularly important in uniting the coalition by coupling interests and negotiating necessary compromises (see 3.3). However, their power is not necessarily neutral and their interests and pre-existing capital is also key to understand. Indeed, in considering the various forms of capital stakeholders bring, we see that this might influence the reproduction of privilege within institutions, as not all institutional stakeholders have equal access to influence decision-making and achieve goals, either individually, or collectively. If we look back at the first hypothesis and research question at the end of chapter two, namely ‘which networks and resources are campaigners able to deploy?’, we now see that understanding the roles and capital of the key institutional entrepreneurs and bricoleurs is vital in analysing the building of networks or coalitions. In addition, the involvement of a high status language may facilitate this process by acting as a symbolic proxy for additional social and economic capital.

Presumably, if all the agents in a coalition lack the necessary capital, then it is unable to effect change. Nonetheless, power is not the preserve of institutional entrepreneurs. Institutions grant their own power through new administrative roles. I would also add that, simply by being a coalition member and participating in coordinative discourse in the early stages, different agents have a say in how

norms and values are developed. There is a narrow window of opportunity to influence these, however, as Owen-Smith & Powell (2008, p602) highlight how the 'logic of appropriateness' (p58) swiftly builds hierarchies which, in turn, become normalized and take an authority of their own. Therefore, the members involved in the early stages of an organisation's emergence are key in shaping its values and granting its agents power (see 3.4).

Finally, it is also important to recognize that institutions have shifting membership. Power is not fixed and may shift as different technical capabilities are required within the organization (Pagden, 2015). Furthermore, institutions may 'forget' as membership changes, putting its stability at risk. Therefore, understanding changes in figurehead entrepreneurs and bricoleurs is key to understand how an organization becomes established.

New institutionalism offers much analytic insight into understanding the stability of organisations by recognizing the structuring power of their norms (see 3.3 and 3.4). However, hierarchies and power within emerging institutions have been given far less attention (Greenwood et al, 2008, p7). Nonetheless, by supplementing an institutional analysis with the work of Bourdieu, we can see that institutional formation is still highly dependent on stakeholders' pre-existing access to a range of capital, especially social capital, and elite assent (Bidwell, 2006, p34). As Lawrence (2008) notes, many institutional studies fail to consider the full extent of agency and interests, despite H.D Meyer & Rowan (2006, p10) noting how the interests of the powerful may disrupt institutional emergence with unexpected consequences for emerging values. The ability of entrepreneurs to build coalitions with significant capital and of subsequent bricoleurs to coordinate discourse and broker the negotiation of values (see 3.3 and 3.4) is key in ensuring the emergence and survival of new organisations. Therefore, it is insufficient to focus on the norms of an emerging organization, as power interests are clearly also at play, and analyzing how and who this involves will aid understanding of the limitations of the market reforms for those with less access to forms of capital.

In 3.3 and 3.4 we consider in more detail the importance of values and the need for compromise. However, first we will consider the second part of the conceptual framework. This will support analysis to answer the second research question, 'how far are campaigners and parents able to utilise legislative freedoms?', by

understanding how education markets, and their limitations, are conceptualized in the literature.

3.2 Innovation in educational quasi-markets

In this section, we consider the theoretical significance of innovation in facilitating the functioning of choice and competition in education quasi-markets. However, we will also highlight a number of theoretical constraints which limit the degree of innovation, namely: a lack of diversity of providers; continued state intervention; limited potential for market expansion and, therefore, lack of incentive to invest in expensive innovations; and a limited degree of real choice for ‘consumers’ who are also often more conservative than anticipated. In so doing, the question of whether bilingual education and free schools can be considered as innovations in English education also arises.

Educational markets, innovation and legislative freedoms: the theory

The argument for the introduction of market reforms in state-funded education outlined in 2.1 highlighted that allowing a diversity of providers of educational services should, in theory at least, allow greater diversification of offerings to appeal to different families choosing schools. The resulting competition for students by different providers should therefore encourage specialisation in different ways in order to guarantee a school’s ‘share’ of the market, allowing potentially better-suited ‘products’ for different learners to emerge. Proponents of educational markets go further by arguing that successful practices will be emulated by competing schools, facilitating the diffusion of best practice, thereby driving up overall standards. They also claim that market reforms are more equitable, empowering parents to choose schools outside of their neighbourhoods, thereby escaping the ‘iron cage’ of the local school district (Lauder & Hughes, 1999, pp10;18). In addition, schools can offer specialist curricula suited to previously marginalized groups, although we have previously noted the potential segregation concerns about ‘niche’ status schools in 2.4.

The anticipated scale of, and pace at which, competition creates an incentive to specialise through innovation is therefore central to market proponents’ arguments. Although schools could be considered to generally be innovating as

they adapt to changing environments, this is usually incremental, and the argument of market proponents is that the major changes needed to radically reform education can only occur through major 'shocks' (Lubienski, 2009, p9).

So when can change be considered to constitute 'innovation'? If we take Bruner's 2006 definition of innovation as "*something new, a change in customs, contrary to established traditions... ...an idea that is new to the person(s) or organization(s) even if the concept is not original,*" this could describe even incremental changes. It does not necessitate research and development facilities, as it may merely involve entrepreneurial borrowing. However, the definition still retains an element of 'shock', implying a significant change in behaviours and mental attitudes of stakeholders. Perceptions are key. Therefore, we may consider, for example, bilingual free schools to be innovative even if their immersion model is heavily influenced by other schools or other countries' systems, if stakeholders perceive the model as such.

Are free schools themselves an innovation? We should guard against the conflation of diversification with innovation, for example, by assuming that a bilingual free school, simply by being a new school locally, is inherently innovative (Lubienski, 2003, p402). But what about free schools' governance structure? The important point is to distinguish, as Lubienski elsewhere does (2009), between innovation of product, which is visible to all, for instance fluency in French; innovation of process, such as less-visible-to-parents online-learning pedagogies; and administrative innovation, for instance in salary structures, which parents never see. Only the first, Lubienski argues, can be truly considered to function as innovation in markets, as only visible products can be judged by families. However, this appears to underestimate many parents' capacity; their often multiple interests as founders of free schools; and schools' marketing, where a far from visible 'ethos' is still commonly used as a point of distinction. So, although free schools in and of themselves may not be tangibly innovative, their ability to be perceived as innovative through their products and, possibly, processes, can make them so.

Although free schools, like their sister charter schools, are "*neither sufficient nor necessary*" (Lubienski, 2003, p18) to realise the "*something new*" of curricular 'innovation', schools with less accountability to the state should, in theory, enjoy

greater freedom to innovate their 'products' where others are expected to conform to the established practices, expectations and constraints of legislature. Such reforms, therefore, challenge the presumption of 'loose coupling' of administrative and classroom levels in schools (p58) because new forms of governance are less entangled in bureaucracy and, it is argued, are therefore better able to respond to, and support, product innovation. So what would this 'freedom' to innovate look like in such schools? Merely being *free from* certain regulations in the context of an education market cannot guarantee change or innovation. Instead, it may be important to consider what free schools are actually *free to do* (Berlin, 1958), which is highly constrained in the context of English free schools.

Milton and Rose Friedman, two of the biggest advocates of markets in education, warned that supplier approval and regulation must remain flexible in order to allow real choice and diversity of innovation (Friedman & Friedman, 1990, p155). So, how far can we really consider 'free schools' or charter schools as operating in a true market? Is there really liberty for suppliers? Who are the consumers and how do they choose? We now turn to examine the failure in the market-based assumptions outlined above, using first empirical evidence, before turning to institutionalism to explain these failures theoretically in 3.3.

Innovation in a constrained school market: the reality

If we consider the research base on innovation in education markets, there is very little evidence of product innovation (Lubienski, 2003 p418; 2009, p37; Cirin, 2014). This appears to be due to the failure of most quasi-market mechanisms in addition to wider institutional constraints.

As we explored in 2.1, state-funded education is, at best, a quasi-market (Le Grand, 1991). The supply side is limited to those approved by government, and may not include, in England, profit-seeking companies. The size of the market share is also limited physically: schools have finite capacities and, both in overcrowded urban and remote rural locations, there is little realistic 'choice'. Suppliers' 'reward price' (Lubienski, 2009, p38) is also limited, as most pupils bring exactly the same funding (although in England the pupil premium is designed to reward those seeking to reach some more marginalized groups). School closure is also almost always very difficult in England, again constraining what should be an inherent market mechanism.

Despite apparent freedoms, the government control not only the national curriculum, but also centralized examinations, which severely limits schools' ability to offer diversity and innovation of curriculum, despite English free schools' theoretical ability to opt out of the national curriculum. Additionally, government control of the supplier side to a few 'safe' providers severely hampers diversity (Higham, 2014; Wilkens, 2013). The lack of profit means sponsors' emphasis is on economies of scale and the overall limited size of the free school market means that those few suppliers remaining become a second de facto monopoly on state education. With limited budgets, radical innovations aren't prioritized (Lubienski, 2009, p39). Lack of profit aside, schools can not be considered businesses. Their ethical priorities are largely shaped by the overlapping institutional context of state education and its norms, which is more comprehensive than competitive. Furthermore, since the nature of this institution, and therefore the nested education quasi-market within it, is still largely collaborative, it is not worth suppliers' investment in research and development if the results are quickly shared with 'competitors'. We will examine these institutional pressures further below (3.3).

There are several other assumptions built in to the view of education as a market which appear to be inaccurate and, therefore, overestimate its potential. A market assumes not only supply, but also demand. But who exactly is the 'consumer'? Legislatively, the 'choice' is assumed to be made by parents, but they are a poor proxy for other stakeholders, namely employers and the state as a whole. In addition, if students are not the primary consumer, are they then the product? Should schools be measured on, and compared by, this 'product'? Parents are also not totally rational consumers: most parents prefer their local school to one further away (Burgess et al, 2009; Lubienski, 2009, p41). Responsibilisation of the parent also assumes that all will choose equally, but information is not always readily available to all and most parents are 'conservative choosers' (Lubienski, 2003, p419), who are unlikely to transfer schools, take risks, and prefer what they already know 'works'. Furthermore, overcrowding means that choice is extremely constrained. Instead, it is the providers who can select students, especially given some limited freedoms over admissions and location.

The result is that parents who choose do so because they consider their alternatives inferior. What they seek is conservative and traditional, and research

shows they will choose based on perceptions of socio-economic, and occasionally racial, makeup as poor proxies for performance (Lubienski, 2009, p42). The resulting chief freedom used by schools as a result, then, is innovation in marketing, to position themselves towards the top of the local school hierarchy, to attract less-costly and better-performing students (ibid, p39). This is mainly an administrative freedom and, where innovative products are used, it is plausible that they are used as a marker of distinction. Rather than facilitating true innovation, quasi-markets therefore encourage traditional aspects of elite education, creating "*duplication instead of diversity*" (ibid, p40). We will explore the effect of this further in 3.3 below. However, for now, it is clear that there are numerous constraints inherent within quasi-market legislation which appear to limit the ability to promote curricular innovation.

Summary

Therefore, if we consider the second question raised at the end of chapter two, namely 'how far are campaigners and parents able to utilise legislative freedoms?', campaigners for schools of choice face significant constraints which limit innovation. The main 'freedom' used by providers is not curricular innovation. Instead, it is to compete for students by tailoring their marketing and admissions freedoms. This is coupled with questionable assumptions about the way in which many parents do not actively choose, the limited market in terms of real choice and lack of supplier profit potential. The result is that the most successful 'efficient' schools are those able to select the most desirable type of students, namely those they perceive will perform best in mandatory tests.

Product innovation forms only a potentially small part in this equation as, although it may be used as a marker of distinction, many schools achieve this distinction through marketing alone, even copying other schools locally (see 3.3 below). Furthermore, desired innovations are also impossible if they are incompatible with regulatory boundaries. The constraints on curricular innovation are therefore multiple: not only from the immediate local market of conservative choosers, but also from the wider institution of public schooling in which their market is nested. Therefore, in this case study analysis, attention will be given to responses to legislation and innovation of processes as well as products. Care will also be taken to gain a picture of the local school market in which the campaigns are launching

themselves. Note, however, that the form in which many constraints are exercised is not just through coercion. Explaining why, for example, so few schools take up the freedoms they do have, such as not needing to follow the national curriculum in English free schools, requires a deeper look at internal organizational constraints. In order to do so, we now turn to examine the institutional theoretical concept of isomorphism and how this is linked to the formation of norms and legitimacy in new organisations. By doing this, we may be able to also identify the processes by which some organisations are, counter to expectations, able to navigate the significant constraints outlined in this section in order to realise curricular (product) innovation.

3.3 Isomorphism and the need to secure legitimacy

In 3.2 we established multiple constraints on potential innovations in an education market, namely: shortage of providers; lack of profit and expansion potential; heavy state control; and conservative consumers. In this section, we examine this apparent market failure through the theoretical lens of new institutionalism as we consider, in particular, the role of internal organization of the schools and campaigns themselves in responding to new market opportunities and constraints.

Isomorphism

Above, we noted that, contrary to market proponents' expectations, schools of choice in general have seen few product innovations (3.2). That competition appears to lead schools towards 'duplication' is not surprising if we consider that, though schools may be part of the education quasi-market, this is nested within the wider institutional context of public education. The basic argument of isomorphism, put first most clearly by DiMaggio & Powell (1983) is that new organisations in particular, over time, become isomorphic with their institutional context, namely they become indistinguishable from it. Greenwood et al (2008 p6) highlight that new organisations do this in order to gain 'social approval', or legitimacy, in order to guarantee their survival.

Di Maggio & Powell (1983) identified three main isomorphic mechanisms. Coercive isomorphism principally refers to the state's, or other powerful actors', intervention in how the organization should be run. If these actors' expectations

are not met, the organization will be forced to change or shut down. However, wider cultural norms can be coercive too (Lubienski, 2003 p423): if parents don't see a school as 'real', this can force a school to change its offering. More subtly, normative isomorphism occurs as agents within an organization bring their own professional understanding and experience to bear as they establish, through negotiation, collective norms. This therefore allows the organization to pass as 'professional' and legitimate in their, and others', eyes. Mimetic isomorphism chiefly occurs when organisations are uncertain how to proceed and look directly to others outside, utilising 'stock responses' that are not subject to institutional learning or debate. This mimesis is exemplified in the multiple studies which show how schools with autonomy time and again select traditional 'ethoses', curricula, discipline codes and uniforms (ibid, p425) to mimic their highest performing 'competitors' in the local school hierarchy. Therefore, despite the apparent freedoms of a market, where there is a high degree of competition, schools actually become more like each other, as they seek the best students, and new schools 'borrow' legitimacy from more established and well-regarded competitors.

Even in the most deregulated contexts, like the non-elite, low fee private sector in Toronto, the degree of innovation is underwhelming (Davies & Quirke's 2013). Indeed, Davies, Quirke & Aurini (2006) showed how these schools actively embraced a testing culture despite their almost complete independence from state legislature. In order to understand this better, we can turn to the concept of legitimacy.

Establishing legitimacy in new organisations

Johnson and Watson (2015), citing Weber, define legitimacy as the "*taken-for-granted support of an aspect of social life... by a real or an implied audience.*"

Suchman (1995) highlighted that legitimacy is both normative and moral, as it is conferred through societal beliefs, but is also cognitive, namely that it needs to be comprehensible. It is also pragmatically strategic, in the sense that organisations manage this process to appeal to an audience's self-interest. These audiences or 'sources of legitimacy' (Deephouse & Suchman, 2008, p54) are not just the elite but also those able to move the organization or restrict it. This is not just regulators and state actors but, for new schools, parents as consumers and the wider community too (ibid, p55). However, organisations may persist without full

‘cultural endorsement’, making those agents who do grant legitimacy, despite lack of societal support, all the more important (ibid, p57).

Johnson and Watson (2015) highlight four stages of legitimation. First, an innovation emerges to address a local need. This is then validated locally in relation to existing norms either by actor justification or lack of contestation (which Suchman, 1995, terms ‘passive support’). With diffusion across the institutional network of organisations, the innovation becomes an increasingly accepted social ‘fact’. With replication, less and less justification is required. Finally, the ‘innovation’ is validated more widely as part of shared culture and, thereby, institutionalized.

Both a new form of organisation and any innovative product it offers therefore need to be legitimised. Although usually conceptualized somewhat vaguely in the literature, this legitimacy spans multiple audiences. The immediate need for legitimacy, to be seen as ‘real’, is with the direct consumers but also, in parallel, with regulatory authorities at central and local levels. However, validation is also contingent on lack of contestation, so wider acceptance in the local community and by the public in general, is also relevant.

Therefore, although much literature describes a binary struggle between accountability and autonomy in education quasi-markets (Glatter, 2012), I believe it is insufficient to refer to government as coercive isomorphic agents in an anonymous, blind process. Instead, ‘government’ is comprised of individual agents too. Furthermore, the government, both locally and nationally, as institutions, have their own ongoing legitimacy concerns, particularly at crucial stages in the election cycle, so may seek to legitimize themselves through their regulation of markets.

Organisational facilitation of legitimation

Although many institutionalists prefer to focus on the role of societal norms in a gradual process of legitimation, Suchman (1995) highlights that others prefer focusing on the role of opposition and discussion in strategic legitimacy, a more agentic view than the arguments of isomorphism (Greenwood et al, 2008, p17). Suchman (1995, p600) highlights three types of legitimation strategies. Pragmatic legitimation involves conforming to demands, focusing on recruitment and reputation building. Personal legitimacy, *“rests on the charisma of individual organizational leaders”* and is a key part of ‘moral legitimation’, along with

structural and procedural legitimation, which involve conforming to ideals and use of symbolic displays (ibid, p581). Although personal legitimacy may be temporary, individual 'moral entrepreneurs' have a key role in new organisations as a conduit for hope, allowing problems to be sidelined. The agency of such entrepreneurs and bricoleurs is also required to aid comprehensibility (through communicative discourse) in order to facilitate the third type of legitimation strategy, namely cognitive legitimation, with wider audiences. In addition, they: broker negotiations (coordinative discourse), both externally and between stakeholders inside the organization; create new audiences, particularly when legitimacy is threatened with existing audiences; and network when seeking wider institutional support.

Suchman notes that, although they are time- and resource-consuming, pragmatic and cognitive legitimation strategies may be achieved relatively straightforwardly through marketing, certification and mimesis. Moral legitimacy, in contrast, may be harder to achieve widely. Technical success is key in ensuring the conforming to demands, although symbolic displays which mimic those with moral authority (namely other successful schools) go some way to achieving this. A clear vision is important, but proving outcomes figure in this too, especially in maintaining legitimacy. Suchman also highlights that new organisations sometimes have trouble defining which institutional context they fit into (as free schools may with regards to state or independent schooling) which can lead to two responses. Actors either integrate the competing environments, appealing to the common denominators of both, or they may segregate: by exalting ceremony but ignoring performance; openly displaying cynicism over established rituals; and promising reform (Meyer & Rowan 1991). However, this is highly risky and can lead to delegitimation.

Countering the agency of strategic responses, many institutionalists highlight that organisations often use a normative repertoire of 'stock responses' (p73) to draw on when problems arise (Peters, 2005, p35). These familiar responses are often preferred, as they fit better with the core values of the organisation and its wider institution and, therefore, the act of establishing legitimate change conforms, first and foremost, to a 'logic of appropriateness' (3.1). These responses therefore define the boundaries or limits of the organisation's remit, but rarely in a conscious way. Change in this view then becomes again a more incremental process of adaptation and learning, rather than radical. In this sense, a focus on

norms is perhaps better suited to understanding change in mature organisations, than when establishing new ones.

Nonetheless, studies of new schools in particular highlight the significance of agentic responses by institutional entrepreneurs and bricoleurs. Huerta (2009, p256), in his study of a new charter school, for example, showed how leaders opted to 'succumb' to coercive isomorphic pressure, simply in order to survive. However, much of the decision to adopt state textbooks, in this case, was simply for show, which could be viewed as active borrowing of symbolic legitimacy. This allowed the school to then focus less on mere survival and begin to look again at some of their more niche values, which remained untouched by the decision to come under local authority control, rather than full independence as a charter.

Lubienski (2003, p423) highlights that such intense need for legitimacy means that schools are therefore more likely to innovate in areas outside of the core purpose of schooling. Indeed, such marginal changes may actually facilitate legitimacy through mimesis of most aspects of a 'real school' while retaining a distinctive edge in a competitive market. Scott & Meyer (1991) state that the stronger the institutional environment, the greater the need to 'make sense' and 'play by the rules' with regards to cognitive and moral legitimacy, so the institutional context of state-funded schooling puts exceptional isomorphic pressure on new schools, both coercively and mimetically. However, innovation at the edges may be easier to protect.

One final element to consider again in gaining legitimacy is the role of communicative and coordinative discourse. As ideas are communicated externally and problems arise, bricoleurs and PEs may need to reframe or 'tinker' with them. The result, in general, is gaining a wider coalition of support and greater legitimacy, but this may have unintended consequences. Note again Dorner's 2010 empirical study of the implementation of a dual language programme. She utilised Boyd's 1976 'zone of tolerance' to conceptualise the substantial resistant influence of parents and community members, in taking action when a policy impinged on their own values about who schooling is for to an unacceptable extent. Therefore, leaders as bricoleurs must navigate the interests of all and shape discourse and ideas in order to prevent an extreme reaction, which may undermine not only the

policy itself, but also wider values, for example, in Dorner's case, over who has power in educational decision making (see 3.4).

Therefore, although many institutionalists still underplay the agency of individual stakeholders in organisations, tending to describe the process of legitimacy as more normative (Suchman, 1995, p576), both perspectives have much to offer. Focusing on either one to the exclusion of the other ignores the power of each, and this thesis is built on the premise that neither an agentic nor structural approach, nor a macro- nor micro- level study alone can help us to understand the establishing of bilingual free schools in England.

Summary

In section 3.3 we have shown how new organisations' response to external pressures on them to appear legitimate mean that they often choose to isomorphically imitate more established organisations, which helps to explain why innovation may often have been avoided. The great paradox of brand new charter, or free, schools is that, as Di Maggio and Powell, 1983, p156) note,

"in fields characterized by a high degree of uncertainty, new entrants, which could serve as sources of innovation and variation, will seek to overcome the liability of newness by imitating established practices within the field."

Given the uncertainty of educational reforms, not only do such schools need to legitimize any unique product, but also their existence as an alternative school model. Given the intense coercive and mimetic isomorphic pressure on them, does this then rule out any possibility of innovation?

Davies et al. (2006, p117) argue that instability pushes some organisations towards niches, demonstrated by third sector, non-elite, private schools in Toronto, which don't have the resources to signal the most elite forms of schooling. Therefore, we might still expect innovation in new forms of schooling. However, many public education systems are a different quasi-market, with greater coercive isomorphic pressure. Davies et al's schools have less bureaucracy in their governance and are more directly answerable to their consumers through (albeit small) fees. It might therefore be expected that corporate sponsorship, or alternative governance in new bilingual schools might alleviate some coercive isomorphic pressure. However, sponsors have their own legitimacy concerns with central government, as few are yet fully institutionalised.

In a sense, what is needed in order to break through the isomorphic constraints of the institutional context, is a very strong parallel, even if overlapping, alternative institution. Schools of choice, and the educational quasi-market, are not a strong enough alternative, although Toronto's independent third-sector schools market may be closer to this. Huerta and Zuckerman (2009) conceptualized the struggle faced by charter schools as the struggle between bureaucracy and more decentralized, technically-focused classroom activities. If we visualize these as interlocking Venns (Fig 3.1), rather than being between overlapping bureaucratic and decentralized institutional contexts, free schools are not as much trying to stretch in to the decentralized space in order to establish their own institution,

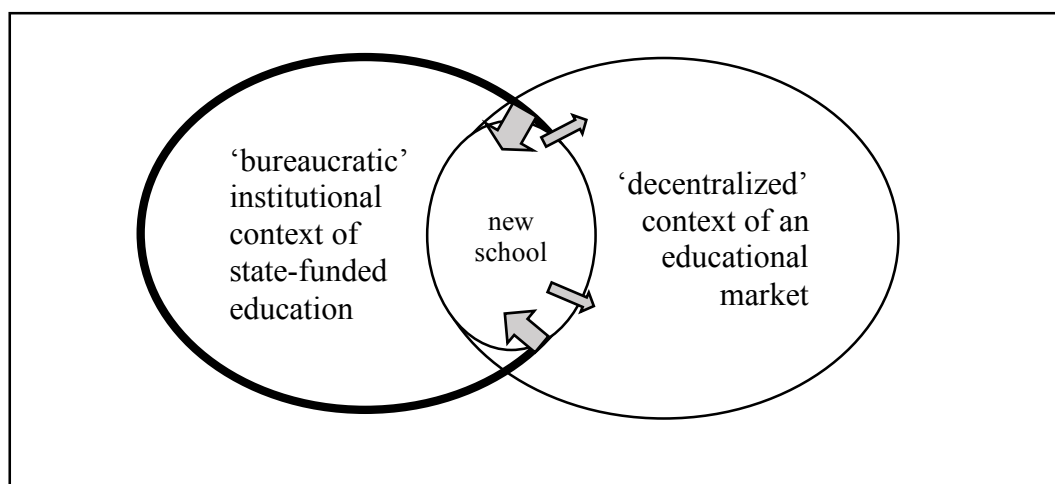


Fig 3.1. The tension faced by alternative schools (adapted from Huerta & Zuckerman, 2009)

as much as finding themselves completely constrained by the far more powerful institutional context of what state-funded, or public education is understood to be.

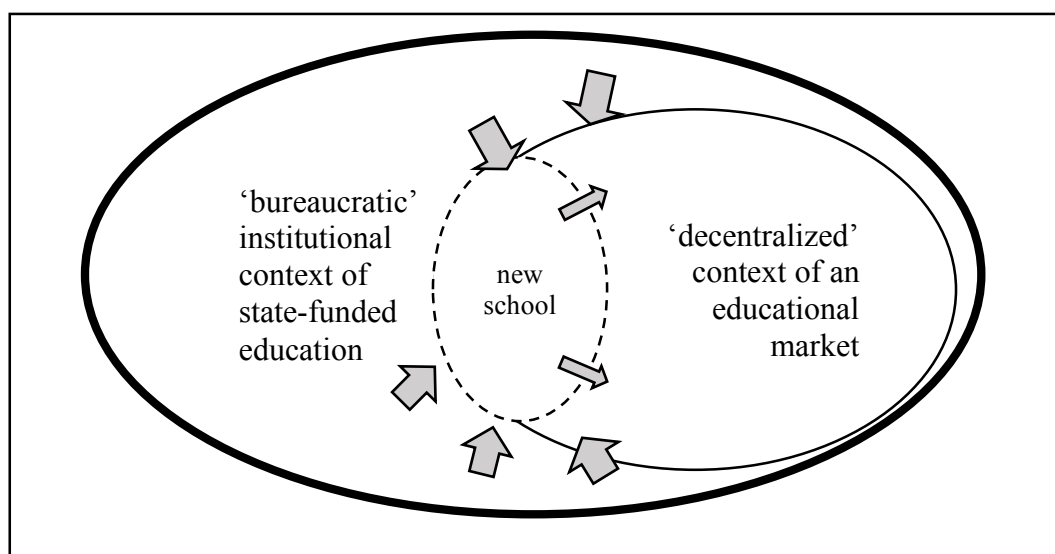


Fig 3.2 Institutional nesting of alternative schools (adapted from Huerta & Zuckerman, 2009)

Resistance may stretch the boundaries but coercive isomorphism re-establishes them.

However, this stretching action also appears to put decentralized schools at greater risk of legitimacy, which means that such schools cling increasingly, mimetically, to their wider institutional affiliation in order to justify themselves. But, this is not a permanent model. It only explains the failure of new schools to be the vehicles of innovation which some market proponents expect them to be. Furthermore, the story is not complete in 2D. If we could conceptualise a third plane in figure 3.2, then the ability of alternative schools to restrict innovation to non-core technical areas means that compromising what we could consider to therefore be more peripheral values in order to achieve symbolic legitimacy in the technical core allows them to pursue their unique core values in other areas of their wider curriculum (represented, perhaps, by a faint perpendicular emergent plane on the diagram).

Nonetheless, the result is underwhelming given the depth of claims made of how charter and free schools can be hotbeds of innovation. Berends (2015) highlights that the institutional explanation of how isomorphism defines what counts as legitimate means that parents, rather than choosing the most innovative school with the best results, will choose the one which appears most legitimate, making competition through innovation moot. However, scholars like Lubienski (2003; 2009) claim that institutionalism explains not failure exactly, but why innovations, and their effects on educational quasi-markets in general are far smaller than anticipated (see also Waslander et al, 2010). An intermediary hypothesis might suggest that securing legitimacy of the core with niche marginal innovation might be the most 'successful' model for ensuring survival and a high position in local markets, particularly where this symbolically signals additional capital to target desired audiences.

However, this process of legitimisation through compromising more peripheral ideals, or values, in order to achieve stability, may result in unexpected outcomes. Section 3.4 below considers what these might be, by shifting focus from the formation of organisations, to the way in which particularly new organisations, through the process of gaining legitimacy, shape the wider values of their institutional contexts in turn.

3.4 Value formation in emerging institutions

The fourth assumption derived from the review of literature in chapter two was that there could be two main outcomes resulting from the compromise needed to secure legitimacy for bilingual free schools: evidence of social segregation and a very limited bilingual curriculum. 3.4 examines the theoretical basis for these assumptions by focusing on how new organisations may shape the values of emerging institutions like state-funded bilingual education in England.

Value formation: the theory and issues

At the beginning of this chapter, the ‘new institutionalism’ was characterized by a focus on the mutual constitution of individuals and institutions through the development of emergent norms or values. According to this logic, as an organization becomes established, routines develop which become refined through the ‘logic of appropriateness’ (p58). For organisations which push existing institutional boundaries, the norms or conventions which develop take on symbolic significance as ‘values’ identifiable both for individual agents within the wider emerging institution and, more publicly, in creating an institutional identity. Recognising the importance of values in the process of institutionalisation is not new. Selznick (1949) saw this process as one whereby structures become ‘infused’ with values, or meaning, beyond what they are technically required to do. The institution therefore ends up with inherent value itself (Peters, 2005, p34).

However, neo-institutionalism now incorporates a more agentic view by recognizing that individuals bring their own socially-conditioned values in to the institution. Institutions do not become infused with value in a vacuum. Therefore, the formation of values is a political process, involving compromise.

Discursive institutionalism (DI) ’s preoccupation with the study of interactions and idea formation in understanding change is useful in highlighting the significance of bricolage on emergent values through the brokering of communicative and coordinative discourse (p63). However, although DI explains well the ongoing evolution of ideas and membership as they mutually constitute each other, its texts seem almost silent on issues of power (Schmidt 2008; 2011). DI underplays not only individual stakeholder interests, but also the hierarchy and roles bestowed by institutions as they become established, although Schmidt’s assertion that actors use their “*background ideational abilities*” (2010, p4) during interaction overlaps

considerably with Bourdieu's habitus (3.1). Similarly, in times of uncertainty, using stock responses which conform with core values through the logic of appropriateness, can appear largely unconscious (p68). However, if we integrate the more agentic insights from work on PEs, coalitions and social capital (3.1), we can identify multiple ways in which norm or value formation may represent the interests of some better than others.

The evolution of norms as founders recruit others and implement, incorporate and negotiate the ideas and values of an increasingly diverse membership is known as 'value drift' (Peters, 2005, p34). Peters claims this is inevitable unless there is clear control. Even small changes in target membership of the group can result in considerable value shift. If certain values are to be preserved or prioritized, another solution would therefore be to control institutional membership and leadership. Finally, Schmidt (2011, p61) highlights that value drift may be inevitable during subsequent diffusion across a whole institution as "*ideas may be reinterpreted or misunderstood*". So, value drift may be conscious or less conscious.

Although discursive institutionalists see value formation as evolutionary, historical institutionalist studies repeatedly demonstrate the path dependency of decisions and actions of early pioneers. Here we can refer again to Owen-Smith & Powell's description of emergent power relations in institutions (p61) and the potential for entrepreneurs and bricoleurs to utilize the volatility of this period to reflect their own interests. Therefore, although many institutionalists disagree with a DI interpretation as it undermines institutions' stability and persistence, Meyer & Rowan acknowledge that "*interpretive processes [DI's focus] both suggest and limit possibilities for social action, framing problems in particular ways, suggesting thinkable courses of action, providing acceptable vocabularies of motive.*" (2006, p208) Institutions shape values.

As institutions embed, values can become unquestioned and entrenched over time, and, thus, such a process appears not fully incompatible with explaining stability. But most important, however, are the unintended consequences of value drift in these early stages. For example, as schools of choice become legitimised and institutionalised, so school choice becomes normalised, as well as the new forms of governance and the involvement of third sector organisations such as charter school chains. Johnson & Watson (2015) highlight that, as innovations become

institutionalised, so the social order and hierarchies within the new organisations do too, advantaging some actors and, thereby, undermining the collectivist roots of the original advocacy coalition. As this process happens quickly during volatile periods for a coalition, the social reorganization usually goes unquestioned, especially if there are more pressing legitimacy concerns. Therefore, hierarchies become tacitly accepted, despite conflicting individual beliefs. Once institutionalised, this becomes difficult to reverse.

But it is not only from an institutional perspective that we can view issues around the formation of values and ideas. Language planning scholars too are concerned with how language planning activities reflect, build on and reconstruct ideas about language.

Values in the language planning of bilingual education

In this section, we examine what a focus on values in the language planning of bilingual education programmes in general has yielded theoretically. In 2.3 we saw that language planning and language policy making are problem-oriented, with bilingual education planning scholars using two key frameworks. Firstly, by considering Cooper's 1989 framework of language planning as being concerned with who plans what for whom and how, we recognise the potential for different stakeholders to dominate the planning process, reflecting different values and interests in turn.

Secondly, Ruiz's 1984 framework of orientations in language planning highlights divergent goals and power relations at work in different bilingual education programmes in what has long been considered the 'bilingual education institution' (Lewis, 1979) in North America (see Chapter 2). Notably, Ovando (2003) showed how the values of this institution have shifted over time, through being '*contested and reformulated*' as a response to changing social, political and economic forces, leading to evolving social and political priorities for the stakeholders concerned. If we consider dual language programmes as a specific sub-institutional example, their roots originate in parents and leaders contesting the subtractive nature of TBE programmes, which reflect a *language-as-problem* orientation (2.1). Bilingual education, they argued, should instead be about *language-as-right*. However, as dual language programmes became popular with 'monolingual' English-speaking families seeking additional capital, the dominant values and goals began to reflect

a *language-as-resource* orientation. Idealists like De Mejía (2002) still see these programmes as offering the best of both worlds in serving two differing sets of goals. However, studies like Dorner's (2010) show how the value drift can be dominated by power relations (see also 2.3).

The roots of bilingual education as entitlement for minority language speakers had its roots in the liberal values of social justice and the inclusion of language majority speakers appeared to broaden this to encourage understanding between different language communities. However, studies such as Olson & Burns (1983) demonstrate that individual opportunity (2.3) is routinely espoused by families, to the detriment of the programme's original values of unity and social justice (Valdés, 1997). New schools or programmes therefore drift isomorphically towards serving the middle ground, or the most vocal and those with high status.

If we consider the wider level of value formation across the whole bilingual education institution, Ovando (2003) shows that this may both be informed by, and inform, individual language status and language ideologies as well. May (2000) demonstrates how institutionalisation of a minority language, for example, through schooling in it, means it gains legitimacy which can ultimately lead to increasing status. Macro- shifts in language ideology and language status may be beyond the remit of the current thesis, but it is worth noting the contribution to these shifts from the micro-level. Therefore, if we are to incorporate the full understanding of agents' interests from the micro-language planning studies in 2.3, we need to recognize the interests and norms of family language planning too (See Fig 3.3 below). This language planning and its symbolic association with other forms of capital (see 3.1) means we should redraw our understanding of the institutional nesting of alternative forms of schooling when this involves language planning activities. Parents as choice agents, as well as campaigners, in a quasi-market have power to determine values by voting with their feet. Since an institution reflects the make-up of its members, it is perhaps natural that the habitus, as a result, favours active choosers, entrenching values of the dominant as a result.

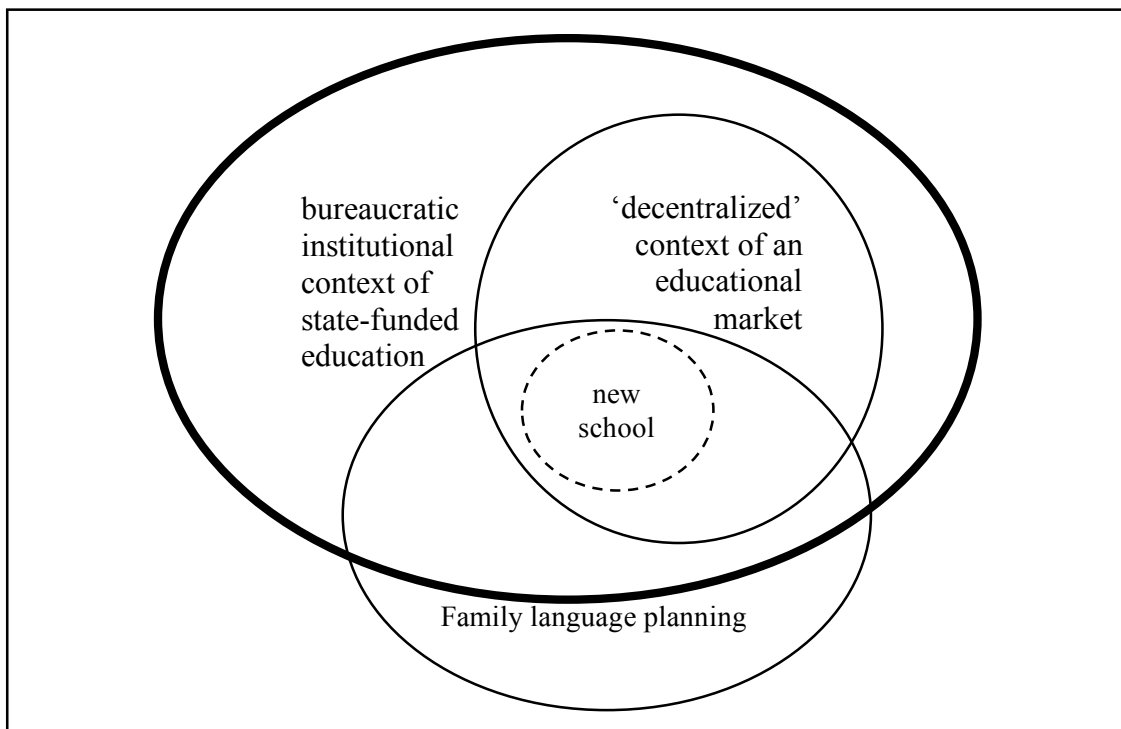


Fig 3.3 Updated conceptualisation of the institutional nesting of new bilingual schools

Therefore, understanding shifting institutional membership, and the values which they bring, is key in understanding the drift and entrenchment of particular values. This is not merely a 'blind' process, but involves power relations too, when interests differ.

Understanding the complexity of stakeholder relations and recognizing the language planning activities of parents as well is key in analysing the way in which a new organisation may be shaping the values of the wider institutions it is part of.

Summary

To summarise 3.4, we should consider that pioneers involved in setting up new organisations, particularly parents, have a significant role in defining the boundaries of emerging institutions. They may influence this through the choice of language and its status, but also by creating a habitus which is perceived to serve some groups more than others, which may be an unintentional result of value drift towards serving the interests of the dominant. As much of this drift may be critically unexamined, it becomes key to understand the internal dynamics of these campaigns and the values and interests of the individuals involved, as well as changes in this over time.

Conclusion: markets' theoretical potential to foster bilingual education reform

How may we conceptualise how alternative forms of schooling in quasi-markets may be navigating the opportunities and constraints of legislature in order to establish bilingual education? Figure 3.3 encapsulates this chapter's conceptual framework by demonstrating how a new school of choice, rather than being able to 'stretch' away from the coercive isomorphic pressures of bureaucracy into a deregulated, decentralized 'market' (Huerta, 2009), finds itself embedded within multiple institutional contexts. These contexts exert coercive pressure to conform but can also be potentially overcome through acts of mimesis in order to secure legitimacy.

Therefore, it would initially appear that attempting to bring innovation through alternative schools is futile, as it only serves to delegitimise schools. However, if we consider the possibility of a third, bulging, faint plane in figure 3.3 in non-core technical areas like partial bilingual immersion, room may exist, as long as legitimacy in the core is maintained. Gradually, this 'bulge' of innovation outside the core curriculum, we might conceptualise, could 'seep' into the wider institutional contexts in which the school finds itself, raising the possibility of wider institutional change, namely dispersing through diffusing of innovation. However, in 3.4 we noted that this diffusion might come with unexpected consequences in terms of the other values which are institutionalized in the process of establishing bilingual education, namely over which languages count and who these schools serve.

If we relate this conceptualization of institutional change through innovation in non-core areas, followed by diffusion, to Mehisto and Genesee's 2015 framework (Table 2.1), a quasi-market vehicle appears to offer several opportunities to establish bilingual education: in providing a space for the "*passionate advocates*" to act entrepreneurially in gathering coalitions from all stakeholder groups; to bring capital in to schools through these networks; for power sharing, as parents can be founders; and at least similar financing to other state schools. However, Mehisto & Genesee's named mechanism of central leadership may be lacking in such new schools, as well as a lack of clarity over goals and the status of the schools. Value drift may also threaten the key forces around social cohesion which they mention. This kind of instability, however, can be counterweighted (in their framework) by justification, which institutional theory might label the discursive

abilities of bricoleurs and entrepreneurs. However, the counterweights the authors identify which resist the coercive isomorphic pressure to deliver results may be harder for new schools, unless they are able to secure a tight coalition or partners with significant expertise and capital. The framework I present here therefore builds on Mehisto & Genesee's framework and tightens the focus by identifying and utilizing institutional theoretical concepts and more explicitly focusing on the forces, mechanisms and counterweights afforded by quasi-market opportunities and constraints.

So, if we return to the assumptions derived at the end of chapter two and the research questions deduced from there, the framework in this chapter suggests that new bilingual programmes in quasi-markets may, in theory, be establishing themselves by:

1. building an advocacy coalition through the expertise, skills and networking of institutional entrepreneurs with considerable personal legitimacy, adept at decision making, befriending government and facilitating the coordinative discourse of a wide range of stakeholders. However, these entrepreneurs' roles may recede as the institution builds its own hierarchies, with a shift in power, necessitating new bricoleurs to facilitate change. Where they are unable to relinquish control, unexpected consequences may unfold as they fail to incorporate and broker the discourse of all stakeholders. Furthermore, those groups with less material and social capital may struggle to realise their vision.
2. making use of limited freedoms to select location, language and admissions to position themselves advantageously. They may decide to forego some potential freedoms, including devising their own curriculum, in order to gain legitimacy. Nonetheless, they will likely use the 'freedom' over governance structure to recruit stakeholders with additional capital and the skills needed to facilitate the building of their coalition.
3. gaining legitimacy by not only compromising aspects of their vision in response to coercive isomorphic pressure through regulatory demands, but also by mimetically 'borrowing' legitimacy from the highest status schools. They may also limit innovation in core technical areas, signaling legitimacy, while protecting innovation in more niche areas. This process will be partially coercive, as the wider institutional players, such as

authorities and sponsors, also have their own legitimacy concerns.

However, it will also be strategic. Although normative 'stock responses' may be deployed in times of turbulence, identifying a leader with charisma, able to broker the necessary negotiations, and convince those inside and out of necessary changes, will also be key.

4. compromising more peripheral values, meaning the bilingual innovation may become more limited. However, this value drift may have further unintended consequences on the wider perceptions of who bilingual education in state-funded schools is for. Both scenarios, either where the population appears to drift without control, or where certain families are actively targeted, may lead to the interests of the more powerful being disproportionately represented, leading to potential social reproduction of capital as the goals reflect the habitus of dominant group members. Bilingual free schools may therefore end up, almost unwittingly, reinforcing a view of language learning as being for an elite.

Institutional theory is predominantly used to explain why markets appear to fail, particularly in terms of their facilitation of innovation, making them "*neither sufficient nor necessary*" (Lubienski, 2009) for product innovation. Therefore, BFS appear as something of a paradox in bringing something innovative, in the widest sense, to English state-funded education. To understand this apparent paradox, we therefore need to turn to the empirical data from the schools themselves and, in particular, the process of establishing them to the point of survival, or failure, to see how this was secured, and what market mechanisms, or counterweights, are involved, using the institutional concepts outlined above. Therefore, the next chapter will outline the methodology of the study in detail, starting with its grounding in a case-based approach.

Chapter 4: Methodology

Introduction

In chapters 2 and 3 we saw that new institutional approaches seek to reconcile both structural and agentic understandings of change within organisations. Therefore, as in language planning research, there has been a move to incorporate insights from the 'micro' scale, principally through organisational studies reporting individual agents' perspectives and narratives. Chapter 4 details first how the present thesis builds on these moves in institutional and language planning studies by designing a multiple case study of bilingual free schools in England. Next, the philosophical basis for this approach is outlined as well as the study's limitations. Thereafter, it also details the practical aspects of methodology, including how data were generated, analysed, how the study evolved following piloting and ethical considerations.

4.1 Research approach

In this section, I introduce the type of emergent case study design adopted, focusing on the ability to explore rich contextual detail from multiple stakeholder perspectives, while still being able to respond to emic research concerns. This is particularly pertinent given the uncertain fields of bilingual education and free schools. Furthermore, it addresses the shortcomings of existing research outlined in chapters 2 and 3 by considering the interactions within emerging organisations seeking to implement language planning or innovation in educational quasi-markets. The multiple case design is also justified through its ability to aid tentative assertions to the emerging institution of bilingual free schools as a whole.

A case-based approach

In this thesis, case study research is defined as the detailed study of an integrated system (Stake, 2006, p2) within a specified context demarcated by time and spatial boundaries (Creswell, 2013, p97). Case studies as research approach differ from those used for teaching or record keeping as illustrative examples or anecdotes (Yin, 2013, p5). Case study research highlights clear methodological decisions which relate to tight research aims and questions; rigorously entertains multiple rival hypothesis; and establishes a clear chain evidence (ibid, p4; p20). Although

case studies may be studied in an exploratory or descriptive vein in order to understand a case's uniqueness, Stake (1995) highlights a distinction between such *intrinsic* cases, and more *instrumental* ones where researchers "*bump up a level of generality*" (Luker, 2008, p106) and become interested in what he called the 'zeta', a wider theme or phenomena which the case represents.

In order to explore the case and 'zeta' in detail, rich description from multiple stakeholders is desired, often referred to as aiming for a 'holistic' account (Yin, 2013, p55). In chapters two and three we saw how many language planning and micro-institutional studies are limited by their focus on one stakeholder group's views. Since the present study is exploring new territory and the interactions and power in an emerging institution, it is particularly pertinent that a case study approach, with its emphasis on rich description and multiple viewpoints, is therefore employed. The present case of interest, therefore, is the emergence of a new institutional configuration of bilingual education through free schools legislation in England, but the 'zeta' is the utility of markets in general to foster innovation in language learning.

A case study approach has distinct epistemological advantages. Thomas (2010) argues that a chief advantage of employing a case design is that it is the specifics of the case which interest and guide people, rather than abstract generalisations. The case should therefore be judged primarily on its ability to harness and 'speak to' the phronesis, or experiential knowledge, of the reader. Nonetheless, 'triangulation' using multiple sources of evidence is still key for many case study researchers (Stake, 1995, pp107-120) and an in-depth case approach allows for this in several ways, both planned and also by being flexible in design. Therefore, what I focus on now is the suitability of a case study approach for researching emerging fields, like bilingual education in England and free schools.

An emergent design

In 4.2 we will consider in detail the epistemological basis for the case study approach being located in the logic of abduction, rather than deduction (from theory) or induction (to theory), as a back-and-forth iterative approach between data and theory. If we accept this logic, then the in-depth case study offers the perfect opportunity for abduction, as it may respond to emerging insights from both data (emic concerns) and theory (etic concerns). In outlining how this works

practically, Alvesson and Kärreman (2011, pp58-61) advocate the following steps: identifying empirically testable themes; gathering credible material (in sufficient detail to offer a basis for claims and counter-claims); and engaging with theory throughout in order to identify potential gaps or problems (breakdowns) which remain unexplained. The researcher will therefore often need to rewrite their tentative original research questions as new 'breakdowns' are revealed in the data. Stake's (1995) 'progressive focusing' is similar, as the case study researcher's etic questions become refined by emic concerns (pp19-20) resulting in "*improving on the research questions as the study continues*" (p172). This is true of both instrumental and intrinsic case studies, as the zeta, or what causes the uniqueness of the case, may not be clear before the study begins.

In a field like free schools, where little was known at the start, such breakdowns, or an uncertain zeta, were to be expected and a flexible design allowed me to respond to this. Yin (2013, p12) contrasts this strength of case studies with much quantitative research which has to predefine variables of interest. It is, however, vital that the researcher's choices are clearly justified throughout, and we will return to this below.

For now, Stake considers one more 'dilemma' pertinent to a multiple emergent design, namely the tension between focusing on cases' similarities and the uniqueness of individual cases (2006, p7). He argues for a balance between both and, since a multiple design was chosen for the present study, it is worth briefly justifying this choice.

A multi-case design

Although Stake's initial focus (1995) was on the unique, single, case, he later moved towards "*working with a set or collection of case studies so that they effectively illuminate a common program or phenomenon*" (Stake, 2006, p.x). When we speak of a 'case', he argues, by definition, we rely on the tacit knowledge¹⁹ of the hearer of other, similar cases, "*so even when there is no attempt to be comparative, the single case is studied with attention to other cases*" (2006, p4). When the 'zeta' of the study becomes more important than the uniqueness of the single case, the object of focus becomes what he calls the 'quintain', or collective, which shares the phenomenon. Multiple cases are then selected in order to

¹⁹ Or phronesis: see 4.2

understand the quintain better. Recognising a quintain also guides progressive focusing, as the zeta and research questions become sharpened, although the researcher should remain open to surprise (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2011).

Nonetheless, Stake highlights the need to understand the complexity of interrelated events and their sequences within the individual case in its own context, rather than a reduced search for common causes for a 'zeta' (2006, p13). Like Thomas (2010), Stake (2006) highlights that universal generalisation is not the aim of multiple case study research. Instead, 'assertions' are drawn, which note individual complexity, helping to understand the quintain better, with phronetic 'naturalistic generalisation' left to the individual reader (see 4.2).

Therefore, this study comprises four individual cases of campaigns for bilingual free schools which were selected for their unique complexity, using what Yin (2013, p57) calls the logic of replication, rather than sampling, in order to understand better the quintain of the emergence of bilingual education through quasi-market legislation in England. Identifying this quintain was the result of recognizing, in the words of Alvesson & Kärreman, (2011) the 'double mystery' of not only BFS' emergence contrasting distinctly with a lack of existing provision but, moreover, their navigation of quasi-market constraints which are known to limit innovation in similar contexts (3.2).

Responding to criticisms of the case study approach

Case study researchers face similar questions to most qualitative researchers over the validity of their arguments and methods. These will be largely addressed in 4.6.

However, there are particular issues which need to be addressed when using an emergent case study approach. Firstly, I acknowledge that resources are always finite and subject to access being granted so, ultimately, the desired 'holism' is, in fact, impossible. Therefore, analytic, sampling and selection decisions by the researcher must be outlined carefully, so that the limits of any assertions can be understood (see 4.4). Such rigorous reflexivity also deflects the second criticism of emergent case design as one which is open to bias, since it relies so heavily on the researcher as its main tool. Flyvbjerg (2006, p21) goes further in arguing that this greater reflexivity means a natural open-ness towards falsifying existing theories. This is exemplified in the 'mystery finding' approach of Alvesson and Kärreman (2011) which can be contrasted with those following a neat experimental design,

who may have more invested in achieving positive results. However, this argument perhaps presumes too little of fellow researchers.

Thirdly, the case study researcher must avoid claims of generalisability, due to the small number of cases and lack of representativeness in sampling. Although many acknowledge a case study's utility in exploratory stages of research to determine what is happening and to raise questions for further study (Yin, 2013, p7), some claim case studies' lack of further generalisability means they should be avoided thereafter. There are two main responses to this. Firstly, Flyvbjerg (2006, p11) argues that, where case studies are able to falsify existing theory, they can also contribute to building generalisations. However, Thomas (2010) considers this a weak defense, and instead highlights, which Alvesson and Kärreman (2011) and indeed Flyvbjerg (2006, p7) additionally do, that all social research is perhaps erroneous in claiming that it can generate universal predictive theories, as its findings can never be truly isolated from the multiple contexts within which it is generated. A case study approach is therefore preferred as it highlights the context specificity of its findings and provides greater detail, leaving the reader and fellow researchers to draw 'naturalistic generalisations' (Stake, 1995, p19) to other contexts phronetically, which Flyvbjerg (2006) terms 'transferability'.

In summary, if we refer back to the aims of the present study (1.2), a multiple case study approach was selected in order to understand more fully, from multiple perspectives, how the establishing of free schools is facilitating the emergence of state-funded bilingual education in England, but also what form this takes in specific contexts. The multiple case study design adopted here also goes further in seeking to understand the quintain too, namely bilingual free schools, in order to highlight different complex factors which may be contributing to the relative success or failure of some campaigns in particular local contexts. Instead of aiming to generalise to the wider fields of bilingual education or English state-funded education, any assertions are drawn across the quintain of bilingual free schools, leaving the individual reader to apply generalisations phronetically to their own contexts. However, it is also anticipated that the 'zeta' of interest, namely the desire to establish innovations in an increasingly marketised system, despite its constraints, will also be applied phronetically by readers across the wider population of marketised school systems too (see 4.6).

In this section we have referred to several philosophical assumptions, notably the logic of abduction and phronesis. Therefore, we now turn to explore the philosophical underpinnings of the case study approach and emergent design in more detail.

4.2 Philosophical stance

In this section I outline the philosophical justification for a case study approach and the resulting stance adopted regarding the nature of reality and the construction of knowledge, namely moderate constructionism. Thereafter, this stance's limitations, yet usefulness, for the present study will be highlighted with respect to existing institutional and social research, the nature of the research questions and the field of interest itself.

Social constructionist roots

This thesis adopts a stance informed principally by social constructionism (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Burr, 2003; Gergen & Gergen, 2008), albeit in what Alvesson & Kärreman (2011) term a 'light' or 'moderate' form. Social constructionism's roots lie in Kuhn's arguments that radical 'paradigm' shifts in the natural sciences demonstrate that knowledge is ultimately constructed through human debate and is therefore socially and culturally mediated (Kuhn, 1962, in Savin-Baden & Major, 2013, p28). Berger and Luckmann, in their seminal 1966 work 'the social construction of reality', sought to explore the processes involved in this further. Unlike existing paradigms, they argued that reality is neither totally objective, nor subjective, to the individual knower. Ontologically, meaning is neither totally imposed by the individual, nor totally inherent to an object (Scott & Morrison, 2006, p223), as it is the product of human relationships (Gergen & Gergen, 2008). Meaning is a social construction.²⁰ Berger and Luckmann (1966) therefore argued that a form of external reality does exist, which is built by individuals negotiating and 'constructing' a shared knowledge or understanding.

²⁰ Constructivism differs from constructionism, as it is more subjective (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013, p29). For constructivists, reality lies in individual minds' constructions which can be interpreted inductively. Though knowledge is a compilation of human-made constructions (ibid, p53), 'reality' is individual and neither external nor shared, unlike social constructionism.

Nonetheless, the relationship between reality and individual understanding is dialogical, so both constantly shift as individuals respond and contribute to the shared reality in turn. Therefore, social constructionist researchers are principally concerned with the processes of knowledge construction, as it impacts on the nature of knowledge and shapes individuals in turn. Research activity is thus considered intersubjective, with data the shared construction of both researcher and researched, demanding reflexivity as a result (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013, p64; see also 4.4).

Alvesson & Kärreman (2011, p29) highlight that a key way of accessing and understanding social constructions is through language²¹. Constructionists therefore often focus analysis on the mutually constituting effect of language and society by examining discourse formation and circulation. Although there are varying understandings of what is meant by ‘discourse’ (see Blommaert 2005), Blommaert’s preferred ‘language-in-action’ hints at what Burr (1995, p64) details of discourse’s multimodal and discursive nature, in describing it as "*a set of meanings, metaphors, representations, images, stories, statements... ..that in some way together produce a particular version of events*". Therefore, the social constructionist researcher pays close attention to not only spoken and written language, but other forms of representation too.

A moderate constructionist stance

Moderate constructionism responds to the inevitable objectivist criticisms about the existence of an external reality by recognising that not all attributes of human existence are constructed only through "*discourses, institutional mores and traditions*" (Scott & Morrison, 2006, p223). Mehisto (2011, p139), for instance, distinguishes between Searle's (1996, p2) "*brute facts [that] require not human institution for their existence*" and '*institutional facts*'. Although this may be hard to distinguish in practice, Burr (2005, p93) highlights that even the most ardent constructionists recognise divergent philosophical traditions as "*two different forms of discourse*" which may be pragmatically deployed for different purposes. In

²¹ Alvesson and Kärreman clarify how viewing language as a ‘perspectivator’ in a ‘light’ constructionist stance differs from deconstructionist perspectives. Language, they state, has "*relative capacity*" to capture aspects of reality as, though highly filtered through societal and individual assumptions, they nonetheless "*recognize the pragmatic value of emphasizing its capacity to clarify phenomena*" (2011, p31) (emphasis theirs).

a similar vein, Alvesson and Kärreman's 'light' constructionist philosophy recognises that all data and theory is a construction, attempting to make sense of a very complex reality which still exists 'out there'. "*Social reality is not denied, marginalized, seen as a pure constitutive effect of discourse, nor viewed as a robust source of input... ..to transfer meaning*" (2011, p31).

When I state that I am adopting a 'moderate' constructionist stance, I therefore recognise the existence of external realities, yet acknowledge that, where human activity is concerned, meaning is intersubjective, being constructed by humans together, and is therefore open to change, contestation and differing understandings through the mutually constituting nature of discourse as language in its widest possible form. The implications of this stance will be considered further below, but I wish first to delve further in to the process of knowledge construction by examining the Aristotelian concept of *phronesis*, which arose in 4.1 and also recognises knowledge construction as a shared endeavour.

Phronesis and the logic of abduction

Although Aristotle acknowledged that both Platonic and Socratic schools of thought had their place in explaining wider worldly affairs, he questioned the relegation of experiential or 'craft' knowledge, *phronesis*, below *episteme* (universal truth) or *techné* (technical knowledge) (Flyvbjerg, Landman & Schram, 2012, p1). The concept of *phronesis*, defined by Flyvbjerg et al (ibid) as "*practical wisdom that comes from an intimate familiarity with the contingencies and uncertainties of any particular social practice*", is highly valued by many social scientists, since its experiential premise allows the constant judgments made by the reader to be recognised and harnessed. Flyvbjerg et al (ibid, p17) argue that, ever since Giddens' 1976 recognition of the double hermeneutic, we recognise that it is impossible to 'know' social reality in any objective way because of the double filtering by both participant and researcher. Aristotelian *phronesis* turns this on its head by recognising the advantage of engaging the reader's 'tacit knowledge', '*practical learning*' or '*practical theory*' (Thomas 2010, p578).

Phronetic research aims to be methodical and discerning, but bases its 'validity' (see 4.6) on portraying real-life experiences in sufficient detail to be relatable to the reader's own *phronesis*. Instead of aiming for generalisability to all populations, *phronesis* recognises the limited generalisability of all social research

and, instead, aims for practical usefulness. Yes, patterns may be drawn, but the context of research must be made clear, thereby facilitating knowledge transfer and application. The phronesis we acquire is therefore, as Thomas notes (ibid), always malleable and provisional and the 'exemplary knowledge' shared in research is not as much a model as a real-life contextualisation, intelligible through the other's phronesis. Knowledge is built through insight from similar, but different, studies. Phronesis underpins the approach of other case study researchers. Stake (2006, pp. 89-90) recognises that, although epistemic generalisations may give insights at the macro level, simplistic rules often do not help understand practical life in its contextual complexity. Tentative assertions may better facilitate this, but any generalisations are left to the reader to draw by supplementing their own phronesis with the 'vicarious experience' offered by engaging with others' phronesis.

Thomas (2010) also highlights the potential of the logic of abduction, rather than generalisation based on either deduction from theory, or induction to create theory, to develop "*looser*", "*fluid*" explanations applicable to the local or particular, rather than general population. Through the logic of abduction, heuristics or tentative 'ideas' are provided which "*serve as hypothetical explanatory concepts*" (Thomas, 2010, p577) by harnessing existing explanatory concepts in a deductive fashion when designing the research focus or problem of a study, followed by working inductively during systematic data collection, which leads to the verification or modification of explanatory concepts. Resulting abductions therefore stem from the "*close examination of particular cases*" that "*explicitly or tacitly recognize the complexity and frailty of the generalisations we can make about human interrelationships*", providing findings that are knowingly provisional and fallible, like Flyvbjerg's arguments above (p96).

Alvesson and Kärreman (2011, p3) go further, claiming that induction and deduction are artificially separated during knowledge generation. Instead, both theory and data are 'critical dialogue partners' (ibid, p4) useful throughout the abductive process of identifying a research focus, refining the problem, analysis and interpretation. Theory is therefore still key but must always be stimulated by data, and is also bound by data in turn (ibid, p17). It must 'speak' to the practical and is therefore phronetic. However, Alvesson and Kärreman recognise that the researcher's role in this dialogic engagement between theory and data is vital in

selecting the chosen theories and data construction sites, demanding reflexivity over which analytic pathways are explored or under-explored.

It is worth noting that Stake (2006) doesn't enshrine phronesis as a superior basis for social research, unlike Alvesson and Kärreman or Thomas. Rather, he recognises that generalisation is a human impulse, and research based on phronesis, like case studies, explicitly highlights the context of research, which allows the reader to form more nuanced judgments of a study's applicability. By recognising that there is not just one method by which to access 'reality', phronesis is often associated with the post-paradigmatic pragmatist stance. In this stance, research methods are selected according to which approach will best facilitate answering the research question as well as facilitating social change (Flyvbjerg et al, 2011, p20). Although not all social scientists would share this explicit goal, social change is nonetheless part of the rationale for conducting almost all social research. We will return to this goal and its implications in 4.5. First, however, we will see how the abductive process played out during the course of data generation (4.3), before examining in more detail the nature of the data itself.

Summary

This thesis uses a multi-case study design, underpinned by a moderate constructivist stance, for multiple reasons. In contrast with most language planning and institutional studies, it seeks to integrate a holistic view of the emergence of BFS by incorporating multiple perspectives and data sources. The resulting rich contextual detail therefore also facilitates better engagement with the readers' phronesis *"by increasing understanding in specific contexts as opposed to questing after the ghost of an abstract knowledge of law-like processes"* (Flyvbjerg et al, 2012, p19). The thesis' recognition and embrace of a focus on interactions between stakeholders is consistent with the moderate constructionist stance, demanding reflexivity of the researcher during the abductive process of selecting a problem of interest, cases, participants, 'texts' (in the widest sense), strands of analysis and existing theories which they consider significant (see 4.3 and 4.5).

Integrating institutionalism and moderate constructionism has precedence. Early institutionalists appeared to echo Berger & Luckmann's understanding of the social construction of institutions (see Phillips & Malhotra (2008, p703). However, though discursive institutionalism is most obviously built on constructionist

understandings, it lacks recognition of networks, hierarchies and power, as Scott & Morrison (2006, p223) note of more extreme social constructionist views.

Therefore, the present thesis embraces a more moderate constructionism and a wider institutional perspective in turn.

Language planning research, however, has traditionally been more deconstructionist or constructivist, assuming one stakeholder reflects stable attitudes or motivations without reference to interactions (e.g. Baig, 2011). This multiple case study, in contrast, provides a fuller picture, offering greater utility for researchers, practitioners and policy makers alike for examining the institutional context for language planning through free schools legislation in England. Furthermore, by highlighting the role of interactions in securing this, it also helps them to apply this to their own, or wider, settings.

The overall research question for the present study is understanding how stakeholders are navigating free schools legislation in order to secure bilingual education. Conducting a multiple case study while adopting a moderate constructionist stance is therefore useful in foregrounding interaction, rather than pre-selecting one set of perspectives. Additionally, as bilingual free schools, at least in the early stages of the present study, were not actually in existence, an emergent design was able to respond to changes, which we explore in detail now.

4.3 The early stages of emergent design

Before outlining in detail how the data were generated and analysed (4.4; 4.6), having justified the design of a multiple case study and its philosophical basis, it is important to outline how selection and sampling decisions were made within an emergent design. The aim in doing so is to facilitate better understanding of the strengths and limitations of the case study reports which follow.

Case selection

Between 2010 and early 2015, there were over twenty campaigns (see Appendix 1) for a bilingual primary free school in England, resulting in six approvals and

four open schools²². These were identified using weekly google, social media and parenting forum searches; scrutinising DfE releases on www.gov.uk portal; and networking with fellow students, education professionals and academics. This may, however, not be an exhaustive list (4.7).

Including all twenty campaigns would have prohibited holism. Instead, following the pilot, which arose opportunistically due to my availability at short notice for a scheduled event, additional cases with slightly varying contexts were selected to understand the quintain better, using a replication logic (Yin, 2013, p57), rather than seeking to verify findings exactly. In order to identify cases, I defined BFS campaigns as a group of people who planned to:

- open a state-funded free school in England before September 2015;
- offer lessons in several areas of the curriculum in a language other than English;
- cater for students from Reception (age 4); and
- who recruited prospective parents; thereby existed in the public domain.

As I engaged with the literature in parallel with data collection (see Chapter 2), I identified the following contextual conditions which might explain differences in the process of setting up BFS:

- language offered;
- stage of the campaign, as marketing changes with establishing of reputation (Oplatka & Hemsley-Brown, 2004). NPD data is also only available after 2 terms;
- type of sponsor (one campaign is a faith school);
- location (region; urban or not; local population demographics)

There is an important spatial element to note here. Appendix 1 clearly highlights the dominant regions for applications for a BFS being London and the wider South-East of England and it is no surprise that the cases included here are all from these regions. There are two main potential explanations for this, which are drawn on in individual case study chapters later. Firstly, as an overall pattern, the areas with the highest shortages of school places are generally urban or in the South-East and,

²² Four state-funded primary schools in London offering partial French immersion were not included as they are not free schools and two depend on partnership with a fee-paying school so are not replicable.

in particular, in London (London Councils, 2012). This means that there is more obvious desire from parents and even local authorities (see Chapter 8) in these areas to open up new schools than in more rural areas. In areas with fewer school shortages, parents would feel less need to set up a new primary school, particularly if there was less competition for the perceived 'best' schools and they were likely to get in to them. If we also consider distance and distribution of schools, it is often only in urban or semi-urban areas where parents have multiple realistic choices within a short distance of their home (Burgess, Greaves, Vignoles & Wilson, 2010) and, therefore, feel the desire or need to seek another primary school rather than the defacto choice where all local children in their area attend. In addition, it is worth noting that London and its commuter areas are also far more likely to have higher concentrations of speakers of other languages, given that it is consistently the area of the UK with the highest immigration overall, with 45% of the national intake in 2014 and well over 50% in the 1990s (Vargas-Silva & Markaki, 2016).

Therefore, although I was not able to sample as widely on location as I anticipated initially, my case selection reflects the dominance of BFS applications in the South-East and London and, by using the criteria above, the resulting range of cases nonetheless secured the greatest possible ability to draw assertions to the quintain.

Gaining access

Following the pilot, then second campaign (see below), three other cases were added based on the criteria above, and their potential for:

- rich description in terms of their stage in the pre/post-opening cycle;
- access to multiple viewpoints;
- potential to attend public events; and
- access to and through gatekeepers.

Some cases were excluded as they would have been entirely retrospective and difficult to recruit participants. In addition, I favoured those campaigns where I had early contact with leaders, as I found that they were generally very open and held more public events than mature campaigns. Re-initiating contact with open schools also often meant new leaders, and sometimes more restricted access as a result. I initially approached each campaign by email, introducing myself, and the

study, using a tailored information sheet (see Appendix 4). The email either asked for an interview, or informed the group that I planned to attend a public event and make notes, but not interview or record as such. If emails were unanswered, I introduced myself in person before events officially started. Often access was granted but, when not, I deferred attendance and often secured access later by respecting gatekeeper's wishes, but also using informal events to allow them to ask questions. Nonetheless, whether a case offered a different context, then information richness and access to multiple viewpoints came above full gatekeeper access. By attempting access with all campaigns, I am confident that these four cases represent the best possible diversity achievable.

Appendix 1 outlines the selection process in detail. Unfortunately, all four cases selected ended up being in the same region, as those campaigns elsewhere where I gained initial access were later dropped before I had been able to gather sufficient data. Additionally, although I had contact with two campaigns for a non-EU language, these were not successful and retrospective access to materials and parents would have been tricky. For the four selected cases, the main data generation occurred between October 2014 (when admissions opened for September 2015) and March 2015, shortly before places were allocated (thereby avoiding retrospective justification of parent choices). However, for three cases, data was generated up to twenty-one months before this. Additionally, almost all data was generated before the general election of May 2015, so the future of free schools was still highly uncertain.

Sampling within cases

Multiple stakeholder views were important for both triangulation and data richness. Leaders were contacted through websites or at public events. Parent sampling, however, requires more interrogation. Parents occupied two principal roles: leaders and 'early adopters', who were relatively easy to recruit; and the wider group of local parents who could feasibly attend a BFS. However, sampling of the latter was complicated as catchment areas were not established and some BFS allocate half their places randomly. I initially planned to sample parents of different ethnicities, language and class backgrounds to explore possible differences in choice, informed by existing research (see 2.3). However, in the early stages, the 'zeta' of the cases began to shift from parental choice to understanding

the survival of the campaign as a co-construction between leaders, authorities and parents. Therefore, although parents were selected from a wide background of religious, language, socio-economic, national and ethnic affiliations, the prime criterion was their ability to offer new information or perspectives, established through initial emails or informal chats. I was given partial access to parent databases or email lists in three cases, whereby participants could opt in. However, self-selection raises issues around who is more likely to respond and I therefore pro-actively sought conversations with parents from less-represented backgrounds at meetings. Using document summary forms (Appendix 2) to reflect on my recruiting, snowballing and inviting everyone who expressed an interest to interview, however, went some way to alleviate accusations of researcher bias in parent sampling.

Non-choosers were recruited by approaching schools with a nursery within one mile of the central postcode for admissions for the BFS, as previous research indicates parents of primary children still prioritise locality (Burgess et al, 2009). However, this resulted in access in only one case. Non-chooser under-recruitment is therefore a limitation of the study, further complicated by theoretically limitless catchment areas (see 4.6). Snowballing is limited in restricting recruitment to acquaintance-based groups, but it offered a pragmatic solution to access difficulties. It also allowed me to follow participants' suggested avenues for exploration, respecting the co-construction of the data generation process.

All possible documents from the campaigns themselves, governmental policies, media and press releases were included. Participants confirmed that no formal language learning or bilingual education policy exists for DfE advisors on free schools. Although access was initially granted with the New Schools Network (NSN), subsequent contact went unanswered. Due to public scrutiny, many participants from the government/umbrella agency domain were concerned about going on record due to lack of anonymity and putting people off applying to open further schools. This, then, is a limitation of the study. However, several sponsors were happy to be involved and, through others' freedom of information requests, application forms for successful campaigns and approval letters were released, and are included in the corpus. Appendix 3 outlines the data sources by campaign in more detail.

Pilot phases: reflections and modifications

In previous sections, I highlighted the advantages of the abductive process and case studies' flexibility in adapting to emerging emic issues, particularly in a little-researched field. What this meant was that I had an initial interest in the uniqueness of bilingual free schools in appearing to secure innovation in language learning despite long-term neglect of state-funded bilingual education in England. My phronetic understanding, informed by literature, MA research and experiences teaching in other state bilingual schools abroad, also led me to quickly focus in on the initial 'zeta' of the inherent tension between being a state school aiming to serve all families, and the mechanisms which seemed to privilege some more than others. I saw BFS as instrumental cases (Stake 1995) challenging or reinforcing social reproduction of linguistic privilege, informed by my abductive engagement with the literature (Bourdieu, 1977; see 2.3).

The pilot study during the winter of 2013/2014 trialled my data generation tools and thematic analysis approach and helped me identify potential mismatches between the way parents chose and the way schools were recruiting. I consider the main ethical challenges and tweaks in data generation methods which resulted in 4.5 and, as my pilot study went on to become a main case, findings will not be presented here, but incorporated in Chapter 6. Of the changes following piloting, minor ones included modifying information sheets to target leaders and parents with example questions (Appendix 4) and reducing the interview schedule length (Appendices 5 & 6). However, more pertinent is the analytical and theoretical shift which was prompted during piloting and recruitment of the main cases.

Practically, during piloting, I found my desire to target choosers from diverse socio-economic backgrounds became very difficult, as pre-school parents are often unclear about eligibility for free school meals. Furthermore, emergent interview themes appeared unrelated to economic status, and only inconsistently with educational background and language experience. I also recognised that my first interviewees were borrowing exact phrases from meetings and acknowledged the influence of others' questions there. Coupled with reflections on my influence during interviewing, I became drawn to social constructionism and turned my focus to how schools promoted themselves, and how this might be influencing choice (De Mejía, 2002). However, conversations with leaders for my second

recruited campaign raised the emic concern of merely surviving and I became aware that who was being approved was shaping the emerging bilingual education field in terms of languages and locations. I could no longer ignore the governmental domain, and, therefore, with an eye on emerging values in new organisations, I came to the work of institutionalists and Huerta's (2009) case-based approach to exploring situational complexity. Given the constraints and literature which highlighted lack of innovation in educational markets (Lubienski, 2009) the 'mystery' (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2011) which emerged was that any campaigns had survived at all. This abductive shift represents perfectly Stake's 'progressive focusing' (1995, p133), which ultimately meant refining the research questions too.

My main focus thus became understanding how leaders and parents were able to navigate the legislation to secure bilingual education and what type of bilingual education was emerging as a result. Around this time, having realised that I would struggle to sample the diversity of parents I had originally intended to, I discovered that the annual schools census was available to scrutinise who was choosing the school, which could also form part of the data on what type of bilingual education was emerging. Let us now turn, therefore, to the different forms of data included in the study but, before doing so, it is worth briefly reiterating the research questions which arose through the emergent, abductive engagement with the literature in chapter two while conducting the first two phases of the study (pp52-53).

The Research Questions

The principal question which crystallized during the emergent case studies was: *how are stakeholders navigating free schools legislation in order to secure bilingual education in England?* And, in order to answer this, four sub-questions:

1. Which networks and resources are campaigners able to deploy?
2. How far are campaigners and parents able to utilise legislative freedoms?
3. How are campaigners gaining legitimacy with regulators and parents?
4. What kind of bilingual education is emerging as a result?

4.4 The data

In order to answer these questions and guide phronesis (4.2), the case studies demanded detail from a variety of perspectives (4.1). Therefore, several methods of data generation were used in order to best understand how campaigners and parents are navigating free schools legislation and what kind of bilingual education is emerging as a result.

Qualitative data

The qualitative data generated aimed to build an understanding of how different stakeholders are securing bilingual education through free schools. To gain depth, different forms of data were sought and as much contextual detail retained as possible, despite progressive focusing of the research questions (see 4.2). To examine the first sub-question, public documents, supplemented with leader interviews, were sought to establish which networks and resources were utilised, although field events also revealed some contacts not otherwise made public. How far campaigners were using legislative freedoms again looked to public documents, particularly applications, although interviews and public events revealed more of the constraints experienced. Furthermore, actual practices at events were useful triangulation between intended and actual use of freedoms. The third question, how are leaders gaining legitimacy with parents, relied chiefly on parent interviews and event attendance, although publicity materials also revealed marketing intentions. Legitimacy with regulators looked to application documents and leader interviews. For the final research question, quantitative data on intake (p109) was supplemented with interview data and data from public events, documents and websites, to paint a picture of the type of bilingual education emerging through BFS. However, it is worth highlighting that the final stages of analysis were conducted thematically, which meant that all data sources were drawn on (see 4.5).

Public documents

Public documents included downloads from campaign websites, promotional materials gathered at events, press releases, consultation packs and reports (required by the free schools' pre-opening process), application forms to the DfE, campaigns' social media posts and conversations on online forums. Though online forums might be considered unverifiable settings, they were included as several

participants referred to them when making decisions, so they were involved in constructing knowledge about BFS.

It is worth noting that, following Blommaert, understanding discourse as “*a general mode of semiosis, i.e. meaningful symbolic behaviour*” (2005, p2), means that features such as colour, layout and pictures in printed or online materials were also drawn on in analysis. Where documents were not obtained opportunistically, these were requested and all documents analysed were in the public domain at the time of gathering.

Publicity events

Attending promotional events, I recorded memory joggers on my phone or notebook to write up as field notes soon after the event, before discussing with anyone, following Emerson, Fretz & Shaw (1995). Analytic insights were jotted in response to my research questions in a parallel notebook. Document summary forms facilitated reflection, organisation and subsequent sampling (Appendix 2). Such events allowed me to recruit participants but also hold informal conversations with parents, keeping a rough interview schedule in mind (see below). These conversations are included in the data as I always made participants aware of my research in the first couple of sentences in order to avoid deception, and it allows inclusion of the perspectives of a wider range of parents. Although parents may have shaped their justifications once they knew of my research, I regard all data as potentially contrived and therefore kept this awareness during analysis (4.6). At the end of conversations, I also gave participants my information sheet, enabling subsequent contact if they had concerns.

Interviews

In-depth interviews were held with 20 parents and 9 leaders, although four participants had overlapping roles, or were considering two campaigns. Face-to-face interviews were arranged at interviewees' convenience. Two telephone interviews during piloting were problematic and email interviews often went unanswered, so I strongly encouraged face-to-face interviews. Additionally, they allowed better opportunities to probe or ask verification questions by picking up subtle clues in body language. Interviews were semi-structured, allowing flexibility in order, wording and following interviewees' direction when it related to the

overall aims of the research. Guiding questions were developed separately for leaders and parents (see Appendices 5 & 6) using Luker's 2008 approach of generating every possible question you would ask the most interesting interviewee (with my research questions in mind). These were clustered until five main questions emerged, with potential follow-up questions, ordered to allow warm-up and closure. Often, establishing informed consent by discussing potential anonymity issues meant that interviewees quickly led to their biggest concerns anyway, which I preferred as it levelled the power imbalance somewhat.

Interviews ranged from 20 to 90 minutes, although typically lasted 30 minutes for parents and 45 for leaders. All interviews were recorded on a passcode-protected digital device and uploaded promptly to a secure server. Contextual notes were made soon after the interview to capture final passing insights and interruptions. All interviews were transcribed in full using conventions I developed to identify silences, hesitations and non-voiced audible responses, with time stamps, to point me back to the original recording during subsequent analysis (see Appendix 7). Only extended periods of interruption or items asked to be kept off-record were omitted. For the longest interviews, I listened once and wrote quick notes to create an interim overview document to aid interim analysis. Transcripts were shared when requested, or offered where interviewees had concerns. One recording was destroyed post-transcription at the request of the interviewee.

Interviews were key to this study as they presented an opportunity for participants to share their thoughts away from the distractions and possible restrictions of events. As a co-construction they also allowed exploration of additional, related issues that arose prior to, and during, the interview. Kvale (2007, p102) considers this the first stage of analysis, whereby participants discover for themselves new meanings, relationships and understandings, with the interviewer condensing these back to be modified or verified. This process raised my awareness of the co-construction of knowledge, and also pushed forward analysis, informing subsequent lines of questioning and additional data generation, allowing me to verify emerging insights.

Individual interviews were preferred over focus groups, as several participants indicated during early interviews that they found it difficult to talk with other parents openly about school choice. For the potential feeder nurseries, I developed

a shorter, survey-style protocol (Appendix 8), which allowed all participants to offer some insight, while allowing others to speak at length, which led to several in-depth interviews.

Responses by email

Two parents requested follow-up by email after initially meeting in person. One cited busy-ness and one felt her spoken English was not very good. Email responses proceeded by breaking up the questions on the protocol in to three sections, first questions about the family in general; then questions about school choice and the free school in particular and, finally, questions about language and religious experience. However, follow-ups were tailored to create a personal tone and often necessitated clarification questions (see Appendix 9 for an example). As discussed above, email was not the preferred option, but offered to facilitate participation. Interestingly, I subsequently met both parents in person informally and was able to clarify any final questions face to face.

Quantitative data

In 4.2, it was noted that both phronesis and a light constructionist stance may be associated with pragmatism, in both selecting the research methodology best able to tackle the research problem (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998, p21). Both Yin (2013, p66) and Creswell & Plano Clark (2011, p90) refer to an 'embedded' case study design, which I employ here, namely where analysis is conducted principally using qualitative data, but quantitative data analysis forms part of understanding one aspect of the phenomenon or case. In particular, my last sub-question (p105) about the kind of bilingual education which is emerging, may be examined through multiple data sources and, with the desire for holism and triangulation, the Annual Schools Census provides an excellent opportunity to understand what kind of families are choosing the school compared with other schools. Mertens (2007) highlights that inclusion of mixed methods may facilitate transformation and change by pushing through paradigmatic barriers. Within this mainly qualitative study, the inclusion of quantitative data secures evidence of who is attending the schools in a way which a fully qualitative approach would not permit.

Understanding how BFS' ASC data compares with neighbouring schools provides insight into how BFS are being framed in terms of who they serve. The intention is

not to prove statistically across all BFS whether the intake is more or less inclusive than neighbouring schools as they are still very young. Instead, early intake may establish path dependency of BFS as serving certain groups to the exclusion of others, especially in the absence of an established reputation or league tables. Furthermore, the exclusion of some groups means that emerging values will be shaped by a more limited range of families, exacerbating their privilege (see 3.2).

On a given Thursday in January every year, all schools in England conduct a detailed census of their students, including special educational needs, language background, ethnicity and eligibility for free school meals (FSM). Much of the anonymised data is publicly available (DfE, 2015), which allowed scrutiny of intake of BFS open for at least one term, in comparison with other local schools. Missing groups may therefore be identified. Although ethnic background at a group level is available when this applies to at least three pupils, language spoken requires special access. Therefore, following the January 2015 census, I applied for extracts for the two open BFS cases, their five closest neighbouring schools (following Burgess et al, 2009) and the whole local authority. Unfortunately, the data specially requested on language background was not supplied in time, but comparison of ethnicity, English as an additional language (EAL) and FSM status is included here (see 4.6).

4.5 Ethics and Reflexivity

Ethical Considerations

The study followed both BERA (2011) and institutional guidelines and was approved in mid-2013. However, the second phase presented new dilemmas over responsibilities to participants, the research community and the wider emerging institution of bilingual education.

I consistently used information sheets (Appendix 4) and consent forms (Appendix 11) straight away, which then led to negotiation of the level of anonymity desired. Ensuring confidentiality was only occasionally tested when snowballing led to direct questions about who else I'd spoken to. Despite using pseudonyms for all names and places, and modifying some minor identifying details such as family makeup, leader anonymity was harder to guarantee given there are so few

campaigns, with the language alone enough to identify them. An attempt to generalise the language of campaigns in a conference paper (Saville, 2014) was not pursued further as important cultural context would thereby be lost. Creating a composite case study (Creswell, 2013, p. 59) would also have sacrificed individual case complexity. While negotiating access with a second case, the campaign announced that they would not open, despite government approval and children signed up to start months later. I negotiated leader transcript verification, but during subsequent analysis, they retracted the transcript and offered an email response instead, which never occurred. Regrettably, I had to treat this case as withdrawn consent. On reflection, I realised that both 'researched' and researcher have agendas, and that the leader's questions had been geared towards gaining support which I could not provide. Furthermore, they were worried that sharing information might jeopardise any future applications. Finally, the language selected is associated with some marginalised groups and I felt persisting might actually contribute to limiting language diversity.

The need for reciprocity when securing access also arose during piloting, as one participant turned the interview to seek my personal opinion about bilingual education. I shared some brief evidence supporting it as well as questioning the validity of some claims (for example, Lindholm-Leary, 2001). However, during analysis, I realised her very revealing subsequent responses were likely informed by my incomplete summary of the field. More experienced researchers suggested deferring such discussion until after the interview, but it revealed the need for reflexivity on the co-construction of knowledge. Henceforth I tried to share emergent analytic insights with participants during the interview, without refusing totally to pursue interviewees' agendas. However, rather than seeking participant verification for every stage of analysis, I prefer to recognise that imbalance in power will always exist, and, instead, I used within-interview analysis and selected transcript verification as a compromise.

Transcription and selection decisions are sometimes glossed over in ethical review, but my withdrawn case highlighted that sharing transcripts may have a detrimental effect as detail is never adequately captured on paper. Therefore, although my transcription conventions saved time, I returned to recordings when selecting excerpts and, during write up, I tried to retain contextual detail where possible. Analysis of textual documents and responses are less obviously fraught

with ethical issues. All documents collected were in the public domain at the time. The data from online forums was only included after carefully reading the usage policy of the website and details were also anonymised. Where direct quotes have been used, an attempt was made to invite the author to participate further, or withdraw consent, but I received no response.

Finally, using quantitative data also has ethical implications, if it identifies individuals who may be at risk as a result. Therefore, I used the guidelines of the NPD where a proxy (*) is recorded when fewer than 3 children fit an ethnic category and, ultimately, used composite ethnic categories to disguise this further.

Reflexivity

As highlighted in 4.2, a constructionist stance means reflexivity is required throughout the study, as the researcher is the key tool in selecting data construction sites, methods, theories and analytic pathways. I admit my sampling was based partly on opportunism. However, use of DSFs (Appendix 2) habituated reflection on what or who might be missing and any surprises, which led me to seek less-represented groups. Alongside progressive focusing, this led to challenging my assumptions about who or what might be responsible for success or failure of campaigns, facilitated by my active seeking of multiple stakeholder perspectives. Furthermore, remaining open to 'mystery' (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2011), a key part of the abductive logic, made me routinely question my initial analytical insights and seek evidence across other data and insights from literature in a direction not initially sought, namely institutional theory. However, a researcher's starting assumptions are often deeply ingrained, and I therefore wish to highlight my own phronetic experience in order to help you, the reader, build your own phronesis.

Although in the present study I am not explicitly seeking transformation, I recognise that my research follows a long-established critical agenda²³ in bi- and multi-lingual research (See Baker & Hornberger (eds) 2001; Blackledge & Creese,

²³ Critical theorists view research as inherently politically biased, so researchers should aim to understand and reduce social inequality by unpicking assumptions and seeking change for minority groups, with focus on participation (See Creswell, 2013, pp30-31). Post-modern critical theory differs from critical social theory (Savin-Baden and Major, 2013, pp60-62) as, despite both focusing on structural inequality and power relations, the former seeks more to understand how power inequalities are constructed rather than directly giving voice to participants. This study tacitly aims for the former.

2010). Both chapter one and my MA work (Saville, 2009), frame bilingual education as a positive force and lack of language learning and bilingualism in English education as a problem. This is an assumption, fed by my experiences as a bilingual learner growing up in English schools who, after spending several years teaching monolingually in English state schools, moved through three other countries' state education systems teaching bilingually. Teaching in these schools also shaped my own phronetic understanding, guided by the literature, that bilingual education provision is unequally available to different groups in society. Therefore, I admit a starting assumption that power relations and inequality often shape bilingual education as an elite pursuit. Nonetheless, including multiple stakeholder perspectives in the present study allowed this assumption to crystallize and be challenged, which I then used to question my interpretation of events.

In the words of Creswell, it is still a tacit aim that the present study will "*bring to the surface ... concealed hierarchies as well as dominations, oppositions, inconsistencies, and contradictions*" (2013, p27), with the aim that language planners and policy makers, at all levels, will evaluate, reflect and take action to ensure equitable access to bilingual education. However, I also wish the agency and tenacity of stakeholders at all levels to be acknowledged, and allow their success to guide others, by providing the necessary detail to allow recontextualisation to their own phronesis.

4.6 Data analysis

In 4.2 above, I outlined the logic of abduction, whereby existing explanatory concepts are harnessed deductively from the literature to design a study, followed inductively when the data generated is deemed to either verify or modify the explanatory concepts (Thomas, 2010), which Alvesson and Kärreman (2011) state occurs at each stage of an emergent design. Theory and data are therefore both 'critical dialogue partners' (ibid, p4) when generating assertions. This section details what this process looked like in the present study, utilising thematic analysis tools, and how quantitative data analysis was embedded within the mainly qualitative approach to analysing cases. Finally, the cross-case analysis is outlined.

Early analysis and abductive progressive focusing

Stake asserts that, "*There is no particular moment when data analysis begins*" (1995, p71). With an emergent design based on abductive logic this is especially true, as insights from the field and literature shape the direction of the study, sampling and questioning. In 4.2 I outlined how the present study evolved from looking at parent choice, to considering school leaders and government regulators, as the zeta of interest shifted from my researcher-led etic concern (Stake, 1995, p19) over potential social segregation to the more emic issue of ensuring institutional survival. Throughout this process, I engaged with literature, initially on social reproduction, then organisational and institutional theory in turn. This process was aided by choosing an emergent, flexible design, incorporating abductive analysis with literature and data as 'critical dialogue partners'. I built on Alvesson and Kärreman's steps (2011, pp58-61) (see 4.2) by initially visiting a public event and joining a mailing list many months before piloting. Here I identified some "*empirically testable themes*", namely what kind of bilingual education was being offered, and which parents were choosing this. I then designed my pilot study with another campaign (see 4.3), in part to gather "*credible material*". In parallel, I began constructing tentative hypotheses about parent choice using existing literature. This identified a 'gap', rather than 'mystery', of understanding how parents from different social backgrounds approach choosing bilingual education. However, 4.4 shows how my 'zeta' of interest shifted, resulting in redesigned research questions to ask what kind of bilingual education was emerging, with the 'how' subsidiary at this point. As I engaged with successive cases and turned my researcher lens to the leaders of campaigns, sponsors and government, I finally turned to institutional and organisational theory.

From the data side, ongoing analysis was recorded through document summary forms (Appendix 2) which forced an early stage of analysis. In parallel, I memo-ed, partly in notebooks, and partly on NVivo, to aid later stages of more formal data analysis. Memo-ing was particularly stimulated by transcription of many interviews while data collection was still ongoing which, in turn, led me abductively to either seek verification, or identify gaps in the literature I was engaging with in parallel.

Creating and applying a conceptual framework

In the final months of data generation, I began formal data analysis, drawing on tools piloted early, based on Braun & Clarke's thematic analysis (2006). I started with the entire data set, including memos, for one whole case, reading and noting broad emergent themes in additional analytic memos in relation to my research questions at the time. These themes were both emic, 'inductive' themes (e.g. *legislative freedoms*) and 'theoretical' or etic (e.g. *compromising peripheral values*), from the literature. However, the line is often blurred, as a priori themes are likely to influence the language, and lens, of all researchers. I then proceeded to read the data from the other cases to check the themes, resulting in more memoing and 'tweaks' to theme names.

These themes were now 'flagged' in my awareness as overarching themes, whereupon I returned to the data set for one case study and coded all data in NVivo inductively more closely (e.g. *mimesis evident*). Crucially, I began to question the overarching 'zeta' of the quintain as more and more emic codes highlighted the difficulties involved in simply starting up. Namely, rather than being primarily about the kind of bilingual education occurring, a new 'mystery' began to form in front of me: how were these schools opening and succeeding in developing bilingual education despite the constraints? This was influenced not only by the data, but also existing literature on markets in education, and emerging literature highlighting the lack of innovation in English free schools and academies (see 2.4).

Therefore, the research questions shifted again, so the overarching focus became how the schools were navigating the constraints and opportunities of free schools legislation, with the outcome, in terms of how bilingual education was being framed, of secondary importance. This tweaking of questions, as Stake notes (1995, pp. 20; 172), is typical of emergent case study design and it is possible to trace both emic (*legislative freedoms*) and etic (*legitimacy*) language in them (p105). The conceptual framework reflects this language too, evident in the headings and subheadings for each case study chapter. Following the rewriting of research questions, many existing codes were simply reorganised, although some were renamed, split or removed. Some were also aggregated to reduce the overall total to around 50 codes in five themes related to the four strands of the conceptual framework.

With a framework abductively developed in relation to one case study, the second case was coded in detail using the existing codes with, again, some codes being reorganised, renamed or aggregated as new examples tested their boundaries and forced me to deal with exceptions. However, the case study chapter subheadings show that not all codes were the same for each case study, reflecting a desire to stay true to the complexity of the individual case, rather than simply looking for commonalities across the quintain (see below).

By the fourth case, the coding and themes represented quite a tight 'fit', which led to a degree of confidence in returning to the writing of the first case report, which also involved significant analytic decisions. Using NVivo, the excerpts for each code were collated and winnowed (Stake, 1995), meaning all data had already been read twice in its entirety and selected extracts read several more times. Selecting excerpts demanded further reflexivity about the voices represented and the context which was lost. Therefore, I benefited greatly from joining a reflexivity reading group, and writing a journal, during these months.

Quantitative data analysis

The quantitative analysis of intake data occurred in two principal stages. During the second phase, after piloting, I wrote a conference paper (Saville, 2014) which explored, in part, the hypothesis that the intake of bilingual free schools was socially selective and therefore did not reflect the local population. Though the findings included only one of my case study schools, they indicated that intake differed from many of the free schools' neighbours in terms of students eligible for FSM and of non-white ethnicities. However, numbers were small.

A year later, I was able to access more data, including for another school. This time, in addition to percentages of students with EAL, of 'white' ethnicity and those eligible for free school meals (FSM), segregation ratios were calculated using Morris (2015a), adapted from Gorard, Taylor & Fitz (2003).

"The SR indicates the level of social stratification in an individual school; where the SR is equal to one for all of the schools in a defined area, there would be no segregation that year, but if a school has an SR of 0.5 it is taking half of its 'fair share' of disadvantaged children. As a result of this other schools will be taking proportionally more FSM eligible students... ..The SR is calculated as follows:

$$SR = (A_i/A)/(C_i/C)$$

where: A_i is the number of disadvantaged children in school i ; C_i is the number of children in school i ; A is the total number of disadvantaged children in a subarea; and C is the total number of children in a subarea." (Morris, 2015a, p540)

For the two open case study campaigns, the closest five schools (following Burgess et al, 2009) were calculated using www.gov.uk/find-school-in-england. For one case (DGA), this was done for both their existing and long term site. School census extracts were downloaded from the national pupil database (DfE, 2014c; DfE, 2015b). For each school, and their local authority overall, the percentages of: students with EAL; students eligible for FSM; and students from clustered ethnic backgrounds were collated. For one case (Anne Frank) a neighbouring local authority's data was also used as the BFS was just a few hundred metres from its boundary. Percentages were calculated for each school for each aggregated ethnic group but, ultimately, due to so many ethnic groups using a * as a proxy when students numbered less than three, in order to retain pupil anonymity, the only robust percentage calculated and presented was the percentage of white pupils.

This data was then embedded within each case study in order to highlight how the school intake may be framing who the BFS appears to serve.

Multi-case analysis

A tight conceptual framework might be presumed to mean multi-case analysis was a mere collation of findings. However, Stake (2006) cautions that this type of approach risks overemphasising similarities at the expense of case specificity which, instead, builds phronetic understanding through its contextual detail (see 4.2). Simple aggregation would ignore the sequence of, and interrelation of events, in order to look for simple 'causes' or 'factors'.

Therefore, great care was taken to refer back to the individual case in cross-case analysis, with emphasis on case atypicality and limitations of the conceptual framework. Ultimately, however, tentative assertions (rather than grand generalisations) across the quintain were presented.

The inclusion of a negative case, a campaign which did not succeed, requires explanation. Analysis of this case with the framework indeed highlighted factors which were missing but, in the present study, I consider this negative case as raising further questions for consideration, rather than suggesting that the inclusion of what it lacked might have guaranteed success. Its inclusion is also

intended to remind the reader that the thesis is not a 'how to' guide. The ultimate aim of this multi-case analysis is to understand the emergence of free schools better and, therefore, commonalities have been identified which offer insight into how they are 'bucking the trend' by bringing innovation to the English school system. However, the aim is to do this by examining situational complexity, rather than reducing findings to a simple formula.

The negative case's inclusion is consistent, then, with the logic of comparative inference (Gobo, 2012, p205), whereby heterogeneity of cases is the aim in order to maximise, more usually, generalization to the wider population. Although the present thesis' argument is based on the logic of phronesis rather than generalization, the inclusion of a negative case strengthens the ability of the reader to engage with their own phronesis by clarifying the theoretical findings needed to generalize to the quintain of bilingual free schools in England.

Having outlined how data analysis proceeded in relation to the emergent development of a conceptual framework, we turn finally to considering aspects of quality in the research undertaken and what the present study aims to achieve with regards to establishing how stakeholders are securing bilingual education through free schools.

4.7 Trustworthiness, limitations and significance of findings

In this final section of the methodology chapter, we turn to considerations of the quality of the research presented here. Consistent with a phronetic and constructionist stance, I present the guiding criteria of research quality as being trustworthiness and transferability, in place of reliability and validity. The limitations of the study's design are then acknowledged, before highlighting its significance in the areas of language policy and marketisation in education.

Trustworthiness and transferability

When considering how to make evident, or judge, the quality of research, Savin-Baden & Major (2014, pp469-483) highlight that many overlapping criteria exist, depending on epistemological assumptions. Although many natural science and social science studies still look to establishing validity and reliability of results as

the gold standard, taking the moderate constructionist viewpoint outlined in 4.2 means we can question how any study can be truly bias-free.

Therefore, given the situational complexity of all social research, the chief criterion becomes the ability to appeal to others' phronesis (see 4.2). This is where Thomas (2010) believes a form of 'validation' can still be judged, which Flyvbjerg terms 'transferability'. Less moderate constructionists might assert that plausibility would therefore become the chief measure of quality. Although I disagree with the inherent implication in the term 'plausibility' that there is not necessarily any grounding in reality, I nonetheless agree that I must make my arguments logically coherent and evidence them. Therefore, I must accurately and convincingly enable readers – examiners, participants, educators and fellow students – of my argument with sufficient detail for them to establish its applicability to other situations and trustworthiness in general. The main criteria relevant to the quality of research therefore become the quality of argument and supporting detail, which enable readers to build phronesis.

Nonetheless, if we consider the general understanding of 'validity' as referring to accurate representation within research, all researchers must establish a degree of strength in their claims. Riessman (in Silverman, 2013, p285) highlights three facets of validity true to most social research: claims being strengthened by evidence; negative case inclusion and the testing of alternative interpretations. In subsequent chapters the first two are made evident, particularly with the inclusion of a negative case. Evidence is drawn from multiple sources where possible, and typicality is also referred to. As for entertaining alternative hypotheses, this occurred through multiple re-reading of the data (see 4.6), and subsequent cross-case analysis, although obviously not all alternatives are reported here.

Respondent validation is often desirable for validation and was partially achieved (pp108), but Silverman (2013, p282) warns that we should still view participant feedback as simply additional data. Re-establishing contact and allowing findings to be challenged is good, but does not make our accounts 'true'. Although checking plausibility and validity with a team was not possible, I benefited from feedback at a selection of conferences and student- and academic-led workshops and seminars.

Reliability, where results are seen as consistent and replicable, was chiefly ensured through an audit trail of document summary forms, documents with date stamps

and careful tracking of pseudonyms in spreadsheets, facilitated by NVivo software. With one exception (on the request of the participant), all audio recordings were retained to refer back to. Inclusion of appendices in the present thesis and retention of the context of selected extracts also aids understanding by the reader of the tools involved. Finally, case study evaluation criteria developed by Stake (1995, p131) and Creswell (2013, p265) were consulted at various key points in the study.

Limitations of the design

The chief limitation of any case study is its limited generalizability (see 4.1 and 4.2). However, as noted above, if we are aiming to build phronesis, an individual case's generalizability is less relevant. The present study, in exploring how a new form of bilingual education is being established through free schools legislation, is largely exploratory and descriptive and any assertions generated are therefore conditional. As many questions are raised as are given tentative answers. Such is the nature of research in an emerging field. Generalisability at this early stage would perhaps mean little, as it tends to assume that a certain aspect of social endeavour is fixed (see Stake, 2006, p89), which free schools' emergence is certainly not. However, by building phronesis, this study does aim to present useful assertions for policy makers and practitioners in the same, or closely related fields. Additionally, through using a multi-case design, assertions to the quintain are possible.

The small size of the study might traditionally be considered a limitation: only four cases are presented and, currently, there are only six bilingual free schools open. The findings therefore may not be as widely significant yet as initially conceived at the outset of the study. However, I still argue that this is the most rapid change in language learning policy which has occurred in England and the potential path dependency of the early institutional formation should be more widely known, rather than waiting for a larger 'sample' of schools. Furthermore, a study with more cases would have meant less researcher time per case and, therefore, depth, which is key for the building of phronesis.

The study is also limited in only being able to access quantitative intake data for two cases and not for language background. Non-choosers are also incredibly hard to conceptualise due to limitless catchment areas. If repeating this study, more

resources might be spent on this. Surveying might be an alternative, but the limitations of survey-based approaches and concerns over response rates from some groups, which informed the chosen methodology, would still exist.

Finally, the selection of cases might have benefited from further negative cases, rather than just one failed campaign. Converter schools or one of the existing French language community primary schools in South London might be a useful comparison point. Again, time limited this, but as BFS reach greater maturity, I anticipate future research which is able to compare different models with greater relevance than comparing a very established school with new free schools.

Another point to note regarding the limitation of the sampling is concerning the location of the campaigns. In 4.3 I mentioned that I aimed to select a range of locations by region and both urban and not, in order to draw assertions to a possible quintain of schools reflecting BFS in England. Since all of the open schools are currently in the South East or London and are all, bar one converter school, in urban or semi-urban areas, the selected quintain of schools still reflects this broader pattern. However, it should be noted that campaigns have been attempted in other parts of England and this study, like the BFS emerging institution as a whole, is dominated by London and the South-East. Therefore the findings do not reflect England as a whole, but still do the BFS within England as a whole currently.

Using multiple viewpoints and cases, I acknowledge that I have constructed one possible version, or account, of the emergence of bilingual free schools. Other researchers may have produced slightly different accounts, which would help in building a more complex understanding of BFS. Nonetheless, despite the limitations, by outlining clearly the context around my data, how it was constructed and my analysis, I seek to demonstrate the transferability and trustworthiness of the findings, thereby facilitating informed, phronetic generalisations to similar cases.

Wider significance

The wider significance of this study falls into several camps. First, there are a large number of policy makers, practitioners, academics and the wider population who are interested in the highly opaque world of free schools. Little is currently known about how they operate and how they have been established. There is much interest in claims of social segregation and it is anticipated that publishing a paper

with updated annual school census data would be appropriate, with equal balance on quantitative and qualitative evidence. Additionally, international scholars and policy makers are interested in the ability of market reforms to unleash innovation. The complex and slightly counter-intuitive story of the emergence of BFS in England is likely to interest many of these scholars.

Think tanks, policy makers and academics who are interested in language learning in England will be interested in the possibilities that BFS create for greater access to language learning. The significance for them will be in highlighting constraints on realising this vision and the thesis' recommendations should enable them to identify possible future directions for working with and facilitating BFS. There will also be international interest, particularly in Anglophone contexts, as BFS represent a case of how a liberalised market can help support and constrain bilingual education programming. As noted in Chapter two, this is currently under-researched.

Finally, and not insignificantly, there is already significant interest from participants of the study (and participants from other schools not included in the final case selection). Many report that little is known about other bilingual free schools, and they often feel isolated. Furthermore, the cases should present a useful strategic tool in planning similar applications for bilingual free schools. The lens held up in the final section about what type of bilingual education is emerging as a result will present many planners with somewhat critical feedback about unintended consequences. Although some may access the study as a thesis, I will also send a condensed report to all participants and contacts developed throughout the study. In this way, I anticipate that the present study will go some way to highlighting possibilities and constraints around the use of markets to widen access to quality language learning through bilingual education in England. It will also offer a commentary on the general possibilities for other market reforms to support similar innovations, as readers engage with their own phronesis.

Conclusion

In this chapter, several justifications of the case study approach have been presented. Firstly, existing literature on quasi-markets in education and language

planning, although aiming increasingly to incorporate findings from the 'micro' level, inevitably lack in presuming a priori a locus of language planning or institutional power, which a case study approach overcomes in two main ways. Firstly, it aims to triangulate and build detailed holistic knowledge, necessitating multiple stakeholder perspectives from the start. Secondly, its flexibility allows progressive focusing with tweaking of research questions as emic issues emerge, which is also particularly useful in a new field like free schools in England, or state-funded bilingual education.

The philosophical basis of this emergent approach was rooted in the logics of abduction and phronesis, which recognise much social science research as that which aims not for abstract truths, but case-based complexity and rich detail. This allows the reader to engage their own phronetic understanding as a result and apply it to other contexts, including other campaigns, government and policy makers, academics in England and overseas and language learning advocacy groups (see 4.7). An abductive and phronetic stance was also shown to be consistent with a moderate form of constructionism, which returns to the original focus of many institutionalist pioneers. In addition, constructionism's focus on interactions and reflexivity were felt to not only be necessary given the abductive, emergent design, but also in challenging language planning scholars' tendency to deal with stakeholders in isolation.

Given the limited number of cases and present size of the emerging institution of bilingual free schools, the logic of phronesis is particularly pertinent, as wider generalization could never be the aim. Nonetheless, a multiple case study design was justified in allowing the exploration of slightly different contexts and in order to raise questions about the possible boundaries of any emerging BFS institution. Therefore, this chapter then outlined the selection of cases and data generation methods, which involved qualitative interviewing, field work and document analysis in addition to embedded quantitative analysis of intake. This use of mixed methods was justified as best facilitating the portrayal of complex, rich cases as well as being best able to answer all strands of the overarching research question.

The development and implementation of the conceptual framework through an abductive thematic analysis was outlined in 4.5, showing again the iterative process between engagement with literature, the field and refining of research

questions to develop the framework established at the end of chapter three. The next four chapters, therefore, now present each case study in turn, organised by the four overarching themes, condensed below, although care has been taken to present a broadly chronological account within each chapter. Although references are made to the conceptual framework, the focus is on presenting the case material in sufficient detail for the reader to understand the case as a whole, in addition to reflecting on the relevance to the guiding themes. Discussion of the key findings in relation to the literature will thereafter be largely incorporated in to chapter 9, the cross-case analysis.

The four analytical strands

The following case study chapters will be organized by the four research strands outlined in chapter three. A condensed version of this framework is that new bilingual programmes in quasi-markets may be establishing themselves by:

1. building an advocacy coalition with expertise, including entrepreneurs with considerable networking skills. Power may shift over time as roles change.
2. using location, language and admissions, governance and curriculum freedoms to position themselves advantageously, while forgoing others to gain legitimacy.
3. gaining legitimacy by also ceding to regulatory demands and mimesis of the 'best' schools. Innovation may be limited to niche curricular areas.
4. compromising peripheral values, as bilingual innovation may be limited. Value drift may lead to exclusion of some and reinforcing of languages for an elite.

Chapter 5: Anne Frank School

"They promised the parents, oh it's going to be a bilingual school, but in fact no one really had a proper idea how this can be done under the regulations that we have to face" – Stella, parent and governor

Introduction

Our case study chapters begin with Anne Frank school, selected for its unique use of German, and also its age. As one of the oldest bilingual free schools (BFS), the highs and lows of the story of its emergence mirror those experienced by free schools more generally (2.4). As the opening quote previews, the unique offering of a language learning innovation attractive to a highly invested community brought potential distinctiveness, but also significant challenges. Anne Frank's journey in securing and maintaining local and regulatory approval highlights both the opportunities and constraints inherent within free schools legislation as a vehicle for bilingual education. But its story will also demonstrate how threats to the school's legitimacy after opening necessitated drastic compromising of central values around bilingualism to ensure survival. Nonetheless, undergirded by the trust and hard work of highly invested parents, including the key entrepreneurial figurehead of Paul, this compromise appeared to pay off as, once a positive inspection report was obtained, the compromised core bilingual values were able to be resurrected.

5.1 Forming a coalition with capital

This section looks in particular at the first strand and research question, namely how Anne Frank school recruited the networks and resources which took it from an idea to a reality. We see how its emergence relied heavily on the vision, time, networking skills and capital of one man who successfully formed a committed coalition of parents from a community with considerable means. Recruiting the right sponsor and school leader at the right time was also key, although the balance of power, particularly on the governing body, was far from fixed.

Founder parent networks & expertise

In November 2010, Paul Webb gathered a group of parents from his children's German nursery in an affluent suburb to share a proposal: what if they could

extend their children's German language through one of those new free schools. Paul, brought up bilingual, had regretted losing his German later in life and, since it was parents who had founded the German nursery, could they not also help found a free school?

With the group's encouragement, Paul became the natural leader of the nascent campaign, given his background in finance, expertise in democratic participation, social enterprise and experience on a governing body of another school. The first port of call for the then-titled 'German Grundschule' campaign was the local German nurseries. Paul's own employment was flexible, and other parents on a career break supported him. Together, their skills included expertise in finance, risk management, primary teaching and school governance, law, organization building, marketing, data analysis and website management. However, the nursery leaders themselves were unable to offer specific bilingual education expertise due to their own expansion priorities. Undeterred, the campaigners contacted a state boarding school in England with immersion strands, state bilingual schools in Germany and two other groups proposing BFS for advice. The German embassy and Goethe Institut also offered advocacy and networking.

Despite these networks and over two hundred potential families signed up, the first application in May 2011 was unsuccessful. Founders were told they lacked a breadth of educational leadership expertise. Although disappointed, the DfE offered considerable advice, which Paul rapidly enacted by rallying the by-then nearly 300 families to reach out to potential partners and non-German-speaking contacts more. He also established contact himself with the English Educational Services (EES) trust.

A suitable sponsor

EES had an established track record in languages education worldwide, and education administration in general, having been contracted by local authorities in England, and Ofsted too, to run various administrative and evaluative functions. EES also sponsored a number of convertor academies and were in the process of opening a free school. EES immediately recognized the overlap of interests with the German Grundschule and the potential for expansion, as detailed in the second bid:

Our genuine partnership between the Anne Frank parent-promoter group and an education charity is an excellent example of what a free school proposer ought to be. We are also ambitious to ensure this school's resounding success with a view to replicating it, in other languages, elsewhere.

For the German Grundschule, meanwhile, EES offered, in Paul's words, "*tremendous credibility*" and considerable personnel support. The second bid in early 2012 clearly capitalized on EES' recent success with another free school, and the newly renamed 'Anne Frank' bilingual school was duly approved to open the following year.

EES' "*high autonomy/high accountability*" model for working with free schools, the bid claimed, allowed them be "*a vehicle for enabling member schools, including Free Schools, to maximise the freedoms which academy status offers, whilst minimising the risks associated with complete independence,*" principally through their own growing network of free schools and academies. However, this network ultimately ended up exposing Anne Frank to risk, as some of EES' schools began to receive mixed feedback from Ofsted. In Anne Frank's first year post-opening, the DfE identified 'serious weaknesses' in EES' capacity to support its schools and they were told not to take on any more schools. This chapter's opening quote was followed up with Stella unequivocally asserting that EES' bilingual expertise was insufficient, as it was limited to non-UK schools, where the regulatory demands are completely different. We will return to the significance of this below, but the point here is that the right sponsor was found at the right time to gain approval and push towards opening. Meanwhile, the founder parents were also exploiting their growing networks to evidence considerable demand from families across the city. And with these new families came additional resources.

Early recruits: a wider network with capital

Paul Webb was clearly the campaign figurehead but he deployed his expertise in democratic participation to regularly solicit for specific support from a growing network of followers. The considerable capital of these other supporters named on the DfE bid was evident where it states: "*Our network of contacts and supporters might be fruitful... ..in providing funds towards refurbishment or capital equipment such as ICT or musical instruments*". The supporters' capital and networks were also evident in the search for an appropriate site. Paul regularly encouraged supporters to identify empty buildings in their localities, which resulted in a

second bid with a considerable database of potential sites. Indeed, the eventual school site was not the first choice but actually the recommendation of a parent who did not even end up at the school.

Post-approval, Paul's requests to supporters became more targeted and, later on, the supporter list was used to recruit community governors. When the first round of applicants for the principal's position was deemed unsatisfactory, the following reassurance and appeal demonstrated potential parents' power:

"the chances are that however much we advertise, someone in our network already knows the right candidate - so please alert your friends and colleagues in the teaching profession."

A school leader

The eventual choice of Maria Novak, an English-trained teacher who had set up bilingual fee-paying schools abroad, appeared far from ideal as her UK experience was limited and she did not speak German. Haste was a likely factor as the team ideally envisaged a year pre-opening for the principal to become *"an authoritative voice on bilingual education in the locality and beyond, in order to position the school as a school of choice offering expertise, innovation, and professionalism."* However, this vision may have meant Maria's bilingual expertise was preferred over UK leadership experience. At consultation events, Maria was flown in, spoke at length of her bilingual teaching experiences, and many parents later said how impressed they were. Handed power over curriculum and planning, she replaced Paul as figurehead, emailing parents and hosting pre-opening events. She worked closely with EES, and announced that the first chair of governors would be Colin Anderson, an experienced German teacher, governor, trainer and senior leader at EES, indicating an additional, inevitable shift in power away from the founder parents.

Establishing a governing body

In Anne Frank's second bid, the EES trust board was envisaged as overseeing the local governing body, which would retain powers over the curriculum, some expenditure and recruitment. EES could nominate up to six governors on this local body, but only a quarter could be EES employees. Two would be nominated by founders, two elected by parents and two by staff. This represented considerably

more parent power than community schools, especially as community governor nominations had been solicited principally through Paul's emails.

The determination of Paul to take on DfE advice and push for the right sponsor was paying off. His skillset had also garnered considerable collective capital. Long before admissions closed in January 2013, the milestone of five hundred prospective families was reached. Four German-speaking class teachers were appointed, again partly through Paul's persistent yet friendly emails. The parent-sourced site was handed over in July and, within weeks, housed the first intake.

This early parental power was key. Although EES' expertise gained the school credibility, by my return to the school in 2014, Colin was no longer on the governing body, and Paul had been appointed chair. This was likely to have been related to the 'significant weaknesses' in EES identified in 2013, as most executive staff at EES were also replaced. Although I communicated with two EES representatives, I was unable to gain any more insight. The resulting governing body of July 2015 therefore had no EES employees, but were all local parents, including two lawyers, a financier, a trained economist, architect, and a German nursery founder. This underscored the success of campaigners not only in recruiting useful capital, but also in protecting parent power and German, as almost all had connections to German. This proportion of parent governors was only possible because the school was a free school.

To summarise section 5.1, let us consider the first research question: which networks and resources were campaigners able to deploy (and how)? The answer appears to lie principally with the figurehead of Paul Webb and his unique set of entrepreneurial skills and experiences in democratic participation and school governance. However, he also needed community support and this was readily available in his children's German nursery. Having said that, the team needed to handle renegotiations with the DfE carefully after the first failed attempt and manage the communicative and coordinative discourse to encourage supporters, rather than making them fearful. Paul appeared to achieve this by appealing to supporters in equal measure to offering them reassurances. He was building a considerable alliance, evident post-opening not only by strong parental roles in subsequent open days, but also in the way in which parents took key governing

body roles after their sponsor's reputation was brought in to question. The considerable capital available through the German-speaking parents in this area was a key resource. The fees for the nurseries were not cheap and the school also benefited from a number of parents who were able to afford career breaks to help start the campaign. Harnessing parent power was a key freedom and 5.2 now considers the other freedoms campaigners and leaders were able to use in securing their vision of a bilingual German-English school, in line with the second research question.

5.2 Utilising legislative freedoms

This section follows 5.1 in exploring how leaders were able to utilize not only parent power, but other freedoms over curriculum, staffing, location and admissions to achieve their goal. Possible reasons for unexploited freedoms are explored in order to answer the second question about how far campaigners were able to utilize legislative freedoms, highlighting the pressing need to establish legitimacy with regulators and other families first, explored further in 5.3 and 5.4.

Harnessing Parent Power

Section 5.1 established the considerable power of families recruited early on to propose their preferred language, governors, potential staff and aspects of marketing. Founder parents also had considerable power to shape policies in the bid. All of these are either freedoms unknown in community schools or limited to just a few, like parent governors.

Post opening, power was also retained in a parent forum, or council, where suggestions and complaints were raised. Elected parent representatives for each class conducted surveys, reporting to the head, with feedback available to all. An additional 'friends of Anne Frank' group also encouraged voluntary parent support in gardening and fundraising. At an open day in the school's second year, parents conducted school tours and responded as much as staff to public questions. The school clearly benefited, as parent voice created loyalty, which a local German nursery manager said had been key in securing the trust of some families who had chosen Anne Frank, especially when risks emerged. Even more significant were the

early decisions taken almost exclusively by founders and other early recruits, like the location of the school.

Location

The four local authorities identified in the DfE bid as hosting possible sites were justified primarily by their projected school place shortages. Their social diversity was also highlighted, which might have been in response to DfE feedback on the limited reach of their first bid, given Paul's subsequent pleas to target non-German-speakers more. However, the bid also justified these locations due to the presence of German speakers, who comprised the majority of early support. By the public consultation events a few months later, the search had narrowed to the local authority where most supporters lived and where the German nurseries were. This may be unsurprising due to the dependence on parents to identify sites. EES appeared unconcerned with the exact location and its other schools were not local to the area. Therefore, the power to prioritise sites closest to the heart of the campaign, and the city's German-speaking community, was a significant parental freedom. This was ultimately demonstrated by the decision to proceed with a site closer to the nurseries, rather than a site closer to Paul's home in a less affluent area with an equally high shortage of school places. Stella identified parent pressure as swinging this decision:

Lots of parents from the first, they were, yes, we want to apply for a space, however the building has to be in our neighbourhood because the German nursery was there. Lots of core people... ..they said, no, I'm not driving half an hour, 45 minutes a single commute, to get my child in to a school, so either it is somewhere up here, or we don't send our children..

Before assuming that this was a deliberate decision to prioritise German speakers, we should consider whether Anne Frank also used the freedom to determine its own admissions policy to prioritise them.

Admissions

Like almost all other free schools, Anne Frank chose not to reserve places for those with a learned aptitude. Perhaps this was inconsistent with an inclusive vision, but it also would have created more grounds for appeals and would only have allowed ten percent of places to be allocated in this way. Anne Frank's admissions policy, however, did differ from community schools' policies and, uniquely among the case studies presented here, remained unchanged since long before approval. After

prioritizing children with SEND and looked-after children, the next priority above siblings was children of the founder parents. This was perhaps not significant long-term but, following siblings, the remaining places were split, with 50% allocated by distance, and 50% by random allocation, the maximum permissible under free schools legislation. This was justified as a balancing act in order to:

“attract a mixed and comprehensive intake to ensure this very special school is inclusive and available to all; ensure many of our children are able to walk to school thereby embedding the new school in its local community; and to make this unique school available to children living in a far larger catchment area that reflects our broad-based support.”

Stella was more explicit about the personal double gain:

S: I think first come, first serve catchment area is a good thing and I tell you why because we are in the catchment area as well, and I want her to have friends in her neighbourhood...

... K: But then you do think it's also a good thing that there are places at random allocation?

S: ...not everyone from this community can afford to move houses in to Soughton, but I still want them to have a chance to get in to the school

However, one third of those responding to the consultation (which included non-parents) were unsure, or disagreed with the admissions 'lottery'. In response, leaders proposed yearly consultation on changing the admissions, a freedom only free schools enjoy, but this never occurred. We will examine possible reasons in section 5.4, but the bid was explicit that the school would lose families if a site far from supporters was selected, so a 'lottery' may have also been intended to alleviate those fears. Interestingly, many German speakers felt that a lottery was still too risky and moved closer to the school to guarantee a spot. They were then dissatisfied that the lottery meant a reduced catchment, leaving them outside of catchment once again! It was a no-win situation for leaders if they were aiming solely at inclusivity as a lottery could benefit those more able to travel by car, but a catchment bubble could also increase house prices and rule out the less affluent from further away. Therefore, it seems most plausible that the lottery was intended to favour, or at least honour, early supporters.

The favouring of the widely-distributed German-speaking early supporters was exacerbated by the order of allocations for the first intake. Year 2, then 1, then reception would be allocated, meaning *“brothers and sisters of children allocated a place in an older year group would receive priority as siblings”*. Presented as mirroring what would happen 'naturally' in other schools, it also honoured the largely German-speaking families who had supported the first bid for a 2012 start

which had been delayed. Ultimately, therefore, only 30% of places in reception class were therefore 'open' distance places and having to run separate admissions from the local authority in the first year would have constrained further who applied. Whether this actually resulted in a skewed intake will be discussed in 5.4, alongside discussion of possible reasons for keeping the admissions policy unchanged. However, the admissions appeared to favour early supporters, who were principally German-speaking. This freedom would be almost impossible in most schools.

Financial, staffing and timescale flexibility: freedoms or liabilities?

Leaders referred to a number of financial freedoms, although parents and outsiders expressed some financial concerns too. At a consultation event, an older gentleman asked what advantage freedom from the local authority would bring. Paul Webb highlighted the ability to buy in services from elsewhere, but parents online questioned this assumption and wondered if EES might expect to benefit instead. Although Paul later acknowledged that self-selection might mean fewer children eligible for free school meals, he said it wouldn't be an issue in terms of funding. This emphasis initially on the financial implications of the pupil premium, rather than inclusivity, is interesting, although he went on to promise targeted recruitment to increase diversity. Anne Frank's records of pupil premium expenditure indicated nothing untoward later, but commonly this type of funding indirectly benefits other students and staff too. Anne Frank had reserved the right to prioritise those eligible for pupil premium funding, which may have been partly about financial viability, and partly about pleasing regulators (5.3). However, promotional materials and events also highlighted a genuine desire to be inclusive and we will discuss the intake further in 5.4.

In the bid, EES envisioned a slimlined leadership to save costs, with staff expected to take on responsibilities without pay supplements. This is little different to small community schools, and staff recruitment procedures were almost identical to community schools. It was clear that, although German speaking teachers were desirable, language ability could not be a deciding factor in recruitment. Although the bid envisaged possibly employing teachers without QTS, this freedom was not used for class teacher roles, but was true of some support staff. One interesting freedom used was limiting class sizes to 25 which was obviously favourable when

recruiting parents, but it remained a potential constraint and helps explain the need for EES to justify considerable cost-cutting schemes.

The timescale was another freedom. In under three years, the school went from a hypothetical dream to an open reality, a state-funded primary school teaching German at the heart of a German-speaking area. This time frame was remarkable, albeit constrained by the need to reapply, and almost be postponed again by delays in releasing the site. If we are to consider again the key question of how far leaders were able to utilize freedoms, Stella actually saw the short timescale as a pressure:

"of course lots of things need to be put in place, need to be developed, to make it a proper, a school in full swing, like all the other schools... ...so to have all the routines in place, all the policies, procedures, it does take some time."

Time was not plentiful, with parents eager to start, and Ofsted due just five terms in. Stella similarly viewed the 'freedoms' over staffing and location as significant constraints:

*"They found this building, where the school is in... ...It is coming with all sorts of issues... ...It takes time, money, patience, confidence, lots of people who know other people... ...The building is the biggest problem...
...Then you have the staff team who is coming hopefully from different schools, they should speak German, really understand their subject, the national curriculum, have their planning in place... I think this was really the biggest challenge... to find a staff team who can cope with change."*

In sum, the 'freedoms' actually presented many problems and so little time to sort them out. Stella, once again changing her mind, finished this section of the interview by then stating that the freedom to deliver a bilingual curriculum was actually the biggest challenge.

Curricular freedom: the "bilingual journey"

"Just to set up a curriculum would've been a lot, but to do this bilingually is really a major challenge... ...Integrating the German is really the biggest thing." - Stella

The vision of a state funded school where, according to early publicity, *"the teaching of core subjects - literacy, numeracy, and science - in both English and German will be at the heart,"* was a significant freedom. The school however, was always clear that they would teach the English national curriculum, even though they were free to do otherwise (see 5.4). To enable this in two languages, the team proposed a CLIL approach, familiar to both Maria and EES in their bilingual schools abroad (p126). At the consultation event, Maria explained that this initially meant PE being delivered in German, but eventually Maths could be too. However, she

conceded that formal testing in Year 2 meant that reading and writing would be principally in English at first. German exposure would be increased through extra-curricular clubs. German speakers appeared largely unconcerned by this, maybe because in Germany, at least, literacy is only formally introduced much later anyway.

Pre-opening, the team were already aware that German language immersion might cause issues. Stella and the local nursery managers were adamant that, when the amount of German was reduced, it was chiefly because of Ofsted's demands, although Stella attributed this more to Ofsted's lack of recognition of bilingual skills in its framework, than the coercive pressure of testing. But it was not just regulatory demands that constrained the amount of German. EES' capacity (p127), and that of staff were questioned by Stella in interview, and others elsewhere. Maria, like EES, was familiar with bilingual pedagogy abroad, rather than in England, and the teaching staff had not taught CLIL in German in England before. Finally, Stella's comments above highlight the immense logistical pressures that needed to be tackled before the bilingual curriculum could be considered.

Within a term of opening, rumours began to circulate among prospective parents that only 40% of entrants spoke any German. Following early Ofsted and DfE advisory visits, decisions were taken to reduce and focus German into streamed language lessons, dropping the CLIL. My participants were reluctant to talk about this period especially as, during this time, the original principal, Maria, handed in her resignation. An interim head, UK experienced, but not in bilingual models, was swiftly appointed and the chair of governors and three of the four teachers were also replaced. German was reduced to one or two lessons a week, and bilingual extracurricular activities drastically limited. Some parents were disgruntled. Online, one reviewer retorted "*this school is NOT bilingual*". But others spoke positively of the German community events and shared that their children were still coming home with German sentences and phrases.

However, the second year saw a new intake and the permanent appointment of the interim head, Liz. At the open day she shared the aim of becoming a 'good' school, on a "*bilingual journey*", flagging up the recent appointment of a German coordinator who would be the staff representative on the governing body. Although little German was evident on the tour that day, by the end of the year,

newsletters were partly in German, interns were running daily German boosters, and school links and pen pal schemes were established. Although this was not CLIL, it nonetheless led OFSTED in their first inspection to praise the “*distinctive bilingual approach taken to the curriculum [which] benefits pupils’ language acquisition but also helps them to understand similarities and differences between cultures*”. The task of integrating German was just beginning, but it had survived.

To summarize section 5.2, if we return to the second research question, how far are campaigners able to utilize legislative freedoms, the key freedom to determine a bilingual curriculum was constrained ultimately by compulsory tests in English and the need to satisfy Ofsted. Indeed, the story of all the freedoms used by Anne Frank is one of freedoms constrained, and constraining in turn. Financial and staffing freedoms, for example, actually became concerns for potential parents, as one pointed out that recruiting two headteachers in one year must have incurred substantial costs. Nonetheless, the freedom to form a school in a German-speaking area with an admissions policy favourable for a more widely-dispersed German-speaking community was still considerable. Parents enjoyed far greater power than other schools, and the benefit to the school became clear in the transition between heads, whereupon parents took on more key governing body positions and fielded most of the feedback at promotional events. But we should not underestimate the difference between the freedom to have a vision, and the ability to see this through. Anne Frank had much capital and networked widely, but ultimately it was the capacity of the original staff and sponsor, and the need to please regulators, that restricted the key freedom over the curriculum. Therefore, section 5.3 will begin by considering how Anne Frank’s leaders gained and maintained legitimacy with regulators, before considering how local legitimacy was established with parents and the wider community despite constraints.

5.3 Establishing legitimacy

Section 5.3 explores how Anne Frank’s campaigners’ ability to utilise legislative freedoms was ultimately constrained by the need to satisfy officials at local and national levels, before considering how legitimacy was also obtained with parents and the local community. It will therefore offer insights in to the third research

question, namely how campaigners gained and maintained legitimacy. I will show how gaining legitimacy was not only about compliance, but also how the coercive isomorphic pressure of testing threatened legitimacy. Nonetheless, Anne Frank's leaders' ability to respond with flexibility and compromise meant they were able to secure the necessary legitimacy which enabled exploring of the bilingual vision later on. Throughout this time, it is perhaps surprising that local legitimacy appeared largely unquestioned, which I link to Anne Frank's affluent location, subtle mimesis of independent schools and attractively tight-knit community, which allowed the school to claim a valued place in the local school hierarchy despite the absence of an Ofsted grade for the first three intakes.

Gaining initial approval

Though Anne Frank's campaigners had to apply to open twice, the first 'failure' was still viewed positively, as they were encouraged to resubmit and were given detailed advice to improve their bid (5.1). Although demand rose exponentially between bids, a local need must also be demonstrated and this was trickier, given the initially wide geographic area of the bid. Page 120 highlighted a regional shortage of school places and, although the DfE impact assessment revealed a surplus of places locally, this was projected to disappear as the population increased. Campaigners preferred to highlight a shortage of outstanding schools in the region, which capitalized on changing government policy to approve free schools when parents were simply dissatisfied with current provision²⁴. The inability to pinpoint an exact site at the time of the bid might have actually worked in their favour, as government criteria indicate that flexibility over location is looked on favourably (DfE, 2015a).

The considerable expertise of the founders and sponsor were outlined in 5.1 and compliance was never overtly questioned in available documents. Nonetheless, the bid regularly highlighted how policies would also meet the equality act and guidance to free schools. The seeking of bilingual teachers was also positioned beneath quality first, as German-speaking assistants could be used instead, signalling compliance with employment law. The bid also indicated a desire for ongoing DfE advice over admissions policy implementation, in order to work with the local authority and increase access. Furthermore, the uptake of DfE

²⁴ See Criteria E1 of DfE (2015a). Predecessor documents did not include this criterion.

recommendations after the first failed bid and an open-ness to changing their admissions policy would have demonstrated the core team's flexibility over many aspects, including the curriculum. For example, in the bid, they stated:

We strongly emphasise the importance of flexibility in our teaching and learning approach, since the demographics and abilities of each cohort will vary, as will each individual child.

Finally, the bid's acknowledged lack of legal and design expertise, with a concrete plan to address these, would have served to reassure the DfE that the team's self-assessment of capacity was realistic.

The positive feedback loop and mutual benefits of ongoing monitoring

Once open, schools must demonstrate both continued compliance and demand. From the first application to the first full Ofsted inspection in term five post-opening, the DfE sub-contracts an advisor to become what one participant termed a '*critical friend*' to the school. They clarified that the advisor's official role involves reporting back to civil servants on the school's implementation of its vision and plans, but this participant highlighted that they often offer a "*reality check*" when schools are focused on a particular innovation, but where "*other things need to be in place first*". Although they are not contracted to give concrete advice on the curriculum, especially any bilingual aspects, in reality advice can touch on this, for instance, in suggesting appropriate phonics schemes.

In Anne Frank's case, DfE support acted like a third leg alongside the governing body and parents when EES went in to difficulties and the head teacher was replaced. If we consider the impact these changes had on the amount of German, it was the DfE advisor who highlighted that an immersion approach appeared to be failing learners, with more SEN, EAL and non-German speakers than anticipated. Therefore, although the DfE could be seen to have constrained the curriculum, another view might be that the intake itself forced the change (see 5.4).

The constraints of testing and Ofsted have been mentioned above (5.2), but here we focus on how the school used this to strategically gain legitimacy. Anne Frank's leaders made drastic changes in staffing and curriculum in response to DfE concerns, so Liz was able to report increasingly positive monitoring visit feedback in the second year. Anne Frank's first full Ofsted inspection report was explicit:

Senior leaders and governors have tackled underperformance through the accurate, regular and thorough monitoring of teaching... ..As a result, pupils are now making good progress and achievement has improved.

It appeared that the new headteacher was the key, as Stella had highlighted six months earlier:

"she's extremely experienced and even though she might not be able to speak German, she does understand the rules in England to make a school a good school and she's taking on this idea of bilingualism. However, at the moment, she's clearly looking in to, what do I need to get a good in the terms of OFSTED. For her, the priority really is to have all the regulations and national curriculum in place and I think this is absolutely appropriate for the moment."

Once the Ofsted visit was over, the school could finally claim a badge of official credibility: it was a legitimately 'good' school in the eyes of regulators. The school's newsletter highlighted the extent of the task completed:

For a well established school to receive a 'Good' judgment from Ofsted is an achievement: for a new school still in development and in only its second year of operation, it's a tremendous outcome.

However, the 'good' was emphasized to be just a starting point, as this quote was immediately followed by pledges of continued improvement. Indeed, around this time, German began to take a higher profile in curriculum and publicity, as if the school was now free to explore bilingualism more.

The 'good' rating brought potential mutual benefits for the DfE. The only other BFS inspected was struggling, and EES' multi-academy inspection conducted concurrently depended on individual inspections of its schools, including Anne Frank. With much public disdain for free schools, the ability to count Anne Frank a success was significant, especially locally, where it was fairly widely known that the school had been going through difficulties. However, Anne Frank's credibility locally did not just depend on Ofsted praise. Chiefly, it would require acceptance by local families and community members. But in order to identify and secure a site and evidence demand, relationships with local authorities were also important.

Local authority support

Meetings were held early on with several local authorities. Paul's considerable experience likely facilitated this process, but at least one authority also had an interest in providing more school spaces. Extended discussions about potential sites indicated persistence by Anne Frank's leaders and, ultimately, the chosen local authority did facilitate this process when it could have been harder. Where

one authority was less helpful, it was quickly dropped, in contrast with the ASP campaign (see Chapter 8). Anne Frank helped itself by clarifying that they would conform to local authority admissions timescales and holiday dates. However, they also highlighted their ability to buy in services from elsewhere which parents (p135) did not necessarily see as positive. Local nursery managers saw the authorities as sceptical of free schools and, in their opinion, this meant Anne Frank missed out on what they saw as useful support. Although LA duties should have been replaced by sponsor or DfE support, technically the DfE advisor could only advise on core legislative areas and EES had significant capacity issues at the time. Therefore, it appeared that a lack of LA support could threaten legitimacy.

Nonetheless, the school did become part of the city-wide coordinated admissions, and benefited from local authority grants and traffic management schemes. However, this relied heavily on the persistence of Paul Webb and the 'friends of Anne Frank' group. Nonetheless, despite some local opposition to free schools, the official consultation gained the required approval. In order to achieve this, we must consider how leaders moved from securing legitimacy with regulators through their flexibility and implementation of DfE advice, to establishing legitimacy with families and other citizens in the local area. Ultimately, Anne Frank could only succeed if sufficient parents chose it. Therefore, the remaining sections of 5.3 shift focus to consider how Anne Frank established local legitimacy with the key stakeholders: parents.

Establishing basic demand and need

The statutory six-week consultation, just before the first round of admissions closed, provided leaders with a number of opportunities to justify the school. They asked about preferred locations and reached more families by distributing nearly five thousand leaflets and holding two events near the two potential, still undisclosed, sites. Most of the two hundred plus respondents were keen, prospective parents, but leaders were also unafraid of tackling negative feedback and troubling questions over admissions. The group's promise to hold subsequent consultations about changing admissions (p133) would also have safeguarded legitimacy temporarily, indicating a flexibility with the public too.

Paul's regular supporter emails and surveys about locations and a the 'friends of' group also allowed ongoing involvement for the wider community. Although the

plans shared then to offer out-of-hours facilities, clubs and language classes were not evident two years in, this was perhaps not surprising given the school's pressing internal concerns, in addition to the building being incomplete. In fact, regular public planning meetings for the site provided ongoing opportunities for community engagement.

However, the legitimacy of pre-opening consultation was constrained by the unknown site. It is possible that leaders felt they had already garnered sufficient support from German-speaking supporters and did not require a huge amount of local parents' support, as long as they didn't object. But, like the DfE bid (p138), the consultation relied more on general shortages than immediate local need:

"neighbouring boroughs will each need several new primary school classes over the coming years". This is an unsurprising tactic given the need to justify 'lottery' places. However, again, the main focus was more on quality and this approach was highly relevant, as the site ended up in the area with the highest proportion of families without a preferred school place in the whole local authority. Catchments of local schools were tiny there, especially given that two neighbouring schools were faith-based and partially selective. Given these schools' potential competitive threat, the following sections investigate how Anne Frank navigated potentially thorny issues, such as uncertainty over the site, by targeting their recruitment efforts to highlight their stability, mimetically alluding to the best schools in the area while signalling their distinctiveness at the same time.

Counteracting site issues by highlighting expertise and support

Even as potential staff and pupils gathered, the site remained uncertain. Without a location, parents would have difficulty envisaging a fit for their lives. Campaigners were long aware of this so Paul Webb regularly updated, and sought feedback from, parents on potential locations. The number of agencies involved was a huge constraint, but Paul Webb had outlined clear backup plans. It no doubt helped that many supporters were, in the bid's words, *"willing to travel greater distances than would be expected for a monolingual community school."*

The eventual proximity of the school meant many supporters were likely to overlook the scale of building modification needed. However, some German speakers still felt it was too much of a risk, preferring other local or fee-paying schools. Full planning permission was not granted straight away, and some parents

worried that green space would be lost, and learning would be interrupted by construction. The ‘friends of Anne Frank’ group was a partial response, enabling parents to campaign and fundraise to improve the green land. In turn, this strengthened the image of a “*highly engaged*” community (see below) attractive to others in and of itself.

Ultimately, the school did have an almost complete intake in its first year, thanks to many phone calls by leaders to guarantee uptake of places. So, although the unfinished site continued to present concerns, enough parents took the risk, in part due to the charisma and personal legitimacy of the leaders.

Although the consultation pack highlighted EES’ expertise (p126), no further mention was made of EES until a year later when Liz publicised using their language expertise to prepare the German ‘integration plan’ once again. The impressions of the headteacher were, instead, more significant for parents: having Maria present at consultation events was a key draw and at the first open days for the second intake, parents were impressed with her bilingual expertise. Although Valerie, a non-German speaking prospective parent for the third intake, was more ambivalent about Liz’ ‘*presence*’, she acknowledged that her experience in English schools spoke for itself. Given the limited consultation and site uncertainty, it is perhaps surprising that many non-German-speakers did choose the school. So what did attract them?

Balancing distinctiveness and mimesis in the local school market

Simply offering German from a young age was enough to attract a number of non-German-speakers I interviewed. However, promotional materials highlighted additional bilingual benefits:

“Children show better concentration levels, increased capacity to ‘multitask’, and stronger reading” - website

“Bilingual education can open... ..more options for transfer to secondary school, for study overseas, and for work within and outside the UK” – consultation pack

A further distinction was class sizes closer to both German and independent schools and the consultation pack created an overt two-tier view of schools and parents in the area:

“More high quality schools capacity is required and the cosmopolitan nature of our city’s population means that parents have widely differing needs and expectations. Whilst our area contains some outstanding schools, too many

other primaries are under-performing, under-subscribed, or suffer from a poor reputation”

But how could Anne Frank ensure being outstanding? The website highlighted that:

*“As an **independent school within the state sector**, we are able to harness teaching resources, experience, and culture from the UK and overseas to create an innovative and exciting school.”* (emphasis theirs)

This appears to be a conscious strategic appeal to legitimacy which encapsulates the balancing of mimesis and distinction: global links and an independent status were distinctions, but UK links were still important, as they would have reassured those unfamiliar with the German language.

Nonetheless, mimesis was not intended simply to reassure, but also to position the school at the top of the local hierarchy, as this early flyer demonstrates:

“Excellent results and exciting prospects for secondary school. It’s what the very best local schools offer and our aim is at least to match that – and give every child fluency in a 2nd language too.”

Occasionally this was even used to mask potential risks, for example, when Maria outlined the school’s governance structure to parents:

Our school will be run very much like any other school - with a governing body representing a range of stakeholders, a full range of policies, and operational support from a variety of partners and supportive agencies.

Curriculum plans on the website appeared little different to most community schools, with the increasingly common International Primary Curriculum (IPC) and phonics schemes detailed at length. German was mentioned only in passing. Even the constraints imposed by regulators were repackaged as comforting similarities to local schools:

“Free schools are subject to inspections by Ofsted, just as other schools are. They must administer the national tests... ..and must report the results.” - website

In addition, the CLIL pedagogy was framed not only as long-established in the EU, but also similar to the techniques used in other schools to teach EAL.

But mimesis was not only a conscious strategy. The bid was peppered with apparently unique proposals which were actually little different to similar schools, like slimlined staffing, although the goal was perhaps more about reassuring regulators. Nonetheless, mimesis was clearly used both overtly to mask controversial differences as well as positioning the school alongside the ‘best’ locally.

Anne Frank school appeared to strike a balance between signaling mimesis, distinctiveness and counteracting potential problems by appealing to expertise, personal charisma and the 'tight knit community'. Indeed, most parents I spoke with minimised the high staff turnover, although forums were more questioning, so it obviously hampered legitimacy. But there were many more positive online comments too and, in the absence of an Ofsted grade, online feedback informed many parents I spoke with. Both Valerie and Tanja, a German speaker unconnected to the German nurseries, stressed the importance of seeing the other parents at open days, to judge the "*community*" they would be joining. Anne Frank's tight community was more important than ratings, as a local nursery manager acknowledged:

Katrine: A lot of people are convinced.. And if you have a great parent base that supports you.. that's.. half the school.

Katya: The other half being..?

Katrine: Vision, leadership..

Once the Ofsted report was published, highlighting how "*senior leaders and governors have secured rapid improvements,*" the stability of the school was no longer in question. Many parents I spoke with therefore saw the school on a par with others locally, but with the added advantage of bilingualism. Several were also moving from the fee-paying sector. But how far did Anne Frank's leaders deliberately target a particular audience for their school? Was the targeting of families who spoke German and those with additional capital an explicit, or perhaps more implicit, goal?

Target audience

Anne Frank's leaders had been long aware that they might be self-selecting and recognized, as the bid described it, that "*our ideals can only be realised with open and comprehensive access and a healthy flow of applications from all social groups.*" So, how did the team try to ensure this?

The removal of the German language from the name 'German Grundschule' had symbolic significance and 'Anne Frank school' had far broader appeal. Paul exhorted early followers to reach out with an early flyer, quoted on p143, which tackled barriers head on: "*Is this school only for children who are already bilingual? Absolutely not.*" And the number of supporters swelled. The consultation pack and website opened with the banner "*Bilingualism for everyone!*" and the detailed

admissions, SEN and equal opportunities policies highlighted a desire to serve children from “*all backgrounds*”. Pre-opening meetings were held at evenings and weekends to widen access and one session video-ed for those who could not attend easily.

From the parents’ perspectives, local media reports had first alerted Valerie to Anne Frank school, although she did not follow these up until word of mouth reached her at her child’s nursery, far away. She also acknowledged that positive bilingual role models in her partner’s family and in the workplace pushed her towards considering it. Tanja heard of Anne Frank pre-opening, but it was a family in her child’s non-German nursery, years later, who encouraged her to apply. But not all parents have these multiple networks.

Other barriers for parents were easier for leaders to tackle. The dominance of German speakers wishing to gain priority in admissions may have been off-putting for others, but leaders used the admissions code and their state school status to deny this advantage. When one German speaker at an open day in the school’s second year asked why her child couldn’t get priority, the hall filled with animated voices. An existing parent stood up and bluntly asserted ‘*it’s a community school*’ and, after a few others indicated their disapproval of the question, she then explained that, being state funded, the school ‘*is for the whole community, not just German speakers*’. Parent leaders were clearly at pains to establish their legitimacy as a school for all local families.

However, what leaders intend, and how parents choose, are not necessarily the same. The repeated appeals to a ‘community’ ethos by parents and leaders achieved a second function: by highlighting the strong parental investment. Valerie certainly felt at home with this, despite not speaking German:

“Really the main thing was that most of the parents who were considering sending their children there had the same sort of mindset as me... ..because it’s a school that is founded by parents, and parents are very invested... I didn’t have concerns about there being a lack of an OFSTED grade simply because I thought parent power obviously is very strong here. So, they’re as invested in the standards being high as anyone else... ..so it’s probably a risk but I thought it was a calculated risk that was worth taking.”

Of course, this risk was easier for Valerie, given her bilingual role models, some of whom had offered to help with German homework. She also had a back-up plan: “*at age four.. you can.. I think you have to.. make a leap of faith and if it doesn’t work, it’s not too late to change if you have to.*” A minority also had the private sector

option. However, when Maria indicated possible support for grammar school entrance exams at one open day, Paul quickly countered this with reassurances of the school's inclusive aims. Nonetheless there were mixed messages about who the school was for.

Anne Frank appeared to attract a community with considerable capital, given its reasonably affluent location in its local authority. Stella admitted that offering German helped:

"This bilingualism, I don't know how it is for a Spanish or Portuguese school, or whatever, I can only talk about German schools, but it does attract a community where you do want to have your children in, where there are structured parents who are really engaged, who have ideas. I can really tell... ...there are very engaged parents behind it and this is a community where you want to have your child."

However, the free school status also helped:

"usually the people who are sending their children in to these [free] schools are a very engaged community and I think this is really the key thing, for childcare, for children, the engagement of the parents and the teachers, to make the child, this single child, flourish."

One parent, responding to a query online about high staff turnover, painted a more complicated picture, which appeared to encourage self-selection:

"the Government had us believe that it was possible to get a school up and running in a year, in any old building, and on a shoestring. This was just nonsense... ...especially when you consider the additional scrutiny that free schools have been put under... ...I think with AF you have to be prepared to take the rough with the smooth in this early stage. There is a critical mass of parents, staff and governors who are determined to make the school work and I guess you should choose the school if you want to be part of that project: not a perfect school today; but a very good school in the near future."

Some parents, then, were proud to attract risk takers, even if it favoured some more than others.

Overall, though the target audience of the school shifted over time from German speakers to being, at least overtly, more inclusive of a wider range of families; and although some non-German-speakers, like Valerie, were convinced that the risk was worth taking, attracted by a community that they identified with aspirationally, for others this would be harder if they had less access to networks like Valerie's. In essence, many parents were choosing the community of like-minded families. Given the capital of many founder families and the site's location, coupled with favourable admissions for those located further away (5.2), we might

expect the intake to perhaps under-represent the less privileged in the immediate area of the school. In 5.4 we consider if this was indeed the case.

To sum up 5.3, first, in relation to the third question of how campaigners secured and maintained legitimacy with both regulators and parents, utilising both normative and mimetic isomorphism to balance reassurance of state school status with distinctiveness helped many parents, but not all. Leaders appear to have achieved enough legitimacy with those who might doubt its inclusivity, without sacrificing the core of middle-class, German speakers, one of whom stated:

"In Germany, it's not so extreme. London is very extreme... ..very rich people and poor people, people who are not able to speak or understand English and really, I don't want this for my child. I want a proper, middle-classy environment."

Leaders worked to counteract site issues and German-speaking dominance through regular communication, genuine participation and denying German speakers' priority overtly on a number of occasions by using the 'UK state school' or 'local community school' labels. Although they did not actively seek an affluent community, an involved community appeared to form, with a strong sense of loyalty, by achieving both outreach and retention in their participatory consultation and parent groups.

In terms of gaining and maintaining legitimacy with regulators, Paul Webb's flexibility and determination was key in working with the recommendations of the first failed bid to the DfE and, subsequently, when problems emerged post-opening. His early work with local authorities also smoothed many paths and his credentials as an existing governor no doubt helped (5.1). A general place shortage in the wider area, and dissatisfaction with a number of parents in the local area with their existing choices, were also key in gaining legitimacy. Ultimately, however, it was compliance with DfE advice in response to the coercive isomorphic pressure of testing and curriculum and making ruthless curricular and staffing decisions post-opening to ensure regulators were satisfied, which earned Anne Frank school the ultimate badge of legitimacy: a 'good' rating from Ofsted. The following section traces the compromises required to achieve this, and the effect on emergent values.

5.4 Emerging values in Anne Frank School

Despite approval to open and extensive parental interest, Anne Frank's legitimacy was not guaranteed until the first Ofsted inspection. The intervening time saw immense challenges and changes, demanding resourcefulness, flexibility and compliance of leaders in order to guarantee their ultimate goal: to be a "good" school (p139). This section explores in more detail how leaders compromised their values to secure this goal and the effect on emerging values, in order to answer the fourth research question, namely what kind of bilingual education is emerging.

Who is choosing?

In 5.3, we highlighted that the target audience of Anne Frank school appeared to widen from German-speaking intakes, although there were still considerable constraints for those with less capital. In order to determine not only the impact of the marketing and recruitment strategy detailed in 5.3, but also the emerging profile of the school in terms of intake, we can look to ASC data, whereafter we will consider leaders' responses and shifting values as a result.

2014-15 (2013-14)	% white	% EAL	% white other	% unclassified ethnicity	% FSM	SR
Anne Frank	49 (62)	29 (26)	27 (30)	25 (19)	15 (18)	1.0 (1.0)
Neighbour B (0.3 miles away)	77 (74)	22 (24)	9 (12)	2 (2)	3 (3)	0.2 (0.2)
C	43 (40)	23 (29)	11 (11)	<1 (<1)	12 (15)	0.8 (0.8)
D	52 (54)	22 (26)	8 (8)	0 (0)	16 (19)	1.1 (1.0)
E	41 (37)	19 (17)	9 (10)	<1 (0)	11 (20)	0.7 (1.1)
F (0.6 miles away)	25 (26)	37 (41)	14 (16)	3 (3)	26 (31)	1.8 (1.7)
LA	29 (29)	45 (46)	9 (8)	2 (2)	18 (22)	-
Neighbour LA	32 (30)	51 (50)	16 (15)	<1 (<1)	27 (31)	-

Table 5.1: Pupil intake of Anne Frank and neighbouring schools in its first two years

If we consider Anne Frank's first two intakes compared with its closest five neighbours, its local authority, and neighbouring authority in Table 5.1, there are a number of surprises. Although Anne Frank's initial intake was predominantly white in a wider area of high diversity, it still took fewer white children than its closest neighbour. This proportion also reduced significantly in the second year, to fall in line with most other neighbouring schools. However, highly unusually, up to

a quarter of students' ethnicity was 'unclassified', so there is much uncertainty. Given that the 'lottery' places would allow access from further away, it is perhaps surprising that the school does not reflect the wider diversity of its two closest authorities more generally. Perhaps, indeed, those choosing from further away were the core German-speaking population and did not reflect the wider population. However, without individual pupil level data this is impossible to ascertain.

We also do not know exactly how many families spoke German. The percentage of speakers of English as an additional language (EAL) was higher for Anne Frank than its closest four neighbours, albeit significantly below the figure for the wider area. If we use the crude proxy of students registered as 'white other', not British, which includes many from European backgrounds, this figure is significantly higher for Anne Frank than its neighbours. Therefore, it appears that Anne Frank might have been underserving non-German-speaking EAL pupils, but also not taking as many German speakers as the 95% anticipated in the bid. Unofficial sources claimed that only 40% spoke even a little German before starting school (p135).

The reducing of the amount of German during the first year could explain a second intake with fewer German speakers. However, it is worth considering that the lottery appealed not only to German-speakers far away, as one local nursery parent highlighted they were attracted because they were in a "*catchment black hole*", meaning that their only realistic choice would be the only school with spare places, often several miles away. As the older year one and two classes were not full straight away, they would have needed to accept students transferring in from other areas. A highly mobile population in the city was therefore an advantage in ensuring that places were filled, although this may have contributed to the surprise, mentioned by several participants, of significantly higher numbers of non-German-speaking pupils with EAL and special educational needs.

The intake of children eligible for free school meals, a commonly used proxy for socio-economic disadvantage, was surprising. Anne Frank's segregation ratio of 1.0 means it took exactly its fair share locally. But, remember that Anne Frank's intake was not entirely local. Given that travelling further is easier with resources, and the original widely-distributed supporter base appeared to have considerable

capital, it is likely that the 'lottery' students would be disproportionately wealthier, and therefore the true share of local pupils would be higher in FSM intake. Given that school B took an extremely low share, this seems plausible. However, if Anne Frank was taking its fair share of pupils representative of the entire local authorities, we might expect its SR to be even higher. The alternative explanation is that the children coming from further away are indeed reflecting the authorities' proportion of FSM and Anne Frank is therefore not taking its fair local share. Given the exclusivity of school B, however, this seems unlikely.

In summary, Anne Frank was not obviously exclusive in its intake. Being able to publish pupil premium records on their website which demonstrated their inclusivity would only bolster legitimacy and the Ofsted report highlighted that the proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium was average, and the EAL and minority ethnic heritage intake was above average, although this was in comparison with national figures. A below-average intake of SEND pupils was highlighted, but is perhaps not surprising given the risk associated with a new school which was still a building site.

In one sense, Anne Frank appeared to be meeting its ideal of '*bilingualism for everyone*', as the only possible group missing were children who spoke neither English or German at home, and would therefore become bilingual in English and their additional language over time. It appears Anne Frank may have been under-recruiting some ethnic minority pupils, but only in-depth access to pupil-level data would confirm this, which is beyond the scope of this study.

Changing target audience

It was noted in the preceding subsection that the diversity of intake was perhaps unexpected. However, there are a number of ways in which it appears Anne Frank's leaders compromised their original desire for a German speaking school for their own children to deliberately broaden their target audience. The process of reapplying with a second bid appears to have been key. Given the name change (p144) and Paul's exhortations for parents to reach out to '*those who might not otherwise hear about the school*' more, we can surmise that part of the DfE's advice was to broaden the support for the campaign more. All publicity thereafter was only in English, and misconceptions about the school being for German speakers were tackled head on, using slogans such as "*Bilingualism for everyone*" and

pictures featuring a range of ethnic backgrounds. However, this was not just about satisfying regulators. Stella, for one, was clear she wanted a local community school (p132).

Nonetheless, the school did not compromise its core German supporters completely. The admissions 'lottery' was principally justified as allowing early supporters, who were widely distributed before the site was announced, to gain a place. Furthermore, consultation on changing this was never implemented, which could be due to the fact that, contrary to expectations, the first intake comprised a majority of non-German speakers. The 'lottery' might ensure German speakers unable to move could still attend in future years. However, it could be that leaders saw that the lottery allowed less-privileged families, who could not afford to move, access, though this seems less likely. Without access to pupil level data, this is impossible to ascertain. Nonetheless, the impact of a largely non-German-speaking first intake was that whole class German immersion across the curriculum became almost impossible. The first compromises post-opening were to begin streaming students for German, and dropping CLIL.

Given the diverse intake, there appeared to be a reasonable match between coordinative and communicative discourse about the school's vision. However, several participants indicated that the amount of non-German speakers who arrived threw leaders to begin with. One key participant indicated that it was this intake that forced the group to reconsider their bilingual approach in the weeks following opening. Coupled with concerns from the DfE advisor over progress in English, the group were forced to compromise their original vision and values.

How much German?

"In the light of this extraordinary [largely German-English bilingual] cohort, we feel confident we can achieve our aims through the current curriculum model as it is flexible and adaptable." – DfE bid

Before opening, Maria had already advised parents that the initially-proposed 50/50 model might be delayed until age seven, with literacy in English first. She cited the reasons as both the city's large multilingual population, and therefore needs for fluency in English, and the pressures of compulsory testing in English. English first therefore became a core value (p153). When the students arrived, it was clear to many that even the flexible curriculum proposed could not cater for the spread of ability in German, with the DfE advisor particularly concerned

(p138). Staff were unable to differentiate the curriculum sufficiently so, following the first DfE visit, German was streamed and reduced. The advisor recommended extending 'social German' instead although, one year in, there were almost no German words spoken, or on display.

However, German was never lost completely. By the open day for the third intake, Liz stated German would be taught three times a week and CLIL trialed in some PE and Music lessons. The German coordinator would sit on the governing body and liaise with EES' language team to develop an 'integration plan', which kicked in in earnest shortly before the Ofsted inspection, when staff would have been confident in their students' progress in national tests. Newsletters, partially in German for the first time, highlighted a new partner school, pen pals and even German interns who allowed daily booster sessions in German to be offered.

Therefore, although the online parent claimed the school was, emphatically "*NOT bilingual*" (p135), the phase of the 'bilingual journey' Ofsted witnessed was closer to what one participant described as bilingualism as '*an aspiration*'. The initial compromising of German was paying off.

Staff expertise was also highlighted by several as a key constraint on the ability to implement the bilingual curriculum and, when almost the entire initial staff team left, the replacing of these bilingual staff members with fewer German speakers and a head less experienced in bilingual pedagogy was a significant compromise. This demonstrated that the core values which would not be compromised were staff quality and expertise in the UK curriculum. The freedom to hire less qualified class teachers more competent in German or bilingual pedagogy was never utilized, although perhaps the hiring of highly-qualified German speakers without qualified teacher status (QTS) as support staff made this easier to justify.

Emerging core values

If such a central value as the teaching of German was compromised, what were the core values that were protected? The quote of the online parent on p146 captures the essential one perfectly, namely that of survival. However, the quote also highlighted another increasingly important core value as the school faced difficulties, namely parent power.

The core values embodied in the school's vision covered several pages online. However, its three strands of academic excellence, community engagement and

personal development did not mention language, only a vision for “*children to live and learn two or more cultures, preparing them to become socially active and open-minded citizens.*” So, was bilingual education no longer a core value? Another section on bilingual advantages highlighted that languages “*carry values, culture and history – in short, understanding,*” implying that language learning was still viewed as a central vehicle for delivering the curriculum. Indeed, German was never removed, and when reduced, it was with the vision of being built up again. In fact, the first email to supporters post-approval highlighted the school’s wider ambitions:

“This is an incredibly exciting moment for us and our partners EES; we hope, for our supporters; and, we believe, for education in this country. Bilingual schools are starting to be created in the state sector... We cannot know where it will lead, but with passion and determination and with your support, we can begin a revolution in the way language is taught to and perceived by all our children.”

This bilingual aspect, or at least innovation in language learning, was indeed a core value protected, even if it became highly reduced for a while. Interestingly, which language this involved was never questioned. Only once in my data was a justification of German evidenced, in terms of the size of the German-speaking economic area in Europe. Its wide supporter base left it an unquestioned core value by default. Interestingly, the small class sizes also remained protected. Was this therefore a core value? This is hard to assert, but if we consider that financial legitimacy was never brought in to question, it may be that it never needed compromising.

Despite the resurrection of German, the core value of English first was clear, not only through flagging up UK qualified staff and the English national curriculum, but also in the name change and lack of German used in publicity. A whole section of the website covered ‘British values’, which was not just about gaining legitimacy. Stella, more than a year in, recognized that:

“what OFSTED tries to make sure is that when children go in to school... that they can follow the national curriculum and I think that this is absolutely right, especially in a multicultural society that we are living in. You have to make sure, and this is OFSTED’s idea, and the idea of the government, that children go, when they’re three years old in to some setting, and what they learn there is English and then they are able to follow on in to school. They are all on the same picture basically which is one language, which is English. And I absolutely do understand this because when children are not able to follow when they start school, if they are not able to speak English, it’s really hard for them to understand what’s going on and really, language is so important, it

really is the key to everything. How can you understand Maths? How can you understand literacy, when you're not able to speak this language? And the language in England is English."

The founder parents, and others close to them, like Stella, had been on their own 'bilingual journey'. From conceiving of a school for German speakers, to recognizing the shortcomings of CLIL immersion in year one, they responded with flexibility and compromise of what appeared to be core values. But German never died. Instead, the need to establish legitimacy through securing the 'good' label involved putting English first, while solidifying a parent supporter base in the school community. The best of both worlds, at least for many parents, emerged: a local school with a German spin. The inclusivity of '*bilingualism for everyone*' was beginning to be achieved, although a note of caution should be sounded regarding the outreach to speakers of languages other than English and German.

Sacrificing the desires of the initial target audience by compromising the degree of German was the cost. Anne Frank was not the German Grundschule with 50% immersion originally envisaged. It was perhaps, however, the school which Ofsted would approve, and therefore, the one the community in the area could not only accept, but actively support. With the legitimacy of a 'good' label, the future may bring more innovation. Only time will tell. As Katrine noted at the end of our interview: *"that the school exists should be seen as a huge success and you can build from there, I guess."*

Stella also finished her interview with a rather more positive note than earlier in the interview, in turn qualifying her opening quote on page 115:

"Everyone thought it was bilingual, but within the school, no one really had an idea how they can make it work and I think this is now much clearer and there are much better procedures in place, and there's a much better qualified staff team in place that can really ensure that it is a bilingual education."

Rather than being swallowed up by the constraints, the school did what was necessary to guarantee protection of the German which meant, temporarily, ensuring survival by putting English first.

To sum up 5.4, then, in relation to the fourth research question, namely what kind of bilingual education is emerging through Anne Frank school, the answer appears to be a form of bilingual education as an 'aspiration', resurgent, but still dominated by English. Although this bilingual education evolution has been hampered by

many constraints, it has strong backing within its own community of like-minded, mainly middle class families. Nonetheless, the intake still appears to reflect the socio-economic makeup of its locality, unlike its closest neighbouring school, indicating that the school may be going some way to realizing its goal of *“bilingualism for everyone”*. However, it remains unclear whether this is by design and, furthermore, whether this applies to students from different ethnic and language backgrounds.

Conclusion: overcoming constraints

As we noted above, the opening quote of this chapter is not the whole story, so how did Anne Frank’s leaders and parents navigate the opportunities and constraints afforded by free schools legislation to secure bilingual education with German language immersion? In relation to the first research question, the answer lies, to a large extent, with Paul Webb’s persistence in building a loyal network of supporters. Finding their sponsor EES at the right time was also essential although, ultimately, it was also the strong network of parents that stabilized the school during a change of head and troubles with EES. It was this sense of ‘community’ which maintained a degree of legitimacy with other local families, thereby partially answering the third research question.

In considering the second research question, few freedoms were utilized. New parents were successfully recruited by balancing the key distinctiveness of German lessons, a tight-knit parent community and smaller class sizes with the mimetic offering, including a UK curriculum, standard term dates and phonics schemes. In order to build this community, however, and honour the loyalty of early followers, the school did utilize its freedom to determine its own admissions by reserving 50% of places after siblings for random allocation, rather than distance. Ultimately, however, this did not affect the local legitimacy of the school, possibly because many parents did not live too far away, or had subsequently moved closer to the school. The early parents’ ultimatum to withdraw support if the site was too far away was a significant power in protecting their ability to secure languages education.

The school’s freedom to be established quickly enough for early supporters’ children was a key freedom for founder parents. However, the short timescale also

constrained the school's legitimacy as so many things needed to be organized quickly, which ultimately came at the cost, for a while, of the German immersion. The freedom to choose a sponsor and site were also constrained freedoms, given the difficulty of securing both of these, and the problems that EES' involvement temporarily brought. In general, parent power was the most important freedom realized by campaigners and parents. The participatory methods involved are not exclusive to free schools, but it is hard to imagine so many parents on a community school governing body.

In answer to the third and fourth research questions, this search for legitimacy had a considerable impact on emergent values. Leaders had to demonstrate considerable flexibility in order to adapt their marketing plan to non-Germans and respond to their needs in the first intake by dropping German and letting go of staff unable to accept the changes. By retaining families at this key time by building community and following an English-first approach, the team were able to build legitimacy with regulators too, resulting in the ultimate 'good' label from Ofsted. Compliance was important, but flexible listening to the DfE was even more so. In addition, leaders harnessed local authority support through persistence and carefully identified mutual benefits in terms of needed school places.

A community of families became a core value protected alongside academic performance, although the nature of this envisaged community evolved from a largely German-speaking community to embrace greater diversity of families as the school opened. However, this intake may still be at the cost of non-German and non-English speakers and some ethnic minority groups who are under-represented. Certainly, not all groups of parents appeared to be navigating free schools legislation in order to secure bilingual education in German and English. The mechanisms of school choice may be a significant constraint on this, particularly for the first intake. However subsequent intakes indicated continued underrepresentation of some ethnic groups.

Ultimately, however, balancing the desires of the German-speaking founders with the interests of a wider group of families appeared to pay off in terms of securing legitimacy once the school proved itself in testing and secured its 'good' label from Ofsted. The amount of German began increasing slowly and the school continued to recruit the required number of students. EES were also able to start supporting

the development of bilingual pedagogy. But, if there was a one sentence answer to the question of how the leader stakeholders are navigating free schools legislation, it appears to be by using the freedom afforded to free school proposers to utilize parent power and, in particular, through the social capital, networking skills and enterprise of the chief institutional entrepreneur, Paul Webb. But a proviso comes in considering the second half of the overarching question: have Anne Frank really secured 'bilingual education'? Possibly not, although the foundations have been re-established in order to attempt this once again.

The next chapter now considers what happened for a school who tried to follow in Anne Frank's footsteps with the same sponsor, EES, but faced far greater constraints when EES' reputation was brought in to question. Once again, the involvement of parents was key but, this time, as leadership of the school, and power, appears to have been handed on, more of the bilingual ethos appears to have been compromised in the quest for legitimacy.

Chapter 6: De Gaulle Academy

"It would be like winning the lottery if it had all worked out perfectly... but it is sad because it feels like they were close and I do wonder sometimes if.. there's a lot of politics involved. If it's because.. at the very last minute they became an academy, and STRATA I mean.. they have not only no understanding or interest in language education, but they're in no way experienced so, to them, a child having PE in French they must be, how wonderful, how novel, there's French being spoken in the classroom" – Saffron, parent

Introduction

This second case study arose out of piloting and, although it offers on first glance neither a different sponsor nor language to the other cases, the way in which bilingual education was compromised differs from the other 'successful' cases. It also highlights the complexity of the relationship between parents as choice agents and school leaders in establishing a legitimate bilingual free school. When De Gaulle Academy (DGA)'s first sponsor was told to stop expanding, it was the headteacher's networks that provided an alternative sponsor and a resulting shift in values, exacerbated further by the changing location and intake. Continued threats to legitimacy were tackled strategically by leaders changing the target audience more overtly than at Anne Frank and by focusing more on pleasing sponsor, regulators and, to a lesser degree, existing parents. This ensured the school's survival despite some resistance in the local community. Like Anne Frank school, French remained sheltered throughout by being reduced considerably, this time raising even more prominently the question of whether the outcome can really be considered bilingual education.

6.1 Forming a coalition with capital

This first section, in considering the first research question, highlights how DGA's founder parents capitalised on French-speaking networks to evidence demand as well as Anne Frank's success to recruit a sponsor, EES. However, when EES faced problems, it was the headteacher's networks that secured a replacement sponsor, who had a less parent-centred approach to school governance than Anne Frank. Combined with the loss of a number of parents during pre-opening difficulties, the result appeared to be a shift in power away from parents, as the head and sponsor took the helm. Nonetheless, the head's ability to broker coordinative discourse to

retain many parents and identify new avenues for recruitment underline his key role as institutional entrepreneur and bricoleur.

Founder parent networks & expertise

In July 2012, the UK buzzed with inspiration. The London Olympics were imminent and, just a few miles from Anne Frank school (Chapter five) campaign's centre, a group of parents involved in French Saturday schools began to dream of a French free school. The city's existing French schools were all far away and often fee-paying. Although a whole group of parents and leaders pledged their expertise, it was Harold Norman, a financier and parent, who stepped up to lead the campaign for the then-titled Central Bilingual School (CBS) in Burnville. The dream, shared during later consultation reports, was for a school which both met the demand for more places like those in the 'best' local schools, and shared the "*opportunity of learning in two languages*" with other families in the area.

Harold had considerable financial credentials, although he was neither as dynamic, nor as direct with parents, as Paul Webb in Anne Frank (Chapter five). However, he had a strongly committed team. Initially through the French-speaking Saturday school network and then through local flyers, parents were surveyed to establish demand in the area. The Institut Francais and French, then other national embassies, also publicised the campaign. The private French lycée, its partnered state schools with bilingual streams in central London and three approved BFS also shared their advice. Following two early public meetings in Burnville, the group were convinced that there was sufficient support for their vision. All that was needed now was government approval.

An experienced sponsor

CBS' founders recognised that their own educational experience was probably insufficient and, through a founder parent for another BFS, the team were put in touch with EES, Anne Frank's sponsor (Chapter five). As highlighted in 5.1, EES had considerable expertise with setting up free schools, in educational management more generally and in language learning. Both Lucy, CBS' project manager from EES, and Noelle, a founder parent, acknowledged that EES brought significant financial capital and budgeting expertise. Within two months of announcing a

partnership between the founders and EES, an application had been submitted to the DfE. The bid was approved first time.

Early adopters

By the application deadline to the DfE, a hundred families had responded to the survey saying they would choose the school. Leaders acknowledged that these were disproportionately from French-speaking networks. However, the bid also highlighted use of local playgroups, coffee shops, the National Childbirth Trust (NCT), religious groups and children's centres to place flyers. Press releases were taken up positively by local media, but French-speaking radio and newspapers were also used. By the time applications closed, Lucy claimed over 250 applications had been made for the first intake of 125 students but an internal mapping exercise revealed that the majority of applications were from miles away. Lucy indicated these were mainly French-speaking families and, given the marketing channels, probably middle-class, which is significant when we consider their potential power over key early decisions (6.2). When interviewed, Lucy talked of a planned boost in local marketing to rectify this, but it was Christmas and near the end of statutory consultation and little therefore materialized. The team may have felt they had sufficient demand to open anyway. At least, so it appeared at that time.

A school leader

Founder parents were intimately involved in headteacher recruitment: they co-wrote the job description; helped interview applicants; and it was their networks mentioned above which secured the successful appointment of Charles Silveau. A French national, but UK trained teacher, he had recently completed a prestigious leadership training programme. Over the next year, pre-opening, he worked closely with EES and the founders and, like Maria in Anne Frank, met regularly with potential parents. His UK training and bilingual credentials were supplemented by a considerable network through his leadership programme and previous work in city-wide schools. Although a few parents pointed out his relative lack of teaching experience, he responded at one open day that his teaching while working in academia and community advocacy work were also significant.

A second sponsor

Charles' well-networked role became crucial when, in early 2014, EES' existing schools, including Anne Frank, began to receive negative feedback (5.1). Although EES claimed they had pulled out as they wished to emulate the local focus of the 'best' academy chains, this was not fully plausible as Anne Frank was geographically close to CBS. Officially, governors later reported the need to "*part ways*" to allow EES to "*focus on building the performance of their already open schools*". Charles, however, was more explicit: the DfE would not allow EES to expand.

CBS' other leaders were reluctant to discuss this time, but Charles stated that he was responsible for identifying a second sponsor, STRATA, "*through my contacts*". STRATA was local and had grown by partnering one successful school with multiple 'failing' schools. CBS, however, was its first free school. STRATA's mission in publicity was clear, but not language-focused: "*we are committed to improving the life chances of all children. Where we have the capacity to make a difference, we are morally bound to do so.*" After some hesitancy, Charles convinced STRATA that CBS' leaders shared this vision and, additionally, could offer French specialist support across its network. Weeks before opening, STRATA agreed and the school opened on time, with STRATA deploying significant human and financial resources in the first months of opening.

With a new sponsor, came a new name: De Gaulle Academy (DGA). Charles said he felt more comfortable with this name as it removed the 'bilingual' claim (See 6.4). Although the name at least retained the French flavour, many prospective parents pulled out at this time, with others I later interviewed suspecting that STRATA may have influenced a move away from immersion, which later governing body minutes confirmed. CBS' leaders, however, attributed the exodus more to site difficulties (6.3). Most importantly, the result of the change in sponsor and exodus of parents was a seismic shift in decision-making power.

Shifting power

Power had long passed naturally from founder parents to the professionals, from the first partnership with EES, through to Charles' and other staff appointments. Initially, Lucy from EES had seen her role as support and a liaison between founder parents, who were allocated roles according to their strengths, and the DfE. EES

and the founders met monthly and were, in effect, an emergent governing body. They had proposed a governance structure similar to Anne Frank (5.1), but when STRATA took over, its central trust's governing body sought a stronger role. Both DGA and STRATA's websites highlighted a strong collective ethos through reference to trust-wide "*non-negotiables*" with a "*no opt-out*" principle over agreed structures. Most values were fairly generic, but the flavour was clearly unity through conformity. When STRATA began a review of governance shortly after DGS opened, it sought a '*STRATA first*' commitment, with governors potentially being deployed at any STRATA school, reducing the influence of DGA parents over their children's school further. At the first governors' meeting post-opening, DGA's governors also decided that founders' positions would be time-bound as, after a few years, "*the work on the campaign group in setting up the school will have been achieved.*" The need for additional elected parent governors was brought into question, but they were retained for the first year of opening. Nonetheless, despite a reduction in parent power, the body committed to making most minutes available online, demonstrating far greater transparency than most schools.

In summary of 6.1, then, the founder parents had achieved their dream of a school offering French in Burnville by forming a coalition with sufficient capital to realise this. Unlike Anne Frank, this did not depend on an entrepreneurial parent as much as an entrepreneurial headteacher. When EES had to withdraw sponsorship and pupil numbers plummeted, it was Charles' appointment which enabled the securing of a second sponsor, STRATA, who brought differing expertise and vision with them and a notable shift in power away from founder parents. But did this also mean a different use of legislative freedoms from Anne Frank? Section 6.2 explores this more.

6.2 Utilising legislative freedoms

The simple freedom to propose a free school offering the language of their choice in their own locality was a key one exploited by DGA's founder parents (6.1), although what actually emerged was highly constrained (6.4). Section 6.2 highlights how several freedoms were proposed and then subsequently

relinquished in order to secure the school's opening. How far these changes were due to coercive isomorphic pressure is then explored further in 6.3 and 6.4.

Harnessing Parent Power

Like Anne Frank school, EES' bid with DGA claimed a perfect partnership, with parents providing local knowledge and EES the professional expertise. Although the founder parents had recognised their limitations (p160), during consultation, one founder parent, Noelle, highlighted their intimate involvement in key decisions about values and the potential site, which Lucy verified. Despite the transfer of power to Charles and STRATA in contrast with Anne Frank school, parent power did not disappear completely. The governing body's newsletter at the end of the first year acknowledged that the parent-teacher-association (PTA) had been a key success, cementing relationships and facilitating volunteering. Parent conversations and governing body minutes also highlighted significant expenditure by the PTA on curricular materials, given that pupil intake and, therefore, funding was lower than anticipated and staff salaries could not be cut. Although one parent, Saffron, claimed that the PTA *"has very little to do with.. the actual.. running of the school or structure of the school in any way. It's, we are.. just about raising money"*, she referred to multiple conversations with Charles over various concerns. Without the initially promised parent forum, Charles' approachability became key. He actively listened, with one parent, Lydia, proudly recalling how a recent change in uniform policy had immediately followed her passing suggestion to Charles. In a small school, this was not only easier, but also vital to ensure retention of families in a precarious first year (see 6.3). By the end of the first year, however, given a number of *"vocal parents"*, governors were asked to relieve Charles by holding their own parent meetings, a comments box and register of concerns. Parent voice was at risk of being diminished again.

Many parents were attracted by the chance to get involved in something small scale. Tina, involved in the PTA, noted:

"it's a new school and a chance to shape something... ..whenever something's new, you can help create the culture and you can be involved... ..And it feels like there's a lot more scope to do that when something's new"

She followed this by admitting that this:

"depends who's running the school and how open they are to that, but Mr. Silveau, he's very open to gathering as much support and as many of the skills

from the community as he can and... ...leverage that for the benefit of the school."

For her, involvement was also an insurance policy, given the risks:

"I think once the offers were made... ...I became a lot more engaged then, because I thought I kind of want to understand what's happening if we're going forward with this".

The benefits to the school are perhaps obvious, but parents appreciated the intimate community too. Compared with Anne Frank school, parent power appeared less crucial in guaranteeing survival, perhaps only insofar as ensuring no further families left. However, parents still enjoyed greater presence on the governing body and audiences with the head than in most schools. Founder parents also left a legacy in terms of their early decisions before opening. The next subsections therefore highlight further freedoms founders took and how they evolved after the change of sponsor.

Location

Burnville was the obvious choice for the founders, given the Saturday school there. Their preferred central site, which was successfully leased by the EFA, was rationalized in consultation as much for its proximity to a transport hub for several local authorities as for its ability to fill several catchment 'black holes'. We will explore the responses to this site further below (6.3) but, once again, EES had no specific rationale themselves for the central Burnville location and it was the parent's freedom to propose in this exact area rather than other areas with perhaps greater shortages. However, was the central location also an attempt to prioritise more widely distributed French-speaking supporters? To answer this, we must consider DGA's admissions policy.

Admissions

The bid and consultation documents revealed an admissions policy identical to Anne Frank's (5.2), including, once again, eschewing of the ability to select up to ten percent of pupils by aptitude. Though the consultation report acknowledged that the 50% lottery places helped those specifically seeking the bilingual model, the bid also framed this as increasing equity:

There are more than 5000 families receiving housing benefit... ...in Burnville and significant levels of social housing. Our admissions policy will ensure that our intake is not restricted to one catchment area formed by home to school distance

This is interesting, given the predominantly distant, French-speaking first set of applications (p161). Perhaps leaders were aware that they needed to justify the decision more to the DfE to gain approval (see 6.3). Like Anne Frank, founder parents and siblings were given priority after children in care or with SEND. The first intake also comprised three year groups, a freedom which increased options for early, mainly French-speaking, supporters whose children were now significantly older than when first approached. Several parents also recognized that, if willing to move, their younger children would then be guaranteed a place.

The lottery appeared less controversial during consultation than with Anne Frank, with the only objections coming from those who wanted greater priority for French speakers, both online and at events. However, the team were unequivocal: no priority could be given as CBS was an English community school. Although the consultation therefore appeared to reach people more ambivalent about French priority, this does not appear to be a deliberate strategy. Though the final report highlighted hundreds of community groups contacted, these were organisations rather than the public at large and institutions in this conservative area were perhaps less likely to be against free schools.

Although CBS' pledges to review admissions were somewhat unnecessary, given widespread approval in consultation. Lucy mentioned that Burnville council wanted priority for children of service personnel, which was only followed up much later. At the second governing body meeting post-opening, governors denied a further request from the council to remove the admissions lottery, or limit it to Burnville only. However, they did approve priority for pupil premium children, despite fears it would limit the local intake further. STRATA, meanwhile, though, were reviewing their trust-wide admissions template, which was circulated to all local governing bodies for comment. This did not include a lottery and, at a subsequent meeting, governors were told that, though their views "*would be taken into account*", it was STRATA's Board of Directors who made the final decision on admissions. After continued debate, governors approved the lottery-free policy, four votes to three, indicating substantial disagreement and dissatisfaction with a transfer of power away from founder parents to STRATA. It is likely that pleasing the local authority was key, as well as enhancing local legitimacy with an increasing number of local doubters outside the school community (6.3). However, previous minutes had also noted that finances were precarious and that low pupil

premium student numbers were restricting income. Increasing such funding would allow reallocation of over-recruited staff without cutbacks. Another point supporting the financial argument is that in the full year groups, DGA were asked to increase capacity by the local authority. The planned freedom to keep class sizes to 25 had been long forsaken, possibly due to STRATA involvement, but it is likely that financially allowing the school to increase those year groups with greater demand would help meet any shortfall in funding in other year groups (see 6.4).

What is likely to have swayed the change is that the admissions lottery which had pledged to serve those disadvantaged outside of catchment failed to do so (see 6.4). Furthermore, the less overt goal of giving French speakers priority had also failed, as many pulled out just before opening. DGA's freedom to determine a favourable admissions policy ensured enough support to get the funding agreement signed, but had not served the school well in its first year and was therefore brought into line with STRATA's other schools and Burnville's priorities for admissions. Ultimately, the freedom to prioritise students eligible for the pupil premium did ensure the retention of an inclusive vision. Therefore, the freedom over admissions was a complicated tool which leaders attempted to exploit differently over time, but with often unexpected outcomes (see 6.4).

Financial, staffing and timescale flexibility: freedom or constraint?

Like Anne Frank, little was made of the potential financial advantages of being a free school. At a post-opening event, Charles highlighted the advantages of not paying ten to fifteen percent to the local authority. However, any potential advantages had been actually undermined by parents creating a financial risk when they pulled out. Though STRATA provided assistance, accepting a reduced contribution for services from DGA for the first year, staffing costs could not be easily reduced once contracts were signed. The planned freedom to offer double planning and preparation time was therefore not honoured. DGA was fortunate that it had recruited families with sufficient capital to support them financially through the PTA (p164). However, although there was some freedom in less local authority oversight financially, actual income was highly constrained by the risks around free schools, at least in the first year. Financial freedom was not necessarily serving DGA well.

The freedom to open a school in time for early supporters' children to attend just two years after it was discussed was a considerable one. The short timescale for consultation was an additional advantage as it limited potentially negative feedback. However, the short timescale after the mapping exercise (p161) meant limited time to market locally, which ultimately threatened the school when many families further away pulled out. Although the timescale may have benefited early supporters, it presented considerable threats to the school's survival.

Like Anne Frank, the freedom to employ unqualified teachers was also ignored. Pre-opening, Harold emphasized that they would honour government pay scales and require UK qualifications. Despite being free to attract French speakers, this was constrained by the need to comply with employment legislation (see 6.4). However, this also presented a potential constraint on the ability to enact a key freedom: namely that of choosing a bilingual, or language-focused, curriculum.

Curricular freedom: the 'language focused' school

Although the bid never mentioned a 50/50 French/English model explicitly, it took a flexible approach to the language of delivery for each subject, built on daily Literacy and Maths in both French and English. By the consultation period, the allocation was even more vague. CBS would offer outstanding education first, whilst enabling students to become 'citizens of the world', with the extra distinction of teaching in French and English using CLIL immersion. It would follow the English national curriculum, with no mention that this was optional for a free school. After appointment at one open day, Charles placed more emphasis on 'social' French and no mention was made of subject allocations for each language. This vagueness may be because most parents were initially focused on the early years, which are generally focused on speaking and listening first. However, Charles admitted in questioning that the 'core' subjects of literacy and Maths would be in English first.

Once the school opened with a new sponsor, and website, a split emerged: official policies did not mention French, but the prospectus and open days still highlighted daily French teaching, and immersion in both PE and Music. However, the phrase '*bilingual education*' was no longer used, with the website preferring the "*aim to provide children with an outstanding education with a strong focus on language learning*". Possible constraints on this curricular freedom will be unpicked in

subsequent sections. Nonetheless, French was still offered, and more limited freedoms included early swimming lessons and setting longer hours to squeeze in an extra 45 minutes of French a day without compromising time in English. However, this was also pragmatic as it eased congestion on a site shared with two other schools. Ultimately, this was not the curriculum envisaged by the founders, although Charles claimed it had always been his.

To summarise 6.2, although founders had planned to utilize considerable freedoms to establish a school with a bilingual curriculum open to widely-dispersed French-speaking supporters alongside more local families, many of these freedoms were unexploited. Instead, the key freedoms deployed by Charles, with the tentative backing of the governing body, were the freedom to change sponsor, then curriculum and admissions in order to ensure their survival. Though the short timescale and, we shall see later, the location were constraining freedoms, like Anne Frank, the chief constraint appeared to be built in to the core risk associated with opening a free school: namely that families could, and did, pull out when significant changes were made, which threatened survival, prompting further change in direction. DGA managed to overcome this constraint by increasing pupil numbers by over 40% during the first year and by being oversubscribed for year two. In order to do so, they had to work hard to persuade families of their offer and identify new audiences but, equally importantly, leaders had to convince the government of ongoing capacity. With a more secure leadership and staffing team than Anne Frank school and a less secure parent base, sponsor and site, section 6.3 explores the similarities and differences in their quest for legitimacy with regulators and parents as a result.

6.3 Establishing legitimacy

Section 6.3 focuses first on how DGA's leaders navigated not only the coercive isomorphic pressure to comply with national regulators in order to establish positive working relationships, but also navigated the highs and lows of working with the local authority as well. In demonstrating flexibility by making important changes ahead of opening, a smoother relationship was established earlier on between school leaders and the DfE than for Anne Frank. This enabled a positive

feedback loop, which ultimately gained the school increasing support from new parents following its initial boom and bust in popularity, despite growing opposition from the public at large. We see how, in order to gain legitimacy with families, DGA, like Anne Frank, built a tight, highly-engaged community attracted by the small scale and exclusivity by again balancing mimesis and distinctiveness to mitigate the risks associated with a free school.

From pre-approval to monitoring visits: building a relationship with the DfE

DGA gained approval quickly, benefiting from lessons learned from Anne Frank's second successful bid with EES. At the time, EES' assistance offered the DfE the credibility needed and the bid also demonstrated institutional learning by demonstrating more flexibility than Anne Frank's, for example, through less insistence on bilingual staffing. DGA were able to highlight intense need for places in central Burnville and the Conservative local authority acknowledged that they could not meet the shortfall themselves. DGA's bid also demonstrated institutional learning and the necessary capacity to improve further in framing itself as the inclusive local option by contrasting their vision with the intake of the most popular selective faith schools.

Following approval, CBS, like Anne Frank, was also assigned a DfE advisor who advised on possible admissions changes. However, two hurdles arose unexpectedly after parents had already accepted their places at the school: first the questions over EES' capacity to support its schools; then questions over the suitability of the central site. A temporary site was found, three miles away, which effectively ruled out many existing families and, despite Charles and the founders' pursuit of parents initially declined a place, DGA opened with just over half the pupils intended. Although the governors later stated "*the DfE had full faith in our free school, and supported us fully during this transition*", it appeared to be Charles' contacts that secured the sponsor (p162). Both STRATA's good, local, track record and Charles' success would have given regulators confidence of continuing capacity.

By now, Charles and the DfE advisor had discussed the performance issues in English at other bilingual free schools. Although Charles acknowledged that the one-to-one method of DfE advice was a constraint, he also knew following it was not optional:

"the way we've developed our curriculum is.. because of OFSTED and DfE expectations. The DfE remain quite clear that we are state funded and, therefore, phonics in English come first. English and Maths come first and languages, yeah, but come second.. So we've got a very traditional curriculum which meets the.. requirements of the DfE in terms of getting children ready for their statutory exams.. so we haven't been able to really negotiate on that.... ..it comes down to who is that person who effectively signs off your education brief, which is the key document that you produce pre-opening. If they like it, fine. If they don't, you need to revise it, and we had to revise ours on the basis French was too present."

Charles accepted the compromise, reassuring himself that he had never wanted 50% French anyway (p168). Having demonstrated its flexibility, the school was able to sign its final funding agreement with the DfE and passed its pre-OFSTED inspection weeks before opening.

After opening, survival was no surety. The funding agreement stipulated 82 pupils were needed by the new year. In part due to transfers from a neighbouring school going through many changes, this was achieved and nearly a hundred pupils were enrolled by Christmas. Charles and the staff's ability to attract and retain these parents and be oversubscribed for the second year was no mean feat and, combined with excellent emerging test results, would have further reassured regulators of their capabilities.

Using the positive feedback loop and acknowledging constraints of DfE relations

Charles was full of praise for DGA's DfE advisor. Her celebration of the school's good practice certainly helped this relationship. Additionally, at open days for the second intake, Charles proudly shared feedback from several officials, including a former Ofsted inspector. In addition to reassuring parents, Charles claimed it would permit further changes:

"Between September and Christmas, for us, was about.. focusing on establishing the systems that the DfE and Ofsted will be happy about and now that this is, I would argue, strongly put in to place, we can look at.. the more visionary, outside of the box sort of things"

Praise was mutual. Like Stella in Anne Frank, Charles praised Ofsted's vital monitoring role to answer a parent concerned that her daughter might not be stretched enough. Both schools had learned to accept advice positively, although DGA had also learned to sideline innovation more. DGA could thereby use resulting praise to bolster legitimacy with parents and it also helped them to defend more controversial decisions.

Both the pre-opening team, and Charles, openly used the constraints of government legislation as a defense to parents. At the open day, Charles was explicit that DGA's "*actually very traditional*" curriculum was able to offer PE and Music in French as they had convinced the DfE of these subjects' natural fit for language learning opportunities. Any more French would take time "*as the DfE have made it clear that English phonics and writing comes first and this is right*". Therefore, he appeared to present a united front with the DfE. Like other BFS, DGA's leaders also clearly distinguished between site issues, which they related to the Education Funding Agency (EFA, see below) and the support and approval of the DfE.

Given that it was the third BFS to open, and the other two had received difficult feedback, the DfE had its own interests in DGA's success. Saffron later acknowledged:

S:...he [Charles] seemed to think that maybe things could change in time if the DfE starts to.. be more... lenient with us, when they realize that the school is.. a success.. But then again I think maybe there's politics with the whole free school thing. The last two years in England.. has been not ideal and.. also because we're an academy, we're dealing with the DfE directly..

K: So you think that there's somehow more.. pressure?

S: Yes, more pressure for there to be.. less French spoken whereas the.. schools in Worton council, they.. have the support of Worton, who has obviously recognized over time that.. what the schools are doing is working, so they're supporting the.. methods.

Saffron's reference to Worton council, which has several bilingual state primary schools (partly linked to the lycée), implies that she thought DGA not only missed out on council support, but therefore was under far greater pressure from the DfE. But it is incorrect to assume that Burnville council were uninvolved with DGA's emergence.

Local authority relations

Burnville council, like the DfE, had its own reasons to support DGA: chiefly its huge shortage of places. However, it also had a physical space crisis. Several parents, and DGA's bid, highlighted the thousands of Burnville students educated in temporary classrooms as it was difficult for the council to access funds for building projects. The local authority supported the EFA and sponsors in identifying sites but, as plans were drawn up, one issue remained unresolved: how would hundreds of families be able to park at the central site? The school could have opened temporarily there, but due to travel planners' objections, they were instead

offered, and accepted, the temporary site three miles away. DGA sub-let the central site to another academy chain temporarily, while the council and EFA identified a new site for DGA in a local park. Plans for this site were pushed through in a short timescale ahead of the 2015 general election, but when the news became public, there was local uproar. Several councillors objected, the planning meeting was abolished and the EFA asked to find another site.

Despite this setback, there is some evidence that DGA's leaders early on felt a need to please the local authority. Post-consultation, the then CBS agreed to prioritise service personnel, but they didn't always comply with demands. Twice the council asked DGA to increase their intake, but twice DGA argued that the temporary site was too small. While attempting to secure the parkland site, the council asked DGA to remove its random allocation policy. This may not have only been because of the intense need for places. Many residents' objections to the parkland site claimed DGA was 'not local' and the council may have feared its own reputation was at stake.

Although Harold tried to put a positive spin on these differences, claiming they had "*a good relationship for an urban authority*", Charles was more ambivalent.

K: You've got quite a good relationship with them?... the council have been instrumental in providing this site, then?

C: Well, yes and no. It's mostly because they couldn't sort out the other one that we got to be here. As would be the case for most free schools, it's a political struggle, even though it's a very... Conservative council, and therefore, they are, by default, supporting free schools, but it could have been smoother.

By the end of 2015, DGA's governors announced that the EFA and Burnville had identified a third long-term site. The council wanted DGA to relinquish the lease on their first site in order to build a planned FE college there, but DTA and STRATA had learned their lesson and were clear: "*The EFA have been told that DGA require assurances that our proposed site is fully supported before any final agreement regarding [the first site] is made.*"

Relations with local authorities were far from straightforward. Although the council was officially supportive, the fact that the EFA identified a park as a preferred site cost the council and the school considerable legitimacy locally, which we explore now.

The constraints on legitimacy of finding a suitable site

The-then CBS' securing of a long-term site before the first round of applications closed was unique among BFS. The first, central, site was in an area of significant shortage and near a transport hub, but only 7 in 10 supported this site in consultation, due to its lack of outdoor space and traffic issues. Although DGA countered this with news that the site would have become mixed multistory offices and housing, these concerns were eventually backed up by planners. The team admitted they had no 'plan B' and the late move to the site provided by Burnville council meant many parents fell back on their council places or independent schools instead. However, some were loyal and preferred the green-er temporary site.

Regardless, DGA still needed a long-term site, with governors aware that an uncertain future was still a barrier for many parents. The parkland site could have ended up a disaster for the school's legitimacy. The timing of announcing the parkland site, however, was convenient for DGA, as it sprung up, and was all over during the quiet period between school applications closing and places being allocated, so it did not hamper recruitment efforts. Leaders also made it clear that the original central site was still theirs and was a backup plan, no matter what.

The struggle to justify DGA as a 'local' school

"This is not a community school. Their admission policy allows for 50% of places to be allocated via a lottery meaning that these pupils will come from outside the local area." – comment from a petition against the parkland site

Although some current parents exhibited mixed feelings about the parkland site, due to negative feedback online such as the above quote, it appeared to rally DGA's community, who formed an online counter-campaign. Harold was able to straddle both sides as he lived very close to the park itself. However, Charles' mapping in the first term revealed the same issues as Lucy's mapping had (p161): around 40% of families lived more than a 10/15-minute drive away. The opening quote therefore appeared accurate.

DGA's publicity often highlighted the lack of school places in Burnville and the DfE's impact assessment for the original site highlighted little competitive pressure on existing schools, although this was not true for assessment of the temporary site. DGA used shortages as a key argument in a FAQ they published in response to the online petition, also claiming that 49 applications for places in the following

year had come from parents within 0.5 miles of the parkland site. However, this was somewhat deceptive as not all these families would have been offered a place due to the lottery place allocation. Ultimately, most opposers of DGA's plans for the parkland site agreed that DGA was a means to solving the place shortage, but were not maybe all aware of the lottery places. Many parents I spoke with were concerned about the tiny catchment areas locally, with several banking on a lottery place in order to avoid the local school "*on the estate*". However, DGA's argument to the DfE that a lottery would relieve shortages across a wider area was never used publicly. Instead, the lottery became more of a liability, resulting in its removal, ostensibly to please the council, but also providing less ammunition for opponents.

Wider community relations did not begin so poorly, however. Despite official consultation revealing few negative comments, there was a degree of ambivalence from non-parents about the bilingual goals. The local media and council's more open support of the project pre-implementation than Anne Frank may have helped. Leaders also took pains to answer difficult questions publicly in the consultation report, lengthy public FAQ at events and later in their online FAQ and counter-petition for the parkland site. Pre-opening meetings with residents' groups were not compulsory but, Lucy said, "*in the spirit of consultation*". However, the timing of the consultation over the holidays meant possibly less negative traction than for Anne Frank, although leaders claimed this was due to the short timescale, rather than a deliberate attempt to limit negative feedback. Post-opening pro-DGA petitions and FAQ were only developed in response to negative publicity, but the response was measured, with at least one DGA parent urging sensitivity in negotiations as the communities would need to co-exist peacefully. Like Anne Frank, unsurprisingly, DGA's plans in their bid to work with community groups had, on the whole, not been implemented in year one, although the website highlighted some voluntary causes supported.

Community consultation, although largely sensitive, was clearly not the way in which DGA won local legitimacy. Leaders found it difficult to establish a clear vision with communicative discourse and even coordinative discourse between parents, authorities and leaders of the school was far from united. Instead, like Anne Frank, DGA relied on a similar balancing of distinction and mimesis in targeting parents more directly in nurseries. How Charles and the team managed

to recruit families in the face of considerable constraints is the focus of the remainder of 6.3.

Balancing distinctiveness and mimesis in the local school market

Every child deserves a superb education leading to exciting options for secondary school. That is what the very best local schools offer and our aim is to match that — and in addition offer every child fluency in a second language, in this case French. – consultation pack

Early publicity for DGA, like Anne Frank, highlighted the multiple advantages of bilingualism, but with perhaps more emphasis on the cultural and social advantages of an “*international, multilingual and multicultural outlook serving a socially diverse community*”, which Charles extended by talking of building future leaders, not “*passive recipients of society but, instead, active shapers*”. Post-opening, despite the minimizing of French, the language and associated culture was still a big draw. One parent, Diane, was clear that the much admired ‘family dining’ was related to French practices and Charles also justified swimming from age four as best practice adopted from France.

Post opening, Charles often shared the benefits he had received by transferring to the private sector himself as a student, and how he was passionate that all students should be able to experience this. Indeed, many of DGA’s distinctions were subtly mimetic of the ‘best’ local state and also independent schools. Offering French and extensive extracurricular activities would have been familiar for some, and convinced one parent, Lydia, to move her children to the state sector. The use of the title ‘principal designate’ for Charles while sponsored by EES and the change of name to ‘academy’ also signaled distinction for others like Diane. Indeed, ‘De Gaulle Academy’, although less overtly ‘bilingual’, actually accentuated its French distinctiveness. Despite small class sizes not being retained, they were attractive to many pre-opening and, post-opening, the small overall school size was a big draw. Tina noted the contrast with parents’ experience at the neighbouring school:

“I think they’ve seen what’s happening next to them and they’re thinking ‘we’re part of this big school’. A lady the other day said she really wanted to get involved and.. there wasn’t really a platform like we have a PTA, to come and do that, so I think... people are moving over.”

Slowly, attracted also by the perceived better discipline and uniforms, some of these parents transferred to DGA. Although this might have threatened inter-school relations, Charles wrote this off by saying of their neighbouring school

“they’ve got plenty”. Each transfer bolstered DGA’s legitimacy further as other parents saw it as the more desirable option. Several parents were proud of the rapid progress their children had made since transferring, with one, Alice, claiming it was the significantly greater proportion of able children who had ‘pulled up’ her daughter. The excellent results at the end of year one in phonics and year two in SATs lend weight to this perception.

However, some outsiders during the campaign for the parkland site interpreted these distinctions to mean DGA was still a *“niche school”*. Therefore, the school also showed how their distinctiveness was also built on existing good state school practice and Charles referred often to his previous teaching roles and networks which, unlike Maria in Anne Frank, were also local. He was also eminently approachable. One parent, Susan, was convinced to join the school days before opening after Charles held repeated meetings with her to reassure her that her own lack of French would not be a problem. Although some parents disagreed with some post-opening decisions, his engagement won unanimous praise, often contrasted with the ‘robotic manner’ of other local heads. He highlighted other staff’s experience and, though young, Diane perceived this as a bonus:

“I think the team is very young, seems to be very dynamic in terms of putting stuff in place for the children, reviewing on a regular basis the teaching. They seems to be more engaged and more willing looking at things from another angle if needed as opposed to follow process, or a way of being which has been there for years, So, we thought this thinking outside the box, was.. something we were happy with.”

Some prospective parents did question Charles’ magnetism and the possible repercussions of his claim at an open day to *‘just make things happen’* if you really want to, like the early swimming lessons. Katy, one prospective parent, noted how dependent free schools were on their leaders, given that they have less LA support and she therefore wondered if maverick decisions might therefore put the school at risk.

DGA’s leaders’ ability to highlight the support of a sponsor went some way to reassuring parents. Certainly, EES’ extensive support was cited by many parents pre-opening. Although EES’ removal meant many families left, the change was accomplished before DGA opened, meaning its effect on public legitimacy, especially given the name change, would have been less noticeable. No prospective parents I spoke to for the second intake mentioned it. However, the support of STRATA, and their partner schools, was also rarely mentioned as a draw.

CBS' original bid was highly mimetic of Anne Frank's (5.3) and, although many aspects disappeared with the change of sponsor, some remained, such as the use of the international primary curriculum and phonics schemes. This highlights just how much both drew on established normative practices of the staff and DGA often thanked other STRATA schools for borrowed resources, which helped project the image of a competent, organised institution, all contributing to Charles' boast, nine weeks in, that "*people who visit keep saying you can't tell that this is a new school*".

Flagging up the following of the UK national curriculum repeatedly was a key, unquestioned, act of mimesis. Nonetheless, both staff's experience in the UK and abroad were highlighted: balancing mimesis and distinction. DGA could therefore defend its claim to match 'what the very best local schools offer'. However, unlike the other BFS cases, the offering of French was rarely justified mimetically. This may be because the school was at pains to try and emphasise French as a point of distinction when, in reality, there was little happening in the early stages which was different from other local schools. In section 6.4 we will explore more how a shift in emphasis away from bilingualism, yet retention of French, was a compromise between the needs of French speakers, and those outside of this community. But first we should consider how far DGA's distinctiveness may have been deliberately intended to attract an elite by considering what the target audience appeared to be and how this changed over time.

Target audience

DGA proclaimed an inclusive message from the start, similar to Anne Frank, in regularly using the slogan '*bilingual education for all*'. The consultation pack included multiple pages headed 'a school for everyone', outlining equal opportunities, special needs and admissions policies. However, 6.2 showed how the detail was perhaps not as inclusive as this aim. How far were the 'lottery' places favouring those less able to move in to catchment, and how much did it favour those with more means to travel? CBS' bid claimed that, as Burnville's best schools took approximately half the average intake of children eligible for FSM, a lottery might redress that at CBS. If we consider the early marketing strategy as a whole, however, founder parents and most staff were white and middle-class, perhaps unsurprising given that marketing, like other BFS, began through the founder parents' own networks. It was therefore also geographically widespread,

French speaking and, quite possibly, more affluent. We will consider in 6.4 how this was reflected in the actual intake, but governors still focused largely on French speaking networks to publicise the school in its first year of opening.

Many of DGA's policies were proposed to support families with less means, for instance, the longer day. However, other practices would have been more reassuring for only a select few, particularly French speakers. For instance, Jaime, a French speaker moving from South Africa, contrasted DGA's very French-style academic approach with SABS' more holistic vision (see 7.3). Diane also appreciated this familiar academic approach. Nonetheless, other decisions deliberately denied French speakers' preferences, particularly over uniform and a delay in French writing (see 6.4). Other constraints for some parents were inherent to the fact DGA was a free school with independent admissions in year one. Although some parents in the know kept a private school or council backup place, for many this was not an option and the risk of a new free school was simply too much.

In terms of the perceptions of the second round of applicants, Diane and Esther, although appreciating DGA's academic focus, were also attracted by the "*social mix*" of "*different levels*" compared with their current independent schools. However, for Lena, Renee and Molly, DGA offered an alternative to what they perceived as less desirable intakes at their closest school. Like attracted like, as Molly confessed DGA had, "*people that you want to surround yourself with, middle class, really I suppose.. at the end of the day. It's where I fall in.*" However, for Renee, it was more about the "*cosmopolitan*" feel:

The type of person who would choose a new project are going to take a different sort of risk and I appreciate that type of parent... ..Because it's the sort of risk that maybe you'd take in moving to another country or going for a new job, but also in putting your child in to a new school that doesn't have an established building... ..I've moved around also as an adult.. and so I think then you feel more comfortable in an environment where everybody is like that, rather than just a very British, white... you know, has stayed in one area... ..so there's less understanding and I think less open-ness..

What Renee highlighted was beyond the school's actions. Many parents explicitly sought other French speakers, as Molly recounted:

M: I think it's nice to have more in common with other parents, you can form more of a.. so, one lady said to me at DGA 'we just want people like you. We don't want so many people to know about it..'
K: Why not, because..

M: Well, not every type of person she meant. So, eliminate the riff raff. Because we got on, she was a [French-speaking nationality] lady I said my kids are half [same nationality] and she was like 'oh my God.'

Again, this would be hard for leaders to counteract. However, DGA went to considerable efforts to reach out to speakers with a third home language in public meetings and one to ones. Anya, an Eastern European parent, was also reassured by the school's secularity, as she had been assigned a faith school which she did not agree with. Nonetheless, the overwhelming majority of DGA parents had bilingual family connections. Susan's partner was bilingual in another language, although she wasn't; Alice's partner's family lived in France. As there were excess places in the first year, many families were those moving in to the area, or country. The international community feel was therefore reinforced by several factors.

After opening, good reports spread, before the controversy of the parkland site, but some parents were still concerned about not being able to speak French. Although one non-French-speaking staff member claimed to offer reassurance for monolinguals, some barriers were harder for those with less means, like the changes in location, which were less a concern for those with au pairs, a car or time and money. However, even Katy and Susan, with their family's bilingual connections, were worried about fitting in. It didn't help that both Susan and Molly felt isolated when discussing school choice with others, with Susan referring to it as a "*private family matter*". Parents with less means, time or inclination to do research like Susan would probably choose another school.

How far was this then the responsibility of DGA to tackle? Optional French lessons for parents were offered, but didn't reassure Susan, who confided:

I'm not going to learn French at this point in my life because I'm not naturally gifted in that way. It would take a lot of effort. It's not good.. and so I.. am truly deeply concerned about the support that she will need if everybody else is blathering along in French and.. she doesn't get.. French at home... ..I've already asked the questions about the support and what came back is the same thing: the Saturday groups and the buddying up and yeah they're great ideas.. I'm just trying to be realistic about what I would actually be able to find time for..

Charles, months later, was able to convince her otherwise, but not all parents would have persisted that long. Another barrier may have been the way in which parental responsibility was pushed. Social events organized by the PTA were heavily promoted, and Charles stated at the open day that "*involvement is not a requirement but an expectation*". The website hosted an entire section on 'home

prep' and parents were required to sign a 'home school partnership,' upon starting. Although this would be similar to many schools, the addition of the French element might trouble some. Online, one user noted the large amount of homework, which, although fun, required a lot of parent input. However, for Saffron, this still wasn't enough. She thought more should be made of the need to support French, highlighting other bilingual schools' policies:

"you have to be willing to educate your parent population as to what to expect... .. You can't have parents applying.. thinking.. that there'd be no sort of extra work, I guess.."

Many parents did want to go the extra mile, like Tina (p164). But would all? Charles and other leaders were aware of 'misconceptions' around the French and independent nature of DGA, and Charles used his own aspirational story (p176) as a response. However, the desire of many of DGA's first parents to create a community they were comfortable with, which attracted like-minded individuals in turn, was hard to break, especially as it brought substantial rewards for DGA through the PTA.

Although governors targeted French speakers post-opening, other actions by Charles and STRATA increased legitimacy by widening recruitment. Removing the admissions ballot enhanced legitimacy with Burnville council and parkland site opponents. Giving priority to pupil premium children would also meet the original inclusive vision. But to establish whether this was simply countering negative publicity or, rather, was a deliberate response to the first intake, we need to look to the school census data, which we will do now in 6.4.

In summary of 6.3 first, DGA secured legitimacy in a number of ways. Charles, the headteacher, was a key bricoleur in the negotiations with the DfE, particularly in the turbulent transition between sponsors. He was unafraid to compromise the French bilingual curriculum but was also skilful in guiding coordinative discourse inside the school around French language. On the one hand, he reassured parents who were not French speakers but, on the other, skilfully used DfE's coercive pressure in one to one meetings to defend changes with other parents, while offering limited innovation through French cultural practices, such as family dining and early swimming.

Concerning legitimacy with parents outside, despite an initially smooth start to community relations in the consultation, it appears that DGA had to work much harder to establish local legitimacy than Anne Frank in the face of: a change of site and sponsor; disappointing initial recruitment; and opposition to building plans. It achieved the needed legitimacy to recruit sufficient parents and survive in three key ways. Firstly, it successfully positioned itself among 'the very best local schools' through offering apparent distinctions often associated with fee-paying schools. Secondly, it retained a core of committed early supporters, who established a tight, small, community which in itself was attractive to many parents. Charles' approachability was key in facilitating this process. Thirdly, DGA balanced its apparent French distinctiveness with careful insistence of its nature as an English school, particularly through the borrowed legitimacy of being part of STRATA's network of named, established state primary schools. However, notable barriers still existed for those with perhaps less means to travel, given the site uncertainty, and those with little French. Furthermore, an emphasis on high parental involvement may have accentuated perceptions of not 'fitting in'.

In the wider community, Charles and the team of committed parents worked hard to reshape communicative discourse in the face of considerable local opposition to one of their proposed sites. Ultimately, however, it was the compromise of the admissions lottery which drew the sting out of accusations of illegitimacy, like the quote on p174. Its ultimate abandonment signaled not only coercive pressure from STRATA, but also a desire to please local authorities and increase legitimacy with the wider community. This was a significant compromise and the final section of this chapter examines the impact of this and other key compromises on a variety of stakeholders.

6.4 Emerging values in De Gaulle Academy

This final section follows 6.3 by exploring the effect of compromises negotiated by DGA in order to gain legitimacy on the initial aims and values. By examining pupil intake, we see that there is some evidence of social segregation, which helps to explain the change in target audience, expressed principally through redefined admissions policies, it thus appears to honour the original core inclusive value of 'bilingual education for all' in a way which Anne Frank perhaps did not need to do,

given its more socially diverse intake. In order to protect the core value of being a local, English state school, affiliated to STRATA, several other values were also compromised, to the extent that the degree of French offered was no longer referred to by any stakeholder as bilingual education.

Who is choosing?

Pre-opening, little demographic data on interested families was available as Lucy informed me that collecting it is not permitted by the admissions code.

Nonetheless, a mapping exercise of initial applicants revealed a strong non-local bias, which leaders attributed to early marketing through French-speaking outlets. Given that the central point for admissions was still the original site even in the third year, rather than the temporary site the school occupied, many parents who chose the school were not walking distance from either the temporary or original central sites, which Charles' ongoing mapping in the first year confirmed (p174). So DGA was not necessarily attracting local families. But what about its fair share of minority groups?

The January ASC reveals notable differences in DGA's intake compared with its neighbours (Table 6.1 below). Its EAL intake was higher than many other schools by some margin. It is also worth noting that DGA published updated EAL percentages on the website, highlighting that, by the end of the year, almost half their children were speakers of EAL. Informally, Charles shared that a significant minority spoke some French, but preferred to emphasise the general number of bi- or multilinguals in general. He initially claimed 99% had some other language, then revised this to 8 in 10, which may have been plausible given that bilingual students may have been still registered as English-dominant, rather than EAL. The school, however, was not dominated by French speakers, but, like Anne Frank, whether it was taking its fair share of other EAL pupils is not immediately clear, assuming 'white European' and 'white other' as a proxy for French speakers would be meaningless given the number of French-speaking families I met who were from multiple ethnic backgrounds.

It is clear that DGA was taking a highly ethnically diverse group of students. Around 40% of students were from a non-white or mixed backgrounds, with no 'unclassified' students like Anne Frank. In both its temporary site and its original planned site, where it could move to again, DGA's intake was either equally, or

more, diverse than all its neighbours. However, governing body minutes early on indicated a very low early intake of children eligible for the pupil premium and, although each set of minutes updated a slowly increasing figure, by the end of the year, the school's own figures reported just 7% of pupils were eligible for the pupil premium, exactly the figure quoted in the original bid as the shockingly low figure of the best schools locally. Indeed, if we look at segregation ratios, DGA was also not taking its fair share locally. However, two other schools were also not doing so in the area, suggesting a polarization in school populations, as DGA's difference in intake was most striking in comparison to its next door neighbour, which took at least 3 times as many students eligible for FSM. This corresponds with parent and staff reports of transfers due to various issues at the neighbouring school, suggesting social segregation on a micro-level.

SCHOOL	% white	% EAL	% FSM	SR
De Gaulle Academy	58	37.5	4.7	0.4
Neighbour A	58	21.5	19.5	1.7
B	74	24	5.3	0.4
C	76	9.9	19.8	1.8
D	82	6.4	2.4	0.2
E	69	10.4	4.8	0.4
Burnville LA	72.2	13.2	11.3	-
Occupiers F	?	?	2	0.5
G	58	21.4	6.4	1.4
H	76	19.9	2.6	0.7
I	81	10	3.1	0.8
<i>B</i>	74	24	5.3	1
De Gaulle Academy	58	37.5	4.7	1.2

Table 6.1: Pupil intake of DGA and neighbouring schools, January 2015

Note: A-E were DGA's temporary neighbours; B plus F-I would be its neighbours if taking up the central site. ? = data not provided

It may be that the non-local admissions were primarily responsible, exacerbated by DGA's use of its original site as a central postcode for admissions. If we compare DGA's intake with the academy temporarily occupying their original building, school F, DGA's share of students eligible for FSM was far higher and, indeed DGA's segregation ratio of 1.2 for this area indicates that, if it transferred with the same intake, it would be taking more than its fair local share of students eligible for FSM.

Until the permanent site is chosen, these figures may fluctuate, but it is perhaps surprising that prioritizing pupil premium children is such a big concern if other centrally located schools, where it intends to move to, take fewer children eligible for FSM. Perhaps the fact that their original argument was that DGA would provide for less privileged families across Burnville is the challenge: DGA still took far less than Burnville's average. However, it may also be that a combination of desired financial security and STRATA's inclusive vision were influential (p162), combined with the desire to counter accusations of being a 'niche' school (p177).

Although DGA published its own figures for pupils with special needs, this was not necessarily students with statements of special educational needs and the changes in SEND status around this time make meaningful comparisons between schools almost impossible.

Changing target audience: pragmatism or idealism?

One significant compromise of original values was the target audience of the school, particularly in terms of language background and locality. 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3 showed how DGA started out by choosing an admissions policy and networking which favoured a French speaking target audience, which the governors continued in to the second year. However, the rhetoric was always inclusive: *'bilingual education for all'* and, though there was undoubtedly an element of coercive isomorphic pressure, the bigger driver appears to have been, at least initially, about simply surviving. After all, when many French speakers backed out after the change of site and sponsor, Charles worked hard to recruit parents who had initially missed out. Many, like Susan, were non-French speakers and more likely to be local. Nonetheless, Charles' skilful use of family dining, an academic focus and early swimming created a familiarity for some French families, and a significant minority appeared content with the amount of French offered, given their ability to provide immersion outside of school.

Ultimately, however, it was not the home language of the child which mattered most to leaders. Despite Charles always defending, even exaggerating to me the diversity of his school's intake, governing body minutes show that the school were aware of its limited intake of pupils eligible for FSM. Early on, the focusing of recruitment on French speakers and the establishment of a responsibilised target audience (p180) were, perhaps, more appealing to middle class families and may

have been notable barriers for others. In the end, the concern over under-representation of pupils eligible for FSM led to not only prioritizing these pupils in admissions but also the removal of the admissions lottery. The first change, prioritising pupils eligible for FSM, may have made little difference to the widely-dispersed French speaking community seeking places. However, the removal of the admissions 'lottery' meant many French-speaking families would be unable to attend without moving. Although several governors were against this change, power had long shifted from founder parents towards STRATA (6.1; 6.2).

If we consider again the chapter's opening quote on p159, Saffron saw STRATA's involvement as the start in the decline of French, but there were also normative and pragmatic constraints at work. This is exemplified in the compromise of CBS' originally planned small school with small class sizes, like Anne Frank. The consultation already acknowledged that more classes would be needed, but the need to please the local council and the financial constraints meant that surpluses were even considered in some year groups. The same normative and pragmatic, but also legitimacy pressures with the wider community and government were also at work, shaping the extent of French in the curriculum.

How much French?

Although Charles claimed that the founders wanted a 50/50 curriculum, it was never promised in publicity, and the need to prioritise English due to testing was long recognized at pre-opening events. However, the amount of French promised did decrease to just Music and PE, accompanied by discrete French lessons, with some parents commenting that they weren't sure even this provision was consistent. Although Charles claimed to use 'social learning' to increase French, this was little evident in visits in the first two terms, and was in stark contrast with the bid's original claim that all areas of the curriculum would have some time in French and it would be the 'ambient language' of the school.

The regulatory pressure of DfE 'advice' was identified as a key constraint on p170 and DGA initially appeared to want to prove its English credentials first, before increasing the French in the second year, as Charles indicated originally that the second term project would be about embedding more French. However, the considerable financial constraints also demanded compromises. With staffing costs so high, governors looked to the PTA to provide curricular and other resources

and, given how expensive bilingual training and resources are, they may have fallen down the priority list. The recruitment of non-French-speaking staff was also a constraint, and compromise, showing that overall quality was the core protected value.

Whole class French teaching to allow the less proficient to benefit from others had been envisaged early on and was a sign of parents' desires being compromised. When governors discussed a proposal to set by ability for French, minutes reported that

"the Head teacher explained that the school was aiming to close the attainment gap between pupils. Streaming them for different lessons would have the opposite effect."

However, both Saffron and Tina noted that French speaking children in reception had been placed with a French speaking teacher and assistant, which disappointed Tina as her child spoke a little French but was placed in the class with two non-French-speaking adults. This may have been a concession towards French speakers who had become, in part, quite concerned about how limited French was. Saffron was convinced that the reduction of French was due to four factors: the desire for Charles to prove himself as a competent leader; the dependence on one lone DfE advisor's opinion; the involvement of STRATA; and the changing parent intake who weren't as interested in French. The first two of these have been pulled apart in 6.1 and 6.3, but how valid are the last two points? Looking back one subsection, it is impossible to establish levels of interest in French from the ASC. Nonetheless, there was a clear change in the target audience, partly due to STRATA's influence, confirmed by a set of governing body minutes in early 2016 which concluded, in response to parents' concerns of the lack of French: *"A governor suggested that parents were encouraged to purchase suitable resources to support their children's language learning at home."*

If STRATA were not interested in the French, what were their interests? Which protected core values remained uncompromised?

Emerging core values

"In line with the DfE's expectation, the school's first priority was to establish itself as an outstanding primary school before developing its French specialism." – Governing body minutes, summer 2015

The aims of DGA on its website start with the pronouncement that the school “*delivers the English National Curriculum*” and teaches French “*while maintaining high standards to secure outstanding assessment results*” focusing “*on academic excellence*”. Despite its initial heavy bilingual emphasis, consultation events also highlighted the aspiration of excellence and academic rigour first, often before launching in to the bilingual aspects. Furthermore, the consultation survey also highlighted far greater support for the soft skills and character development aims of the school, before academic standards and language learning. Nonetheless, although the school name lost its ‘bilingual’ edge, a “*language focus*” was never lost, which Charles explained reflected more general global aspirations:

“what we’re interested in is not so much languages, which might sound a bit strange. It’s the idea of being part of a global world. So, languages, as opposed to a language is what really matters, so French is just really an excuse for us to develop global citizenship and once you know French, go and learn Spanish, go and learn Portuguese, go and learn Russian.. So it’s just a tool to get people to think.. outside of the box, outside of their local.. community.”

Despite the removal of the term ‘bilingual’ reflecting a reduction in the extent of French, a French focus remained (p176). So, why French? Charles was insistent that French was simply the vehicle that the market would accept:

“Some advisors at the DfE might say, French, yeah, that’s ok. People like French, but setting up a Russian school? I’m not sure whether Russian is important enough to approve the school... ..For me, any language is brilliant, should be recognized... ..But the world we live in says Mandarin is what you need to learn because China is, the next big player, then French is very important because the history of the French language and the history of the French culture... ..So, it’s finding that balance between the world as it is, which is market driven, and what it should be, which is where the politics come in. Where a child coming in to school with a language that no one knows, that’s brilliant, but the market says no, it’s not brilliant because what’s the point, how useful is that? It’s not, so it’s about finding that balance between being pragmatic, and French is the way to be pragmatic because that’s a valued language, and idealistic.”

French, both here, and in the bid, was rarely justified and this quote suggests merely that its market value was high enough. Charles insisted that French skills were a gateway to other languages, but perhaps he undersold the importance of the accompanying cultural and social capital attached to the French-speaking community. The school was explicit in its official website aim of developing “*extraordinary cultural capital through a rich and broad curriculum and extensive community engagement [with] a deep understanding and appreciation of both French and British cultures*”. As some parents told me that they would have

considered other languages, it was the bilingual aspect that appealed, with French being acceptable enough.

DGA, however, was first and foremost an English school, with British values. One incident captured this perfectly. At the Christmas fair, a group of students gathered to sing carols. The first three were in English, before persistent parent chants of 'Papa Noel' led to one French one. The parents were thrilled, but the essence was clear: English was the natural default, first, with the French 'language focus' serving as a secondary vehicle for principally increasing cultural capital and a globalised outlook of the students.

How much was this reduction due to STRATA's involvement? The reduction in French was proposed by the DfE before the change of sponsor. However, if we compare the trajectory of Anne Frank's 'bilingualism for everyone' with DGA's *'bilingual education for all'* the second part 'for all' appeared more central in DGA, ultimately manifested in its priority for students eligible for the pupil premium. This tied in with STRATA's mission statement on page 130. Its vision of *"educational transformation by establishing a growing family of academies that share core values, principles and aims"*, through agreed non-negotiables, emphasized a strong sponsor-led control, reflected in governing body minutes where the STRATA line was repeatedly emphasized. This inclusive, equitable focus was shared by Charles too and it was also not completely at odds with founder parents. After all, the many aspirational aspects of being part of an engaged parent community, coupled with emerging excellent academic results, kept early parents satisfied despite the removal of privilege for widely-dispersed French speakers. Parent power was nowhere near as central a value as at Anne Frank, but was still present in the extensive PTA support. Instead of parent power, perhaps, it was the needs of all the children in the school, and in STRATA's network overall, which came first.

In summary of 6.4, despite early signs of some social segregation in its temporary location, it appeared that the transfer of power from the founder parents to Charles and STRATA enabled difficult compromises to be made which changed the target audience to a more local and potentially more inclusive one. However, this was still just the school's first year. Furthermore, this was no longer a school

aiming for 'bilingual education for all' as the coercive, normative and mimetic isomorphic pressure on DGA meant a drastic reduction of the amount of French in order to comply with regulators', STRATA's and the local council's wishes. Unlike Anne Frank, the school compromised its bilingual vision early on, thereby allowing the French to continue in a reduced form without the 'shock' downgrading which might have threatened the school's legitimacy further.

The effect of this was that DGA became, in Charles' terms, a 'language focused' school, pragmatically choosing French to deepen and celebrate an international feel. However, DGA was also emerging as a staunchly British school, legitimately part of the STRATA network, seeking educational transformation locally.

Nonetheless, as 6.3 also demonstrates, the use of French was still appealing to many more responsibilised and middle class parents, so it will be interesting to note how far the planned changes in admissions arrangements alone will encourage social integration.

Conclusion: overcoming constraints

Did DGA's leaders and parents navigate the opportunities and constraints afforded by free schools legislation to secure bilingual education? I am re-framing the overarching research question like this deliberately, as the answer appears to have been 'no', in simple terms. But if we can qualify this, it is clear that the very compromise of the French-speaking initial target audience's needs and, therefore, sacrifice of a bilingual curriculum in favour of a French language and cultural flavour, allowed sufficient early followers to remain, but attract the necessary legitimacy of local and national regulators and, thereby, the public and other local families at large.

If we then redefine the overarching question to 'how did stakeholders secure language focused education?', the hurdles were still considerable. In answer to the first sub-question, although parent networks and capital in the French speaking community were important initially, it was actually the recruitment of a French speaking head and his networks, which was key. Not only did Charles demonstrate considerable skills as an entrepreneur but, crucially, navigated the relationships with stakeholders at all levels, subtly steering both communicative and coordinative discourse.

In terms of the second research question, although founders utilized freedoms over admissions and location to bid for the school of their choice teaching French, giving most of the supporters a strong chance of getting in, it was actually constrained by the coercive isomorphic pressure exerted by their switch to STRATA and the need to secure wider legitimacy in general. The cost of this may have been far less parent power than Anne Frank, due to the transfer of power to STRATA. However, it did secure them the necessary borrowed legitimacy, and financial resources, to open quickly.

Nonetheless, if we consider the fourth research question, there was a legacy of the early targeting of French-speaking families in the community of families which joined the school: DGA was a small, active community attractive to responsibilised parents. But this still left the school labeled as a 'niche school' by many outside. The early outcome of this was a notably international intake but with far fewer students from socio-economically deprived backgrounds than neighbouring schools. Whether the planned changes in admissions policy will reverse the trend will only become clear with subsequent intakes.

If we return to the third research question – how the leaders gained legitimacy – it chiefly lay in compromising most of the very freedoms used by parents to bid for the school, namely the admissions lottery and the French bilingual curriculum. However, the compromising of French is also complicated by what was happening in general in other bilingual free schools. DGA, in particular Charles, was able to learn from Anne Frank's experiences to an extent, and was therefore able to anticipate the necessary compromise of the bilingual curriculum and sponsor needed to secure legitimacy with the DfE. Charles always framed this as a proactive choice, at least on his part, and the changes in admissions to prioritise children eligible for the pupil premium certainly reflected the originally inclusive second half of the 'bilingual education for all' vision.

The key to understanding how DGA's story diverged from Anne Frank's is to understand the different relations between leaders and parents. Although much power was removed from DGA's founder parents by the involvement of a more centrally-led sponsor, Charles was a key bricoleur, remaining approachable and open to suggestions. He also encouraged the positive, engaged community feel. Coupled with greater transparency, DGA parents who stayed still felt empowered

and proud of their school. In terms of the original parents navigating the free schools legislation to secure bilingual education, if we return to the opening quote in this chapter, it might appear that DGA's case is an unsuccessful case. However, if we consider a wider set of parents, a French flavor of sorts remained and by replacing the vision of 'bilingual education for all', for more of a 'languages for all', the 'for all' part may still be realized.

The next chapter presents a case of a group of campaigners who, unlike the first two campaigns, were somewhat more ambivalent about the choice of language for their school. Their story highlights slightly different sets of community relations, especially given the involvement of not only a faith-based sponsor, but a prestigious fee-paying school.

Chapter 7: St. Alcuin Bilingual School

Introduction

Chapter seven follows the evolution of the campaign for St Alcuin Bilingual School (SABS), selected for its unique grounding in the Church of England (CofE) institutional context and initial open-ness about which language to select. It might therefore be expected that any threat to the campaign's legitimacy would necessitate compromise of language-focused values before church values. On the other hand, this case study demonstrates that the institution of the Church itself offers resources which actually facilitate the establishing of legitimacy and, in this case, provided additional networking and accrual of extra capital in turn.

At first glance, Haningfield seems an unexpected location for a French Church of England bilingual school. Its largely historical South Asian population is being supplemented by newer waves of Eastern European and Middle Eastern immigration. The resulting squeeze on school places is among the highest in the country. Nearly 3 in 10 residents have a main language other than English, but French does not feature highly (ONS, 2013). Although Christianity is still the religion with most adherents, its percentage is falling and is amongst the lowest in the country. So how did a CofE BFS emerge here?

7.1 Forming a coalition with capital

"So I think we just hassle people but at some point also things just gave you know" - Sara

Success begets success – Anon.

In this first section, we see how vital the institution of the Church was in breeding, then supplying, the fledgling SABS campaign with an advocacy coalition, principally through the recruitment of an experienced headteacher. However, equally important in the early stages was the significant involvement of several academic experts and staff at Old Haningfield School (OHS), one of the country's top independent boarding schools. By handing increasing power to these institutional actors, the original parent entrepreneurs, however, ended up losing out themselves.

Founder parent networks & expertise

The dawn of 2014 found Sara, a scientific researcher, and Elliott Gomes, a financial consultant, confused about their school choices for their eldest daughter. The tiny local catchment areas had been a rude awakening, and they genuinely feared not being assigned a place at any of the outstanding schools nearby. Elliott decided to research the issue and contacted the council who confirmed that high net migration and increasing housing density, plus an inability to construct their own new schools, was responsible. Elliott realised that a new free school, however, would be an option. Discussing this with other parents at their church, he found that Clive and Kerry, teachers at OHS, shared similar concerns. Kerry and Sara already shared a connection in both speaking German with their children, but their initial conversations prioritized a school with Christian values and a ‘back to basics’ vision, as early literature put it, of *“compassion, trust, respect for others in a nurturing environment where it is safe to learn.”* Realising more might be needed, Sara told Elliott:

“well, if you want to do this, you need a bit of [an] innovative idea. Something different. So I said that I have certain issues with the English school system myself, but I think that those issues can’t be rectified by setting up a free school.. ...for example, looking more at the German system, they would never approve it. Then he kept going on about it and then I started looking in to.. what other free schools are there? Then I came across [several BFS named].”

After realizing that the ‘hook’ of a bilingual model appealed to them all for their children, it was perhaps not surprising that, being multilingual themselves, *“very quickly things moved. Very quickly. Actually shockingly quickly,”* with a decision to apply for NSN support to develop a plan for a bilingual German-English Christian school three days before the deadline. NSN subsequently helped identify the group’s strengths and weaknesses, highlighting a need for school leadership expertise.

Although Clive and Sara later played down their own role in securing success, Sara’s opening quote highlights their persistent approach through emails and phone calls. But persistence alone didn’t guarantee success. When Clive started approaching OHS leaders, even he did not envisage the extent of *“educational partnership”* which emerged. Every open day was held in OHS, who also made several pledges, including: OHS boys teaching SABS students; use of their language lab, drama and sporting facilities; and, alongside Clive, two further OHS teachers

on the governing body. Sara admitted that OHS' support involved mutual benefit as all independent schools have to "*expand their community outreach*". But of greater significance is the influence the name OHS had, with both prospective parents, and also the DFE (see 7.3).

Utilising other BFS and academic institutions: networks and advice

Meanwhile, Sara reached out and met with existing BFS, several of which were named as 'partners' in the bid. Of these, the "*most experienced*" former European school, Europa, inspired the parents to initially propose two additional languages but this was dropped as they were told how difficult this was to resource. Sara also realized the groups' visions diverged in other ways:

"We spoke to Anne Frank, to the founder... ...for quite a while but.. I had this big but. That each of them supported.. ...their second language. Europa has taken over from a private school, became a free school. It's a bit of a different story. But they serve, they were set up and supported in the marketing, by a certain community. So, I was not sure.. by that bit."

Later, she clarified:

"it's not really private schooling we were interested in... We were interested in something that is open to the community... That is a legacy for the community, for the children, providing them with an education that they normally could not access."

Nonetheless, Europa were helpful in linking the group with the Institut Francais, who offered contacts at a local French independent secondary school and some marketing through databases. As the campaign grew over the coming months, the Institut was able to gain too as they invited the SABS team to advise other fledgling French school projects.

Sara also approached a professor at the (then) Institute of Education (IoE) in London with speculative emails, who passed on details to a visiting research fellow. Both academics questioned the relevance of a German CofE school in such a diverse area and, given Sara also was not immediately comfortable with German as a default choice, she eventually convinced the rest of the group to take up the academics' suggestion for a community survey on which of the languages recommended by the recent 'Languages for the future' report should be offered (British Council, 2013). Of the top five, however, Arabic and Mandarin were ruled out because of their difficult scripts, leaving just French, German and Spanish. Though the relationship with IoE academics was occasionally rocky, Sara

recognized “... it is so important to have... ..researchers... ..because... ..from these funny data that you collect, they can give a different insight.”

So, once French emerged as the popular choice, she persisted with requests to the IoE staff for governance support, and the professor contacted an expert in governance and eventually (according to Sara) reluctantly facilitated recruitment of a former doctoral researcher as governor. Meanwhile, the research fellow contacted another academic affiliate, a “*top five expert in the world*” on bilingualism (according to Elliott), who advised the campaign on curriculum design and invited the group to contribute to an upcoming book. His support later became key in negotiating retention of the bilingual vision as they met with potential sponsors.

Meanwhile, Clive approached Cambridge university by “*cold calling*” an academic via their public bilingualism network. After meeting the team, they agreed to outline potential research collaborations at what became the best-attended SABS open day. Later SABS plans for early French phonics and baseline assessments were also based on the Cambridge group’s suggestions. Not all their advice was adopted unquestioningly, however, with continued debates about the use of the term ‘bilingual’ in publicity. Nonetheless, the SABS team showed incredible persistence in securing ongoing relationships with these academic partners, by finding areas for mutual benefit.

The Church schools’ network: sponsor, head and partner

Although the founder group had formed in a CofE church, they had not thought to approach the Church of England’s local Diocesan Board for schools (CIDB) directly. They did not know “*how that worked*” until the NSN prompted them to contact Sally, a CIDB project manager and chair of governors, who had opened, she later stated, five free schools “*all on time and to budget*”. According to Sara, Sally suggested meeting the “*head*” of CIDB over lunch, who was enthusiastic about the prospect of a new CofE school. Although initially uncertain about the bilingual approach, the CIDB quickly contacted one of their SIAMS (religious character) inspectors who was also head of a nearby CofE school, experienced in MFL teaching and fluent in French. Enter David Nuffield, and his school, All Saints.

It seemed a perfect match: both David and the founder parents were passionate about languages and passionate about Christian values. David was “*very happy to meet with the group*” and immediately noted that their proposal required

leadership advice in order to gain “*credibility*” with the DfE, given “*the constraints that are placed upon us as primary schools.*” With Sally, he rewrote parts of the bid to the DfE in a short turnaround, resulting in an interview where his considerable reading of bilingual education research literature proved useful as the majority of questions were leveled at him, rather than the rest of the team. Though he admitted that they expected a harder “*ride*”, Sally later indicated that David’s position as executive head is what distinguished SABS’ application to the DfE from other BFS.

Becoming executive head obviously required time out from All Saints. But the school’s support was plentiful, with open days finding their governors and staff advising convincingly on admissions and the curriculum, and All Saints’ pupils guiding visitors to seats, playing with potential SABS students and featuring in promotional materials. Possible benefits for All Saints will be discussed below, but suffice to say All Saints’ staff shared a strong sense of ‘mission’, noting repeatedly the need for CofE places in Haningfield. But all this support would be pointless without potential students.

Early recruits: parents with capital

Early evidence of demand came principally from the large, well-resourced church the founders attended and places they visited with their own children. The local National Childbirth Trust was particularly supportive, allowing publicity through their local events and online portals. As early focus groups were drawn from active followers of the SABS website or social media users, this inevitably ended up privileging more middle-class groups, giving them more influence over the early decisions made. Nonetheless, the bid outlined how, in addition to stands at events and supermarkets, bilingual volunteers visited mother and toddler groups in two other minority languages to share information. Furthermore, any advantage for many of the original families was removed completely when it was announced, a few months before opening, that SABS would, first, be delayed for a year then, a few weeks later, would admit only those turning five after September 2015, making every previously-registered child ineligible.

To understand this dramatic change, we need to examine how power shifted away from the parents to the governing body, albeit in a less dramatic way than at DGA.

An established governing body: shifting power

Within weeks of approval, SABS had a governing body in place. They met regularly and, at the point of writing, benefited from the executive head, David, two inspectors, three OHS teachers, two ministers and Elliott's financial expertise. Only Elliott had never taught, most having been senior leaders, and several were bilingual. The governor I interviewed shortly before the delay in opening insisted that curriculum planning and marketing, especially in the French community, were only just beginning, contrasting with Sara's interview six months previously, where she spoke at length about the core group's efforts to date in these fields.

This demonstrates how, in little over a year, the founder parents went from being the only leaders to, at the last event I attended, not even being present. However, they were not forced out. Clive and Elliott still sat on the governing body and Clive seemed perfectly happy that the *"nuts and bolts are out of our hands, and safely in those of CIDB now"*. If we consider the founder parents' awareness of trouble at other BFS, it appears their main efforts had been directed at recruiting the right capital and expertise to avoid this and, therefore, their partners gave them confidence to let go and relax somewhat. In addition, Sally and David's willingness to really understand the founders' bilingual vision and overcome their own hesitations about it, must have reassured them that they had similar interests.

The outcomes of this transfer of power were challenging though. With the governing body's decision to 'reset' admissions, Sara and Elliott's daughter and many friends' children would miss out. As it was announced after I had finished my involvement, this decision is difficult to understand. However, just before this, David had indicated a strong desire to conform with the local admissions process:

D: We've got to think about our relationships with other schools. Because we don't want to be seen to be taking their pupils that they've worked hard with, so we've just got to... ..manage our relationships quite well. Because we don't want to be seen as in competition, but we are offering something different, which may well feel to people as if we are in competition.. But I think the shortage of places in Haningfield, it won't be as much of a problem. So I think those discussions that will take place in the next few weeks are quite important too..

K: And discussions within the governing body and

D: And with the department who have to approve everything we do.

This quote indicates considerable isomorphic pressure, which we will explore further in 7.3.

In summary of 7.1 first, though, SABS's success in recruiting such a number of 'educational partners' with such prestige was unparalleled among BFS. This was not just about one institutional entrepreneur, although the partnership of the two original couples was a firm, persistent, well connected one with significant expertise. Rather, it was once the ClDB were on board with their considerable experience and resources, plus OHS support, which meant failure was far less likely. This was not just due to persistence. It is plausible that each successive partner's recruitment was triggered by the realization that other prestigious partners were coming on board too. However, the delay and resetting of admissions highlights that the founder parents' freedom to gather and transfer power to this network ended up constraining the opportunity for their own children. So were other freedoms similarly constrained?

7.2 Utilising legislative freedoms

"A free school is never truly free, just free-er maybe"- David

In Section 7.2, we consider how early parents still left a considerable legacy and enjoyed power over early decisions. However, other than the bilingual focus, few freedoms were exercised, with the exception of reservation of places for founders and church attenders.

Harnessing Parent Power

Although the resetting of admissions (p197) highlights how power had been removed from most parents, we should also consider their legacy. Firstly, the original Christian values and bilingual vision remained. Secondly, where freedoms and aspects of the vision were sacrificed, this was done willingly and with some gain, for example when German was sacrificed for French this actually gave the founder parents' children a third language. Elliott and Clive were part of the governing body which 'reset' admissions, and had managed to acquire considerable power in a more permanent way than traditional parent governor positions. Finally, the networks of 'educational partners' they established are not easily undone.

Later parents also enjoyed considerable power, even if they were not all able to gain a school place. Early focus groups resulted in tweaks to admissions policies to reassure non-church parents and, although the influence of families recruited later decreased to helping to select uniform and meals providers, this is still more power than many schools. Nonetheless, in comparison with other BFS bids, SABS' bid paperwork shows that the long term plan would be to support and guide parents, rather than give them particular powers or partner in non-traditional ways. However, David did acknowledge that they indirectly influenced curricular planning:

"the conversations we were having with some of the parents that were coming... ..when people asked us questions.. it's really helpful because we... ..will go away and think about it and, to plan the curriculum, we are able to look at, well, how are other schools doing it."

But before examining the curricular freedoms being exploited, it is worth exploring some freedoms that opening a free school offered other stakeholders, like David.

Financial and time advantages

Financial advantages were rarely mentioned, with the tone more of reassurance that Cldb's other free schools had all been delivered on budget and on time. However, David's interview opened with an unprompted rationalization of SABS as both expanding and replicating his current school:

"We're a small school and we have wanted to share what we do here with a broader range of.. children and more children, so we'd had this potential idea of trying to expand, or do something to.. in one way to help us financially to manage, because one form entry schools can be a real challenge to manage financially and also in order to provide education at a high standard for as many children as possible."

So, was this a win-win? All Saints was heavily oversubscribed and its other staff often pointed out the dire need for CofE school places locally. Although David had experimented with more French at All Saints, he conceded that any consultation to offer more immersion through bilingual education at All Saints would be lengthy, and bilingualism shouldn't be *"imposed on anybody"*. A BFS instead attracts only those who sign up for that particular curriculum, he argued. SABS therefore offered possibilities to replicate All Saints' mission and develop further specialism, but in an accelerated fashion.

This shortcut time-wise was a key freedom. SABS was initially scheduled to open less than 18 months after conception, an advantage for Sara and Elliott's daughter

who would not be eligible much longer. Sara admitted that, had they missed the three-day window for NSN funding, they would not have gone further.

Finally, it is worth highlighting that, for ClDB, SABS provided not only another church school, but also possibilities to extend All Saints' school-centred-initial-teacher-training (SCITT) programme to offer a SCITT in languages education. The bid highlighted that the ClDB expected SABS to lead on MFL provision for all its 150 primary schools. This brings us to the main freedom associated with BFS, namely the freedom to determine their own curriculum.

Curricular freedom, timetabling and other freedoms

Bilingual or 'language-focused' education can mean many things, with David preferring the term partial immersion (2.1), to describe SABS' additional daily oral lessons, French phonics sessions and story times and, from age five, PE and possibly Art or Music in French, comprising maximum 40% of time in French. French literacy and cross-curricular immersion were planned after age seven. However, like the other BFS, it was repeatedly emphasized that the English National Curriculum would be followed, despite the hypothetical freedom for free schools not to. Possible reasons for this will be explored later (7.4).

Several prospective parents questioned how this would be achieved time-wise, but, like Charles in DGA's idea of social French (6.2), SABS signaled that extra-curricular enrichment and playground games would increase French exposure and CLIL clubs would be offered outside compulsory school time. Despite a fairly detailed plan in the bid to the DfE, both David and the governor (p198) confirmed that curriculum planning was only just beginning, focusing initially only on early years. Beyond that, David twice asserted in interview, it very much depended on the actual children who would attend the school. If most children struggled, the extent of immersion would be reconsidered, indicating institutional learning from other BFS' experiences.

Documents and presentations stated that staff would be UK trained and qualified. The consultation report also responded positively to requests to recognise unions. Although there was no plan to reduce class sizes, David publicly stated that French support staff would bring down group sizes in French lessons. Therefore, like other BFS, staffing freedoms appeared unexploited.

Another seemingly unexploited freedom was location. SABS' site is in an area of shortage and, as Sara justified, not in an affluent part of Haningfield borough. However, the shortage of likely sites means we cannot assume this was chosen to serve less affluent families. To ascertain how much the school was genuinely, as Sara desired, "*open for the community*," we must also consider the target audience projected through publicity (7.3) and SABS' admissions policy.

Admissions

SABS' admissions policy was compliant with the admissions code and government guidance to free schools (DfE, 2013) and, like the other BFS, did not reserve 10% of places for a named aptitude. Random allocation was considered, but the steering team were clear that they wanted a local school. As Sara highlighted (p195), other BFS were established to serve specific language communities and a lottery would likely favour those from more widely dispersed French-speaking families. SABS' early supporters, who helped determine admissions, were not recruited through French networks. They were largely from local NCT, playgroups and the church.

Although legislation permits 50% of places to be reserved for adherents in faith-based free schools, new CofE schools were encouraged by the Synod to choose completely open admissions criteria and the vast majority have done so (Church of England Media Office, 2011). SABS, however, reserved 20% of places as 'foundation places', requiring church attendance and a supplementary information form. The bid to the DfE rationalized this as representing broadly the proportion of families in the area who were from Christian backgrounds, alongside the popularity of the faith designation with Muslim and Hindu families they had spoken with. SABS' statutory consultation report deftly framed this decision as both inclusive and consultative:

"The proposers considered carefully the range of views around the importance of being fully inclusive at the same time as having a Christian ethos underpinned by strong values. The proposers also considered feedback about the lack of other CofE schools in the area. These conversations helped to shape the school's oversubscription criteria in which the significant majority of places are allocated according to proximity to the school."

Given the priority in admissions for founder parents' children and early church attending parents through 'foundation places', this extract is likely to be aimed at establishing local legitimacy (see 7.3). However, given that several parents interviewed were already considering moving closer to guarantee a place, both

Sara's hope and David's claim that the policy evidenced SABS' attempts to overcome the elitism associated with free schools, were perhaps wishful thinking. Nonetheless, David viewed the delay in admissions as a positive in this regard as it would mean being part of the local authority booklets the next year, which would go some way towards marketing more widely. He added that it would also help SABS seem "*real*" too, thereby securing "*credibility*". Ultimately, though, the governors' decision to 'reset' admissions inadvertently did more to create equality by removing advantage for early founders.

It is perhaps not surprising that, given the constraints, many participants were ambivalent towards free schools, despite the apparent 'freedoms' offered. Elliott and David both framed their free school as the only route available, and Sara justified free schools legislation thus:

"...I think they have actually set up a lot of schools in a very short time, when they needed more schools which, some of them, yes... ...have worked horrendously badly... ... but they've also gained from experience now... I think.. you sometimes need to see the context and from that perspective, we've probably done the best.. we could.. in a way..."

Free schools were a means to an end, justified by their (positive) outcomes.

To sum up 7.2, SABS's case shows how quickly success can come, but not solely through the exploitation of legislative freedoms. Sara's humble end to the quote above somewhat misrepresents their success as purely hard work. Founder parents' ability to form a network with the resources of a top independent school, and the Cldb, were also vital. But why didn't SABS leaders exercise some freedoms they were entitled to, like hiring 'unqualified' French teachers or using an admissions 'lottery'? We need to '*see the context*' in two inter-related places. Approval is never guaranteed until the final funding agreement is signed shortly before opening. For SABS to move beyond a vision, it was not just leaders' capability and resources that were important: regulators had to approve each step of the process, and parents needed to choose the school. In other words, SABS leaders had to justify their legitimacy with regulators and parents, which is the focus of the next section.

7.3 Establishing legitimacy

Section 7.3 shows how SABS leaders went to considerable lengths to prepare to meet the DfE, which resulted positively in a feedback loop of praise. Alongside a generally supportive local authority and their many 'partners' outlined in 7.1, these were significant tools when marketing to gain local legitimacy, which SABS used to signal both distinction and mimesis locally. However, more than CofE affiliation, uncertainties over the site may have created barriers for some parents.

Gaining initial approval and the positive feedback loop

"We have to follow.. the regulations from central government, because we will be government funded... ..So there was quite a lot of discussion around.. how do we remain.. credible and in touch with what we believe in terms of offering languages and offering bilingualism.. but also meet these constraints" - David

The troubles faced by other BFS meant that SABS' steering team were still not sure how they would be received at the initial DfE interview. David was aware that:

"OFSTED are looking at quite a.. limited number of things in a school. But.. if one of the key aspects is not good enough, then it's going to lose credibility... ..Free schools has been a highly political issue, and we were rapidly approaching an election and there is the potential that nobody in the department was going to make a risky decision at that stage."

The coalition government, with its flagship free schools programme under attack had credibility themselves to lose. So the team prepared. The bid tackled issues head on, using published research, thereby demonstrating both expertise, as well as flexibility, at interview:

"They [DfE] had said we know that in Haningfield the population is generally more diverse... ..and is it not the case that in those schools that the children need more English and less.. other language to help them make progress, which is when we had to pull on the rather thin evidence that we had, [that] this bilingual approach is fantastic for teaching English and French and any other language... ..You know the fact that we had acknowledged what the situation was going to be like I think was quite important. I thought that we were going to have a more challenging ride on that one. Maybe whatever we said gave them confidence that we were going to be able to adapt. We were also quite honest with them and said.. we don't know.. exactly the model that will work over time because actually we need to see how this works and we need to see who the children are... ..to craft.. the curriculum that is going to meet their needs."

David also added: *"I think they've [DfE] been impressed by the partnerships we've got."* The bid highlighted those named in 7.1 repeatedly, with a strong thread of borrowing All Saints' policies and practices (see below). In fact, at a time when negative press was increasing, the DfE used SABS' links to OHS as a 'headline' fact in a press release announcing the latest wave of free schools. This isolated fact,

Sara noted, was lifted from a hundred-page submission, indicating that the DfE saw a mutual benefit in the involvement of such a prestigious institution for one of 'their' free schools.

Like the other BFS, a positive feedback loop began to emerge as SABS' social media outlets and open days repeatedly highlighted the *"wonderful opportunity"* to meet the education secretary and prime minister at events. On securing a headteacher, the email circular commented that *"The DfE sent an Education Advisor to join the interview panel and he complemented us on a well-organised, thorough and robust process"*. By the summer of 2015 a shift in confidence had occurred, reflected in the following post after a routine meeting: *"It's great to work with such a supportive team at the DfE and, of course, nice to know they think we are well on track."* Sally often referred to these meetings at open days. She also emphasized that the pre-opening OFSTED, in addition to the funding agreement being signed by the DfE, acted as a double safety-check. This relationship built on mutual praise and benefits eventually meant difficult decisions by SABS could be re-attributed. For instance, at the same open day:

A man with a scarf questions how they were advised to delay languages. David says that, because they are UK funded school, they have to assess children in core subjects in English so that needs to be prioritised in Key Stage One. They will have optional enrichment opportunities in French after school. He says that they have been advised in this regard, and believe it is the right thing.

More controversial site issues were handled differently by Sally who, at two different events, referred to the EFA being more responsible than SABS' 'steering team' who had other priorities. Like DGA (6.3), by ring-fencing responsibility to the EFA and identifying tightly with the DfE over curricular matters, the message to parents that regulators like the project and have confidence in the team was protected.

If we consider again David's desire to be 'credible' *"in terms of offering languages and offering bilingualism"* (p204), how far is this solely about regulators? He later noted, *"we will also have to demonstrate the progress that children make in the acquisition and development in French, but in terms of an OFSTED report, that is only going to support the judgment, it will not make it."* Ultimately, it is parents who need to ascertain and confer legitimacy by signing up, thereby buying in to the bilingual vision. DfE approval may raise legitimacy, but the DfE also requires

continued evidence of demand. So how did SABS go about spreading the word to gain local legitimacy?

Community consultation and the shortage of local school places

SABS' open days started long before statutory consultation and typically opened with the chronic local shortage of school places, with the website claiming four-figure amounts. Sara reported that this was a principal reason for NSN support and that the local authority had also banked on SABS' success (see below). Several parents I interviewed had failed to secure any central Haningfield school place, as they fell between catchment areas, and were therefore travelling up to an hour each way. The specific lack of CofE places was sometimes used to justify the relevance of SABS in particular, although leaders generally followed this with a reassurance that most places were allocated by distance. However, the shortage alone was no guarantee of DfE approval. Leaders needed parental support specifically for SABS and its bilingual CofE vision.

SABS' statutory consultation process was thorough and indicated a high degree of support, but the report also detailed how focus groups and language choice and name change surveys exceeded the statutory requirement, boosting SABS' image as being genuinely consultative. Was this just image management? I saw myself how FAQ on the website developed in response to individual questions at open days, but there was an element of control in the avoidance of public Q&A sessions, unlike other BFS. Furthermore, a survey over the name change, which indicated support for the original 'Haningfield Bilingual School' disappeared from social media, replaced by the announcement of 'St Alcuin Bilingual school' after "*much prayer*" – and no mention of the survey results. Although consultative, it appears that certain matters were considered best trusted to the steering team.

The consultation report detailed huge efforts to reach "*the widest possible cross-section of the community*", including 65,000 leaflets through doors. However, Sameera, the only parent I interviewed who first heard of SABS this way, said she almost threw the leaflet away, thinking it was a private school, with its picture of a girl in a blazer. Consultation is also marketing and below we see how this approach may have constrained the team's inclusive ideal. Although the short time-scale for official consultation might have facilitated control by leaders, it was a significant constraint in reaching a wide range of families. Furthermore, the leaflet alone was

unlikely to be enough to convince families: parents needed to visualise how SABS could work practically.

An appropriate long term site

“for something like this, I would have to go, and I would have to view it and I would have to see how I personally feel. If I just got paper on it, I would deter away from it, purely because I don’t know enough, but if I went there and I got a good vibe and I felt that .. it isn’t just a façade, it’s for real, they really want to help my kid explore different languages and get a good education, then I would be all for it.” – Chrissy, local parent

The big question in all SABS’ publicity, and a significant constraint for parents, was the unknown site location, kept secret for commercial reasons. Chrissy, although approving of the CofE and bilingual aspects, ended up preferring the local, familiar, OFSTED rated ‘good’ school. Another initially interested parent was Lara, who had kept her daughter over-age in nursery as her assigned school was far and buses might refuse her baby’s pram if they were full. She had researched SABS’ website and bilingualism despite her lack of confidence in English, but didn’t apply for a place for either of her eligible children, claiming her daughter was too old, quoting (inaccurately) the website. As well as concerns over transport, she was concerned, given her children’s special needs, *“that kids will have everything they need to learn there too..”*

Although SABS invited parents to view their partner school, All Saints, few did, and it was relatively difficult without a car. The open days at OHS were also relatively far from the site, therefore both physically and symbolically a world away, up the hill, constraining some from even finding out more. David conceded, *“we are aware it is incumbent on people.. receiving our invitations, our marketing and coming to find out,”* but perhaps it was somewhat unfair to conclude, *“we were probably most likely to capture those parents who are really thinking about what they want and thinking that this is particularly good for their child..”* as this was easier for some parents. Those parents who did attend often referred to not worrying about the site as they had a car, but several also had the capital to, like Sameera, *“move close to it, wherever it is.. I’ll follow the school”*.

Even once the site was revealed, the website highlighted concerns over its suitability. However, the FAQ spun the site as larger than needed and open plan, therefore not needing major structural work. In the end, like DGA, it was travel planning that was not approved in time, which David admitted had rocked their

confidence, despite the ability to, by then, show a real location. So, given that this was partly down to processes with the council, were poor relations to blame?

Local authority support

Conversations with Haningfield council began early (p194). Although Sara indicated an initially ambivalent relationship before DfE approval, with statistics promised by the council, but not passed on, she later discovered that the council had assumed SABS' approval in calculating school place forecasts. One official was also quoted in the bid as welcoming the application. Sara said securing CIDB sponsorship had been instrumental in turning things round, and leaders praised the support of the council regularly at open days. Despite problems with planning permission causing the delay in opening, David continued to seek approval by requesting inclusion in the local authority admissions booklet for the following year. Furthermore, comments like *"we will... ..ensure that we share information and parents are not holding two places"* on the website further demonstrated SABS' desire to conform in order to gain legitimacy. It is therefore also plausible that, similarly to DGA's admissions changes (6.2), the sacrificing of the initial intake may have aimed, in part, to facilitate council school place planning.

Support from other local groups also conferred legitimacy, with the consultation report's highlighting of union responses (p201) likely to bolster legitimacy with possible doubters. SABS' steering team also met with two local MPs in swing seats, leading to not only further publicity, but also one MP raising a question in parliament to highlight the school place shortage in Haningfield.

The Labour-led council might not automatically be expected to support free schools, but there appeared to be little choice given the need for places.

Nonetheless, a good relationship with SABS would facilitate easier planning for the council, and the prestige and reliability of CIDB as a sponsor would possibly have competitive benefits on other local schools. Therefore, the next subsection considers how SABS' leaders, like other BFS, balanced distinctiveness with mimesis to gain legitimacy.

Balancing distinctiveness and mimesis in the local school market

"then it [the leaflet] started talking about Saint Alcuin and I just got so fascinated.. I ran to the internet..."

...I'm Muslim, and.. I'd rather they go to a faith based school than a non-faith-based school... ..the values that they teach.. and the principles of.. charity, good behaviour, being good to others... ..I think they do it in a more sort of explicit way," - Sameera

Parents of all faiths and none repeatedly expressed their support for the CofE affiliation. SABS' own publicity cited the reputation of higher academic and behavioural standards in CofE schools, which some parents also mentioned, thereby signaling a clear aspirational distinctiveness.

Open days and the website also highlighted the key distinction of early language learning. This appealed to Sameera:

"Cambridge university are going to research the impact of.. language and I like that idea, the fact that it's not your average.. Haningfield school or whatever. There's something more. It's an experiment, it's.. something more than just a school, you know, the whole philosophy"

Although SABS claimed to be a "small local" school and referred to potential global links and how "*learning Francophile cultures and customs will give children a second way to see the world and help develop them as engaged global citizens,*" explicit French-based claims to distinction were barely mentioned. Perhaps the twin use of 'bilingual' and a saint in the school's name highlighted enough distinction but SABS also regularly detailed its work with its wider network of prestigious partners (p199).

The use of a coat of arms and blazer on publicity indicated to Sameera equivalence to the private sector and David mentioned that pupils might transfer on to a local independent French secondary school, although how this would be achieved was never specified. Parents were unsurprisingly impressed by OHS' involvement. However, this led to some confusion, with Bhini referring to SABS' "*being part of OHS's quite, you know, quite an attraction*".

David was fully aware of the benefits of OHS' name:

"OHS has a very positive reputation in the local community and so people are aspiring in a sense to that... ..so yes, there's an element to which it's a marketing strategy to have these players on board... ..but it will also give people confidence that these people believe in us too."

David and All Saints school brought distinction. Rowena and Carl, prospective parents, specifically highlighted the Cldb and David's leadership experience as a draw and multiple partners were useful when the opening was delayed and, as the release explained, "*we were fortunate to be able to gain advice from a number of sources*". Clive publicly reframed a question about risk by asserting that, "*once*

David came on board, it didn't feel like a new school any more as he brings so much expertise." However, this occasionally verged on mythology, with Silva, a local parent, falsely assuming: *"As a new school it has no references, but I know that the Headteacher has always headed outstanding schools."*

However, SABS' relationship with All Saints was also an opportunity for mimesis. A video by All Saints children was prefaced as *"written, filmed and directed by them to tell you about their school. SABS will share the vision of All Saints as well as Executive Headteacher."* In addition to aspects of a shared vision, SABS was also *"building on the excellent curriculum on offer at our partner school"*. At open days, David proposed 'innovations' in technology and enrichment activities, but both were exact copies of All Saints' offers. Even the bilingual vision was framed by David as building on his prior French teaching experiences. The federation of SABS and All Saints was perhaps the ultimate mimesis. The frequent references to following the English national curriculum are a more general form of mimesis, of course, and were a reassurance for Rowena and Carl that the school would be covering the statutory requirements, although the coercive isomorphic pressure of SATs which are linked closely to the national curriculum would also have been involved.

Little comparison was made with other local community schools, although Rowena noted that another local free school was now proposing an additional language from reception like SABS. Local school leaders worked closely together, according to Laura, another local headteacher, and Rowena demonstrated that so-called competition might actually drive up all schools, as:

It might be, that once they reveal where it [SABS] is... ... we might look at moving in to central Haningfield... ...if it's a place where the other community schools around it are good as well and therefore we have options.

However, it is clear that mimesis, and the legitimacy lent by prestigious institutions appealed to some parents more than others. A background question remains: what kind of families did recruitment practices fit and how far did this reflect the vision of being *"open for the community"*? (p202)

Target audience

The bid was clear: the team anticipated three main groups being interested: families from across the community wanting a new, small local school; those wanting a CofE school; and bi/multilingual families wanting the opportunity to develop English and French. Despite posts on French language websites, the

governor I interviewed claimed that French-speaking community marketing had not really begun. Without a lottery, it may be that many French-speaking families felt they were too far away. However, Jaime, a relocating French parent yet self-identified Anglophile, felt more comfortable with what he considered the liberal, creative approach of SABS than the stricter French-style approach at DGA (see 6.3). SABS' repeated assertions of following the 'UK' national curriculum, with French as a 'bonus', meant some social media users were concerned that French was being diluted. English-speaking parents with degrees in French, like Rowena and Bhini, were nonetheless pleased they could support their child, although leaders constantly reassured others that all children would make progress whatever their levels of language proficiency. In the end, local-ness appeared more important to SABS than attracting French speakers, demonstrated ultimately by abandoning initial plans for a lottery (p202).

A local population was targeted with an extensive leaflet drop yet, despite framing of admissions as local, a 20% reservation for 'foundation' (church) places indicated a Christian target audience, albeit countered by claims of being open to "*all faiths and none*" in publicity. Parents expressed ambivalence towards more overt Christian traditions, for instance, in preferring the original 'Haningfield bilingual school' in the name change survey. Publicity around the patron saint, Alcuin, with tales and iconic paintings, exuded tradition and history, appealing to those familiar with this, even if not currently practicing Christians. Rowena noted this herself, and was initially scathing of others' questions about what 'collective worship' entailed, until she recalled that parents visiting her own CofE school often worried about their child feeling excluded. Bhini, highly educated, still expressed confusion about their eligibility as Hindus, prompting lengthy leader discussion at open days. But not all parents would go to this effort.

Not all would also go to the effort of climbing the hill to the impressive, but intimidating, OHS for the open days. For those used to private education, however, this was not a constraint. Although SABS promotional materials and events included families from a range of ethnic backgrounds and reassured those without French, or whose children had special needs, David conceded that the hardest group to persuade were often British monolingual families who lacked the incentive to learn French.

In interview, Sara and David showed awareness, yet tacit acceptance of the resulting self-selection and its benefits. David acknowledged:

"we believe that this can work for any child, absolutely, but it's a bit of a niche market, and I think.. the parent has got to.. want that for their child. Now, they may not fully understand it, they may not be able to fully support it, but I think they've got to acknowledge that that's what they're doing... I think they have to perceive it as a risk, because... ..you don't know until your child gets there whether you've made the right choice and we're compounding this by saying this is an innovative approach... ..so initially we do need families that believe in it... ..We are actively trying to make clear our distinctiveness... ..and in it, we're trying to help them make a good decision for their child."

The SABS campaign offered great distinctiveness, which David accepted was not for everybody, and it is perhaps unrealistic to assume it is the job of SABS to legitimize itself with all local families. But we must then accept the inherent resulting constraint that parental risk and choice come easier when the 'product' is something you can visualise, which is easier for those with more experience and resources. Page 185 briefly discussed the use of mainly middle-class institutions for early recruitment of parents. The consultation report claimed that this approach had since widened with leaflet drops and social media yet, by highlighting the traditional aspects of icons, saints and blazers, exclusivity appeared to have been retained.

Some parents responded with concern to the marketing. Lara's concerns over locality were exacerbated by a confusion, probably language related, over admissions ages. Bhini addressed confusions with leaders in person, but this takes considerable self-belief and effort and Sara recognized that some parents were fearful of the marketing, which she attributed to a lack of English. She said SABS had considered translating the materials, but had envisaged volunteers from those communities stepping forward themselves to do so. Like DGA, this pushing of responsibility on to parents, however, automatically creates a further barrier favouring those with greater access. This is not about not being interested: Lara was keen for her children to learn French and, in an interesting insight, Chrissy appeared to use the principles of self-selection and parental responsibility to rule herself out:

C: It's nice to see they're doing this kind of thing. Will all the kids' first language be English?

K: I believe some will have French at home.

C: But how would that work with someone who's already ahead of the game, because if I have Richard who's just speaking English and there's a kid who has a French parent and a British parent, obviously, how are they going to be in a

class.. with Richard? He's gonna potentially hold them back... ..I do think for this school it would be important to maybe educate the adults as well because.. a benefit of learning another language is being able to speak it at home.. It's always gonna keep that language alive. So.. maybe when they're checking out the kids that are.. applying, they need to see how the parents feel about educating themselves as well... ..Because.. some parents don't want to be educated, some parents see it as the teachers educate my kid... ..I definitely think parents being involved,.. and 100% involved is a good idea.

Although the target audience was aimed largely at local people, with priority for Christians, rather than French speakers as such, its distinctiveness appears to have encouraged self-selection, questioning how far SABS could really be “open to the community”.

To summarise 7.3, SABS appeared to gain approval with authorities relatively easily due to the intense local need for places and the expertise of CLDB and David. In order to ensure continued approval, however, SABS required not only local authority support, but also a shortage of places, a suitable site and, crucially, evidence of demand from parents. In order to achieve this, SABS' vision was targeted to occupy a high position in the local school market. Their network of prestigious partners made this relatively easy, but came at the potential cost of inclusion of families with less capital.

If we return to the question at the end of 7.2, the need to establish local legitimacy begins to answer why freedoms weren't taken by SABS campaigners, but the process by which legitimacy was gained was not only about external actors. If we consider how difficult decisions such as resetting admissions were made, it appears that it required compromising the interests of most early supporters of the campaign. Like other BFS, this ability to compromise internally in difficult areas while retaining legitimacy is key in understanding the success of SABS' campaign. The effect on the intake and values that emerged as a result, however, requires further interrogation.

7.4 Emerging values in St Alcuin Bilingual School

Section 7.4 follows previous sections in considering the impact of the compromises and constraints on emerging values in SABS. Although it is still early days, it appears that, although the school is, first and foremost, an English CofE school,

there are reasons to be confident that French immersion may be more protected through the institutional learning and borrowed legitimacy SABS is able to draw on. Nonetheless, questions remain over who will benefit from this.

Which language?

SABS' campaign was founded on strategic compromise. On page 3 we saw how Sara conceded that her preferred German-style education would never be approved, which led her to consider bilingualism as a core ideal instead. But which language(s) would be chosen? Although the founders had proposed a German-English school to the NSN, the team had differing opinions and reasons for selecting it, with Sara uncomfortable that it was a natural choice for her, while others rationalized its selection because of its difficulty to learn later, thereby affording children a head start.

The initial plan was to copy Europa by offering two parallel language streams, but this was also dropped when they realised it would cost a) too much money and b) the unity of the school. David wondered, for example, how assemblies could be held in French if half the children were learning Spanish. Inclusion therefore appeared the protected core value – alongside financial viability. The campaign never rationalized the choice of French beyond its popularity during surveying. Instead, bilingualism was the key goal. When Spanish came second place in the survey, the compromise offered was teaching it to those fluent enough in French from years 3 to 6. However, not all languages were equally considered, evidenced by the deselection of Arabic and Mandarin as options. Citing their difficult scripts appears somewhat inconsistent as German was initially justified for its difficulty, albeit a decision made before ClDB and David were on board. The name change to St Alcuin, according to David, was intended to highlight the French vision but, instead, was perhaps more useful in signaling, as David noted elsewhere, that it was "*not an Asian language*". It is likely that language status was an influence here, as Arabic was spoken reasonably widely locally, but a full exploration of local language hierarchies and ideologies is beyond the scope of the present thesis.

How much French?

Both Sara and David admitted disagreement over the extent of the 'bilingual' vision. However, Sara appeared to minimize the regulatory pressure to conform

via statutory testing, saying that when ClDB proposed ‘watering down’ to a ‘language rich environment’ this was “not for any understandable reason, mainly to get through the application.” Although SABS’ name retained the term ‘bilingual’, the resulting curriculum clearly puts English first. David stated:

“I would prefer to speak about levels of fluency. And our language, I think, subtly changed in terms of our marketing and our education plan.. So we weren’t saying to parents we are going to make your children bilingual... We will help your children to develop a high level of fluency in the French language and in their understanding of French culture.”

At interview, the DfE queried whether EAL learners should learn any French, and p204 shows that it was the team’s ongoing willingness to compromise the degree of immersion, by prioritizing children’s needs first, which won them over. The result?

“the promise we had to make to parents is: your children will do more French in this school than they will do in any other school locally because we may not be able to achieve.. full bilingualism... you know..”

Given Sara’s reluctance, this kind of compromise appears to have been facilitated by the transfer of power to an experienced executive head:

“We are seeking in everything to make the right decisions for the children and what we believe would be right for the school.. but clearly there may be agendas that we will have to fit in with, in terms of what government decide to do. And I think schools are very good at adapting to those and.. navigating through it.”

However, David himself also justified an ‘English first’ approach for some:

“we’ve got to remember that these children are going to be British citizens in the main and so all the focus on British values and British culture, we have to absolutely nail that, because most of them will probably want to work in Anglophone cultures, so we want them to get that. We don’t want them to have been disadvantaged in any way...”

Nonetheless, some hope remained for bilingual immersion, as the following quote highlights a deep thinking about bilingual pedagogy that I encountered nowhere else:

“we thought about using the virgule, the comma, for the decimal point... ..That would be marked wrong in an English SATS test... ..and so I’d been beginning to look at the methodologie in France, the prescribed methodology for teaching mathematics so we could really understand how the language impacts on method, or how you describe what you’re doing mathematically affects how you think about it.

Furthermore, it was the only BFS to retain ‘bilingual’ in the name. But what effect, if any, did the degree of, and language chosen, appear to have on the families considering the school?

Who is choosing and evidence of changing target audience

With official NPD data not yet available, who is choosing the school is hard to ascertain. Nonetheless, the bid highlighted that, of parents registering an interest, this broadly reflected the local demographics, with slightly increased interest from Christian families, unsurprisingly. Almost all the parents I spoke to lived in Haningfield. David reported that applicants came from diverse ethnic and linguistic backgrounds, and open days reflected this. At the teacher recruitment event he also claimed that most of the parents had lived abroad. Most parents were not affiliated with the CofE, though supported it. Vijay, for instance, claimed it would give his daughter a multicultural background, which he distinguished from other local schools that he said catered predominantly for children from Asian backgrounds, due to ‘*high population density*’. His understanding of ‘multicultural’ here seemed to imply SABS would less likely reflect its local population. He sought exclusivity. But was this ethnic, socioeconomic or educational exclusivity? Sameera admitted her main attraction to the open day was seeing “*who else is going to be there,*” having already declared:

S: the philosophy is not like your average state school... ..when I applied for SABS it was purely on the basis of it's bilingual, and it's a state school, even better. But now, thinking about the types of people who would be applying are probably those who are.. somehow... thinking at a slightly different level of where they want to send their kids, you know, the whole thing about the lessons in French.. I think maybe wouldn't appeal to everybody. There's a certain type.. of person maybe who maybe wouldn't be as interested.

K: And that type of person [would be

S: it probably is going to sound judgmental, not your average working class person. It's going to be maybe somebody who's.. got some appreciation of.. how language can help develop a child's.. abilities.

Those not choosing, like Chrissy and Lara, although attracted to similar benefits as Sameera, appeared to rule themselves out (7.3) because the campaign's publicity that had reached them was insufficient for them to visualise a ‘fit’ for them and their lives, particularly as there was no site to visit.

7.3 suggested that there was some awareness of targeting more invested families and the benefits that this would bring the school and their intake might be more skewed as a result. However, David clarified that, though SABS leaders initially “*specifically targeted families that are French speaking... ..have an interest in languages, or through the various networks of.. bilingual families or teachers of languages...*”, they needed to target anyone they could because “*you have to show*

due diligence and you have to show that you've been inclusive and, you know, the perception could be, right, well we want these families in". Certainly, unlike DGA or Anne Frank, the admissions policy prioritised locality over language, and French community targeting was therefore compromised without too much regret, despite the governor's claims otherwise (p198). The prioritizing of British values and localness over French indicates that these might have been the preferred core values (see below).

The resetting of admissions was perhaps the ultimate indication of a change in target audience. Although it is uncertain exactly why this occurred, it is plausible that it aimed to protect the reputation and legitimacy of SABS within the local school market. This decision only became possible because of the transfer of power to the executive head and emerging governing body, coupled with control of communicative discourse by limiting public debate, and the ability to use the 'advice' of partners as a defense (p205). But what did this compromise intend to protect? What were the core values?

Emerging core values

SABS' website section on 'school values' highlighted the core ethos as Christian first, above a language focus:

"We believe that the development of character is as important as the academic progress that children make. The Christian ethos underpins this development and is evident in everyday school life through the shared values of compassion, responsibility, humility, trust and service."

These Christian values were never compromised, nor negotiated, with any criticism of CofE status downplayed by SABS leaders. Page 188 highlighted that parents recognized the additional benefits of CofE affiliation. The only resistance came over the name change and, even then, it was accepted without question.

Rather than a core linguistic value as such, the website later linked the planned French teaching to character development through a more general, multicultural goal:

"At SABS, a Christian ethos and a multi-cultural, multi-lingual approach go hand in hand. We will promote integration amongst all people of all different cultures and backgrounds, both within the school and in the wider community. Learning Francophile cultures and customs will give children a second way to see the world and help develop them as engaged global citizens."

Inclusion here appears to be about different cultures and languages, but not specifically educational or socioeconomic backgrounds and, as the consultation booklet highlighted in justifying the 20% of church foundation places (p206), a desire for inclusiveness should not come at the expense of the Christian core. Along with another web page strap line: *“when culturally aware, children are more socially cohesive, open-minded and tolerant”*, it appears that the bilingual vision is about developing more general social goals, around a culturally-aware moral core, than about the French language or culture itself.

The website noted in the bilingual section that: *“the first academic priority of the school is to make sure that every child makes excellent progress in English, maths and science.”* Not French. Indeed, the order of slides at the last open day demonstrated succinctly the priority in values as it moved from pictures of St. Alcuin, with David’s commentary of being ‘first and foremost’ an excellent CofE school, to details of the many ‘educational partners’, followed by a generic slide headed ‘an excellent primary school’ and, finally, the bilingual approach.

To summarise 7.4, when David justified the renaming to ‘St Alcuin’ as highlighting the French nature of the school better, he concluded that:

“I think that schools that are.. very clear about their ethos and vision and what they do, tend.. to have a greater clarity of that vision and be more successful in it, because they’re clearer on what they’re not and what they are”.

For SABS, therefore, the compromising of peripheral values had a function in clarifying the core values in turn. From the first decisions around dropping German, through to the resetting of admissions, the result became a clarity of purpose, with French language justified in terms of developing global character, within a Christian framework. Ultimately, the core goal was survival, and it made sense to borrow the legitimacy of a tried-and-tested CofE ethos. After all, *“if we fail as a school, then we don’t do the cause of languages in primary schools, and bilingual education.. we don’t allow it to happen.”* Legitimacy for the bilingual approach came ‘first and foremost’ from the CofE affiliation. Nonetheless, it remains to be seen whether this will have an impact on who is choosing the school, particularly given how I met parents who were attracted to the school and were from many diverse backgrounds.

Conclusion: overcoming constraints

How did SABS' leaders and parents navigate free schools legislation in order to secure the possibility of bilingual education, if not bilingual education itself yet? The answer to the first subquestion lies in SABS' considerable network with prestige. The original founder parents were triggers and entrepreneurs for this, but it was through their own prestigious network, through the church and Old Haningfield School, that plans were able to progress. Most important of all was securing the experience and track record of the Cldb and All Saints partner school and its headteacher, David. Compared with Anne Frank and DGA, this is an unparalleled network and the only one which established links with universities. It was also the closest to a coalition, given not just one institutional entrepreneur, but shifting power from founder parents, to Sally at the Cldb and David of All Saints.

Therefore, in response to the second research question, the principal freedom exercised by SABS campaigners was in gathering a network of prestigious partners, notably the CofE. By exploiting mutual benefits, this afforded campaigners borrowed legitimacy and a higher position in the local school market in turn. The freedom to introduce more language learning at a young age in a quick time-scale was also key: without this, the campaigners admitted they probably would not have bothered pursuing the idea. However, like the other BFS, there was limited use of other freedoms. There was some use of admissions freedoms to prioritise those with church affiliations and founders' children but this freedom was balanced against the desire to be viewed as a local, inclusive school. This was ultimately expressed in the decision to reset admissions after the delay in school opening. The fact that this went against the interests of all the early supporters highlights that, unlike Anne Frank and DGA, power had been transferred quite rapidly into the hands of a pre-opening 'governing body' with fewer parents. Although leaders genuinely listened to parents, and advice from academics too, power was being transferred through the recruitment of an experienced executive head, strong control of communicative discourse through avoidance of public debate and slick management of surveys and social media to control the message of the school. The freedom to choose a location was constrained by a lack of choice, exacerbated by the multi-authority process which demanded secrecy and, eventually, a delay in proceedings. Both these were significant constraints on

establishing legitimacy for leaders, as parents were themselves unable to plan without a known site, and eventually were, in many cases, denied a place.

This leads us then to consider the third research question, namely how leaders gained legitimacy. This appears to have been easier for SABS than either of the other cases. Quick DfE approval was facilitated by the networks gathered who demonstrated significant institutional flexibility and learning. The key bricoleurs, particularly David and the CIDB, were also key in securing legitimacy with parents, although the intense need for local places meant little local opposition from the wider public or local authority. Nonetheless, there was still evidence of both coercive isomorphic pressure through the pressure of testing and the need to conform to government regulations and the balancing of mimesis with distinction, in marketing links with prestigious partners and, most importantly, All Saints school. No other BFS had this perfect mimetic opportunity. However, these links may have also meant some families thought the school wasn't for them and problems over the site, more than CofE affiliation, meant some ruled themselves out. For parents as language planners, then, the chief constraint was the risk of the unknown which prevented many who were still interested in the curricular innovation and CofE status from applying. SABS' team were aware of the need to demonstrate inclusiveness, and genuinely welcomed all, but recognized that actions to distinguish themselves from the other local schools in order to establish a high position in the local market also had the effect of undermining inclusiveness. This created even more barriers for parents from less-privileged and non-English-speaking backgrounds. The benefit to the school was not only the recruitment of the desired risk-takers, but the emerging reputation as an exclusive school because of the families applying.

In response to the fourth strand, we cannot assert yet whether this has had a notable impact on intake. Similarly, it is unclear whether SABS will, through its unique opportunities for borrowed legitimacy and prestigious networks, succeed in developing bilingual innovation where others have struggled. Like other BFS, the degree of French is already far less than the founders envisioned, as the coercive pressures of SATs, and a desire to reassure parents with mimetic offerings, placed English firmly first. However, positive signs exist, for instance in preserving the word 'bilingual' in the school name, and the way in which pedagogy was discussed (see p215). Nonetheless, it is clear that, by changing admissions and

compromising the fully bilingual aspiration, the core values that were protected were a principally Christian ethos, with a global outlook, expressed through a French language focus.

On page 194 David highlighted that the group's original concern when he and the CLDB came on board was: *"how do we remain.. credible and in touch with what we believe in terms of offering languages and offering bilingualism.. but also meet these constraints?"* The answer, for SABS, appeared to lie in securing and transferring power to an experienced bricoleur, an executive head able to juggle a range of educational partners to secure legitimacy and recruit parents by balancing distinction with mimesis. As I switched off my recorder for my last interview with SABS campaigners, David's parting words captured perfectly the fundamental constraint on innovation being not only regulatory pressure, but the ability to navigate those constraints. He said that the places of tension were the important ones to capture in this field, and that these exist between the requirements of the government and the educational beliefs that you might have, like those around bilingual education. He continued to explain that these are difficult to navigate, as a free school is never truly free, just free-er maybe. He then wondered aloud what we would do if we had no constraints, but conceded that policy will always constrain the level of innovation that is possible. He finished by stating that everyone is subject to politics and education is a political issue.

SABS, with David at the helm, appeared to be navigating the challenge thus far. But what happens when a campaign has perhaps as much founder enthusiasm, but less capacity to recruit highly resourced networks or the best sponsors? How do founder parents then attempt to navigate the free schools process and with what outcomes? The next case study follows a group who faced exactly this situation.

Chapter 8: Anglo-Spanish Project

"I thought that I would have a team, you know, lots of people would be engaged, but it just happened that I was really the only one.. so I.. just had to contact all the nurseries by myself, go there, do street campaigns..." - Amelie, lead parent campaigner

Introduction

The final case study appears to offer a negative counterpoint to the success of the first three campaigns. By following this particular campaign's evolution through two different, apparently experienced sponsors, it becomes clear that the need to establish local legitimacy is paramount. Although the Anglo-Spanish Project (ASP) managed to build considerable support, this was largely down to one highly active, albeit less-experienced and less-networked parent campaigner than the other cases and neither sponsor had the local credentials to compensate for this. Crucially, a lack of clarity and communication between local and national government about the need for an additional school locally was a significant constraint that all stakeholders might have anticipated sooner. However, the story is not wholly negative, as it appears that the parent support released by the BFS campaign may yet lead to bilingual education within the local authority schools.

8.1 Forming a coalition with capital

In this first section, we see how the origins of the ASP campaign as a sponsor-initiated project differ significantly from other BFS. This means that when the first sponsor, and the next, encountered problems, the noticeably weaker parent coalition, with less capital and power than other cases, crumbled.

A sponsor-initiated project needing parent campaigners

The story of the Luxham Anglo-Spanish Project (ASP) begins at one of the first bilingual free schools in England, the Language Immersion Institute (LII), which offers Spanish in several subjects across the curriculum. Within a year of LII opening its doors, the trustees, who had noted significant interest from parents in other parts of the country, emailed their wider supporters to propose a school in a second location. They said that the exact location would be determined by parental interest, so a survey was conducted and a meeting called. Demand appeared strongest in the West of a second region, where fee-paying Spanish options already

existed. However, a number of parents lived in a more Northern part, in Luxham, a highly multicultural and slowly gentrifying suburb, with pockets of extreme deprivation. It also has among the highest concentration of Latin American parents and Spanish speakers in England. One particularly enthused parent was Amelie, a trilingual Spanish national who lived and worked in the very diverse centre of Luxham. She was raising her son in Spanish, and found the campaign as she was considering her son's future education: *"for me, being bilingual is also being biliterate so it's important for him to go through the.. formal education of the language as well.."* There was no way she could commute to, or afford, the Spanish fee-paying schools in the city. Amelie was convinced that Luxham not only had a large Spanish-speaking population but also many parents who were open to learning a second language. Indeed, she had also invited several local friends to LII's meeting, but was still surprised when the chair of the LII trust, Adriana, asked her if she would be willing to coordinate the campaign. She agreed as she thought it would be easy to get the necessary 120 signatures from people who would want a bilingual school in the area. However, Amelie soon realized this wasn't quite as simple as it appeared, as the opening quote highlights.

Building momentum

Amelie laughed off the suggestion that she might have had any previous teaching or campaigning experience, but she was adamant that she was ready to learn, and the campaign evolved substantially over time. She set up social media accounts and arranged several local media interviews. With her personal approach to campaigning, welcoming every new sign-up online that she hadn't met in person, the number of supporters grew and soon exceeded 120, although Amelie later complained that it was quite difficult getting updates from the LII leaders as to exact numbers. Just six weeks before a bid for the following year needed to be submitted, Amelie was shocked to realize that she had fundamentally misunderstood the required evidence of demand. Sixty signatures were required from parents of four year olds ready to pledge ASP as their first choice. A fundamental rethink was required.

Amelie rapidly collated a list of local nurseries and playgroups, and asked parents for their own suggestions. Other parents also initially helped approach these nurseries, although she later discovered this sometimes meant they were simply

dropping leaflets off, which never reached home. There was some passive retweeting by, and posters in, local businesses and some national embassies, but nowhere like the amount of support for Anne Frank and DGA's campaigns. Importantly, the emerging group of campaigners were also not linked by one 'base' playgroup, church or school like the other case studies. Indeed, Amelie was surprised to find that local Spanish language nurseries were not all supportive, which she attributed to other parents' lack of persistence, or even leaders' professional jealousy. Amelie therefore took to street campaigning, with mixed results, approaching families with children who looked around the right age. Just weeks before the application was due, with a tantalizing twelve, then ten, then six names needed, she asked parents to help her attend library story sessions. Lizzie, an English speaker, whose son was of mixed Latino-English heritage, took up the challenge at this point, becoming, for a time, Amelie's deputy. However, they only actually met much later and it became clear that LII had little knowledge of the marketing campaign. When I met Lizzie at a library play session, she shared hand-typed publicity, copied from information provided by Amelie, with amended application deadlines scribbled in biro. Although professional LII flyers existed, these hadn't reached those campaigning in time.

As the last few signatures were collected, Amelie exhorted a group of parents to gather to hand in the bid to the DfE in person, as LII had done for its previous bids. When I met this group at the DfE offices, most were meeting for the first time and had to leave before Adriana turned up with the paperwork. This was by no means the same tight founder group as in other BFS campaigns.

A distinct lack of group cohesion was not helped by a lack of sponsor support and communication. The parents appeared to rely on LII to write the bid without them. They probably knew no different, as none were educators or had the kind of experience other BFS' founder parent groups had. Although Amelie was aware of some other bilingual schools, there was no obvious reaching out to them, indicating a strong assumption that connections to LII were sufficient. A trustee I met with was certainly confident that a DfE interview would be secured, given LII's existing school. Lizzie and Amelie had both visited the school and were impressed by the amount of Spanish and the staff's knowledge of bilingual education.

What the parents were unaware of was that LII was going through its own

difficulties, and, as a result, were perhaps unsurprisingly unable to give the necessary support to ASP. With hindsight, it is clear that the bid would be unsuccessful, but the parents were unaware and disappointed. Amelie later summarized the problem as:

“the trust is too young and they were going through some difficulties and the DfE felt that it was better if they strengthened the.. trust... before engaging in a new project. That’s why it was stopped.”

More openly, some months later, Adriana herself cited “*financial reasons*” for withdrawing support, but she also shared that LII itself, like Anne Frank, had had to bid twice, only being approved once they had secured the expertise of a head of a ‘leading’ international bilingual school. Adriana also admitted that they needed to strengthen LII’s governance first. Although LII’S own bid had highlighted considerable financial and educational expertise amongst founders, this was insufficient for ASP, as post-opening EFA visits had revealed a number of gaps in LII’s finance and governance procedures and LII were slow to implement needed changes. Eventually, a ‘whistleblower’ reported overpayments to the chair for her services, and a number of other allegations, that were later deemed ‘*overstated*’ by DfE investigators, who ultimately concluded there was “*no evidence of fraud*”. However, as this occurred in the months following the ASP bid, the damage was already done and there was little ASP’s parents could have done to be approved with LII as sponsor. Adriana, however, did not immediately walk away. She looked around for alternative sponsors, and found the Merton group, who had recently been approved as a new academy sponsor.

Rebounding with a new sponsor

Like LII, Merton’s expertise was founded in the international British school sector. However, they had little else in common. Merton already ran multiple schools in several Spanish-speaking countries, with hundreds of employees and a multi-million-pound annual turnover. Its founder, Sir Fred Richards, was a wealthy entrepreneur and Amelie was convinced that his interest was simply about giving back to his home country. Through the process of seeking accreditation for Merton’s most recent project as an official international British school, he had become acquainted with June Poole, contracted by the DfE for a number of projects involving independent schools. When her contract ended, according to June, Fred turned to her and said “*June, I’d like to do an academy,*” and she was duly appointed

as full-time paid advisor. While LII began focusing on Luxham in late 2013, Merton were meanwhile being introduced to a number of parents and educators with links to the Spanish embassy in London, and with that, they identified a “grassroots champion” who was leading two nurseries in the West of the city. Merton applied to be pre-registered as an academy sponsor with the DfE, and were quickly approved, likely aided by their significant financial capital. In early 2014, they began to campaign actively for two Spanish-English free schools in affluent parts of the West of the city. At an open day I attended, they outlined their long term plan to build up from three bilingual primary schools to a secondary school, which could link with their overseas schools. Several months later, it was Adriana who saw the potential for this third school to be ASP, and offered to contact Merton on behalf of Amelie. Amelie didn’t want to wait,

“so I got online and I checked for Merton and I realised that they had a campaign to open a bilingual school, but it was the option of just a Western area... ..So, I left a comment, saying who I was, I was from Luxham and I did a campaign for ASP and... ..could you please campaign, apply for Luxham, because there’s so much demand. And within a week I got an email and then.. soon after I got a phone call from June who was on holiday... ..so we had a chat.. I arranged for her to speak to Adriana and when that happened, she spoke to the DfE and with Sir Fred, and that’s when they decided, yes, let’s go for it.”

Parent and sponsor relationships during the two campaigns

June Poole was a key figurehead, well-qualified and experienced in education, including several DfE roles. She had also already reached out to other BFS for advice, including the-then CBS (Ch6), who had shared various policies with them. However, she was not obviously familiar with the state school sector or the founder-parent approach. Although there were multiple parent meetings for each campaign, neither June, nor the parents, ever formed an active parent forum. Nonetheless, June embraced ASP’s parent network and Amelie later contrasted their working relationship starkly with LII’s.

“The first campaign, I had very little information passed on to me. I was chasing and chasing and chasing. For the second campaign, June sent me straight away the educational plan. I was aware of everything. I wasn’t paid, but I felt I was part of Merton. I felt.. I was doing a job... I wasn’t just campaigning. In fact, for the second campaign, I didn’t call myself Amelie, I had a title. Luxham campaign coordinator, or something like that... ..I had more support in the sense that I was in touch with June every day basically. And she was.. a bit like me, pushy. She wanted to know, to see the numbers going up and the Merton group would provide the data every two

days or something, where with the LII it would be just every month and there wasn't much time..."

In fact, by the time they decided to partner, there were just six weeks left before the deadline for a bid for the following year. The campaigning this time clearly benefited from greater resourcing, personnel support overseas, leaflets, venue hire and a pre-existing website, which Amelie said gave it a more professional feel. In contrast, most of the publicity with LII had been Amelie's own doing. LII may have assumed that the parents would be more motivated, as the original LII school had emerged from a founder parent group itself. But Amelie had never seen the education plan, let alone contributed to the bid.

The second time around, Amelie had also had time to learn lessons from the first campaign, and in the process of making a promotional video between campaigns, had begun to consolidate a core base of local supporters.

"I asked.. parents to be more involved with their own nurseries because I work full time and this second campaign I spent 25 hours a week on it.. and being pregnant as well... ..The first time round I was counting too much on friends."

June was highly available, which contrasted with the early days of the Luxham campaign, before Amelie took the helm, where LII leaders stated on their website: *"We regret that due to the high volume of email queries it is now impossible to send individual responses. A FAQ section is being created and will be up on the website soon"*, which never appeared. Although Adriana emailed the original supporters to encourage them to reapply with Merton, Amelie was not given their details because of data protection. Undeterred, she marshalled parent volunteers she knew with carefully choreographed outreach to nurseries, and previous resistance crumbled. Despite the much tighter timescale, evidenced demand exceeded that of the first campaign within weeks. It may be that parents realized this was their last chance, and were shocked out of their complacency by the first campaign's failure. But the prestige, professionalism and availability of Merton no doubt helped. June also demonstrated flexibility, allowing Amelie to suggest alternative meeting venues that were more targeted at young parents, like parks. But fundamentally, it was the capital that counted.

In summary of 8.1 then, although the ASP campaign with LII was able to gather significant momentum by convincing a highly-invested and energized parent to take the helm, ultimately LII'S internal problems jeopardized the campaign.

However, long before that, LII had failed to grasp the difference between the Luxham parent campaigners' capital and their own founder group in the years before. Amelie and Lizzie were busy working mothers, with little time, and had failed to establish a solid community base to unite them. Although she was figurehead, Amelie was not exactly an institutional entrepreneur and although she had a degree of personal legitimacy, her experience, capital and networks were nowhere like those of the other campaigns. We will examine reasons for this further in section 8.3. LII also failed the parent campaigners by providing insufficient personnel or financial support and, crucially, were tardy in responding to requests for help. Although Amelie was as persistent as Paul Webb (Ch5), she lacked the capital brought by other campaign groups' founder parents and, although equally motivated, she wrongly assumed that LII's sponsor-initiated campaign would bring greater resources. Nonetheless, a second campaign became possible only because Amelie persisted.

When Merton came on board, they adjusted their working approach in order to harness the power of the supporter group. Nonetheless, power was still assumed to lie within the sponsor, as a press release indicated: *"The parents have now asked Merton to submit a new application drawing on Merton's educational expertise and the enthusiasm and vision of the Luxham community."* This was still no founder parent campaign. The capital and close working relationships that Merton group brought didn't guarantee success, however. But before we examine how relationships with regulators unfurled in the process of seeking approval (8.3), let us consider how the planned use of freedoms differed between LII and Merton and, indeed, how they both compared with the other cases.

8.2 Utilising legislative freedoms

This second section builds on 8.1, which highlighted how several legislative freedoms were determined by ASP's sponsor without parent campaigner consultation. In addition, although the timescale and location were key freedoms still attractive to potential parents, these very freedoms taken ultimately constrained the long term legitimacy and survival of the project, examined further in subsequent sections.

Parent Power?

Unlike the previous cases, section 8.1 established that ASP was not really a founder parent campaign. However, it only continued because of Amelie's persistence and its subsequent revival with Merton saw a re-balancing of power somewhat. Amelie appreciated the ability to work more closely with June than with LII, where she had had little direct input into, and little knowledge of, policies. In some ways this might be considered inevitable, given that LII had, at the time, an established school with a credible track record to borrow policies from. However, this approach may have unwittingly contributed to a lack of ownership by many of the early parents.

Merton's approach was slightly different and June was pleasantly surprised by the engagement of the parents she met in all their three campaigns. Nonetheless, although she embraced Amelie's enthusiasm and contacts, her lack of response to parents' requests for involvement in the other locations where they were bidding shows that parent involvement was not a fundamental goal, and the power still lay firmly with the sponsor. However, like the other cases, ASP's parents did utilise the power to bid for their locality and, like Anne Frank, both sponsors asked prospective parents to help with locating the site. Luxham may have also have been a compromise for Merton as it was considerably less affluent than its other two targeted areas.

Amelie was clear that the opportunity to open a BFS was a huge "*shortcut*" in order to get the local, bilingual education she sought for her son. There would be no way that a community or private school could be established in time for him, or other parents' children. However, was the short timescale, like at DGA & Anne Frank, also a constraint? On the one hand, ASP's campaign appeared to create momentum and buzz, with Amelie bolstering parent campaigning by highlighting an increasingly tight time schedule, particularly in the second campaign. However, the compressed time meant less ability for LII to digest facts and figures and respond to individual emails and, crucially, less time to educate campaigners on details like the admissions policy. However, without a quick timescale, many of the campaigning parents would have quickly become ineligible for a place, and the group would have to find new supporters. Furthermore, the sponsors recognized

that the 2015 elections might end the window of opportunity for opening free schools. But these were not the only advantages for the sponsor.

Financial advantages

Although LII never explicitly linked ASP with possible financial advantages, given other BFS were more open about the advantages of a bigger sponsor, it seems likely that finances were a strong motivator. However, as mentioned above, LII actually ended up being a constraint financially, due to their questionable track record. For Merton, the financial motives were more complex: they had a significant financial stream from outside the UK. However, June revealed that Fred still saw potential through BFS to have a “*little business*” helping other schools with their Spanish. This was not a charitable venture and Merton’s network still stood to potentially gain by being able to shop around as June’s defense of free schools to Amelie highlighted:

“June said, I worked for DfE and I know exactly how it works. Free schools don’t take money away from existing schools, that is just fantasy. You know, regular schools get £6000 a year per head, and that’s not changing... What’s taken from the council is the fact that if you’re a free school, you can decide you want to go with neighbouring borough... ...If they’re cheaper, do it with them, and the money that’s left, you can do whatever you want. You can invest in equipment; you can invest in teaching”

The financial advantage for English-speaking parents was exemplified in Lizzie’s promotional leaflet, which asked in bold red lettering: “*Parents, would you be interested in free bilingual education for your children?*”. Lizzie said she couldn’t believe that people wouldn’t want what would normally cost so much in the private system. The second campaign brought even greater potential in its significant network with considerable capital, which Amelie thought would benefit many:

“The free school with Merton would have been fantastic because they had schools all over the world. They could have some exchange. Imagine kids whose parents don’t have, who would never thought of sending, or even go on holiday to Spain, would have had the opportunity to send their children to Spain, in a Spanish school setting.. for free... ...You can’t compare local schools with a private school in Spain that is available, who have the means...”

However, the greatest draw emphasized for parents was consistently the bilingual aspect. But, given the by now familiar constraints on other BFS, how much Spanish did Merton and LII plan to offer?

Curricular freedom and staffing

Both ASP's sponsors were invested in providing a two-way bilingual education model, or as close to that as possible. LII said ASP would be run like their original school, which, at the time, boasted 50% Spanish every day across multiple curricular areas. However, like all other BFS, they said ASP would explicitly follow the national curriculum. On the face of it, Merton proposed something similar, with a 40/60 Spanish/English split, albeit recognizing, by the time they came on board, the need to prioritise English because of the coercive isomorphic pressures of statutory testing. June also said that they were happy to follow the national curriculum as its flexibility actually facilitated the teaching of Spanish in other curriculum areas, although what this was compared to was unclear.

Amelie highlighted that the two sponsors proposed slightly different staffing structures to achieve this:

*"LII has two teachers in the class... ...The main teacher spoke English and the assistant teacher spoke Spanish.. The thing is, they were really encouraging the teacher, the English one, to speak Spanish... Which I don't think it's... necessarily a good thing.. if you want children to learn Spanish properly, you want them to learn from a native.. the English speaker would speak English mainly in the class and the Spanish would translate everything...
...The Merton one was going to split the classes. The actual Maths, for example, would only be in English"*

LII school's first inspection report questioned the side-by-side language approach, as inspectors felt students were waiting for English translations of the Spanish content. However, many insiders wrote this criticism off by asserting that the inspectors were unqualified in bilingual pedagogy. Nonetheless, the degree of Spanish appeared constrained in LII and, although Amelie saw Merton's approach as potentially different, involving, she said, bilingual teachers alternating subjects, the reality would be difficult, given other BFS' trouble in recruiting a full complement of UK trained, bilingual teachers. Like other BFS, both sponsors planned to recruit UK trained teachers as class teachers, foregoing a freedom to employ unqualified language teachers, and June said this was because quality of teachers came first. This is also some indication that Merton was aiming to present itself as a legitimate UK sponsor, especially given its international roots.

Other planned freedoms: admissions and governance

LII revealed little about its plans for ASP before submitting the bid. For instance, Lizzie knew nothing of the admissions policy when I spoke with her while campaigning. Amelie did not refer to it either. However, as Adriana and Amelie both consistently referred myself and prospective parents to LII as the model, we can presume that the admissions would have been more local than DGA and Anne Frank. LII has a lottery system, albeit restricted to the postcodes closest to its building, minimizing the likelihood of families travelling from far away. Merton, however, did propose 50% of its places would be randomly allocated, justified at open days due to the widespread supporter base, although this was truer for its Western campaigns than the Luxham one. Interestingly, Merton, although not a CofE school, emphasized a broadly Christian ethos, but attempted to reassure by saying it: *“will welcome children of all nationalities, races and religions, and neither pupils nor staff will be admitted or employed on the basis of their religion.”*

However, we will see in 8.3 that this confusing status was off-putting for some.

ASP’s policy mentioned no priority for founder parents in admissions and, in terms of governance, both sponsors planned to nominate their own governors, although Merton also promised local representation. However, given that neither proposal was enacted, it is hard to comment.

To sum up 8.2, both LII and Merton’s bids to work with ASP used a limited and apparently arbitrary range of legislative freedoms - arbitrary in the sense that they were not primarily intended to serve the local families campaigning for the school in Luxham but, instead, were transplanted from their other campaigns.

Nonetheless, parents like Amelie were able to recognise the potential to enjoy the freedom of a local, bilingual school in a language of their choice, in time for their children. In a way, the other freedoms exercised were therefore secondary to Amelie and other parents. Although we might deduce that financial advantages were a motivation for both Merton and LII, albeit in slightly different ways, these were never ultimately realised. Why both LII and Merton’s second bid with ASP were unsuccessful will now be the focus of the next section, as the root lies in understanding their failure to gain legitimacy, primarily with local and national regulators.

8.3 Establishing legitimacy

In this section, we will examine how the initially positive relationships of the sponsors with the DfE unravelled. We will also see that a failure to establish legitimacy with local government officials caused considerable wasted effort and disappointment the second time. Though neither sponsor is blameless in failing to anticipate the issues which arose, a struggle for power between the DfE and local authority in planning school provision locally appears to have been concealed from both sponsors and parent campaigners. ASP did attempt to navigate the potential other threats to legitimacy by reflecting between campaigns and deploying the resources of Merton to gather considerable support with many parents. Nonetheless, like other BFS, ASP did make assumptions about the likely target audience and, in so doing, the question arises as to how campaigners might have, in turn, been feeding the fears of many about the potential for social segregation.

Early relationships with the DfE

LII had an existing BFS open which meant many did not question the likelihood of failure (p226). DfE relations were therefore also assumed to be positive and Adriana repeatedly presented evidence of demand as the single hurdle to gaining approval. The singular focus on recruitment figures may well have prevented LII from strengthening other aspects of the bid with parental involvement and the fact that this campaign had less founder parent involvement would have been clear to the DfE. But this wasn't the key reason for failure. Nor was it lack of demand. As Amelie noted, *"the DfE didn't say oh no, we can't grant your application... ..because there is no need in your borough. That wasn't the response we got from the DfE."*

Instead, the DfE had wider concerns about LII'S capability as sponsor (p226)

LII's journey to becoming a sponsor had not been straightforward. Adriana, and early publicity materials, confirmed that it had taken two years of local campaigning and fundraising in another city to drum up interest from both families and teachers and, even then, their first application to the DfE for the original LII school was turned down. However, like Anne Frank, after following DfE advice to recruit more relevant pedagogical expertise in bilingual education, by recruiting Mariana, an international school head teacher, the bid was approved. However, the relationship with the DfE was somewhat mixed once the school opened. Monitoring visits by the DfE advisor questioned the amount of progress in

English, and queried the apparent one-to-one translation from Spanish to English, meaning students were not actually fully immersed. EFA monitoring also highlighted significant concerns about the governance structure and a lack of relevant financial expertise. However, LII did little to implement recommendations and, following the whistleblowing allegations, LII'S troubles entered the public domain. Although the trust set up to run LII remained intact and the DfE refuted accusations of fraud, regulators needed to minimize potential damage to the free schools' brand. More than in any other BFS, the government would have been worried about its own legitimacy as LII was one of the highly-fêted, early free schools. LII had certainly not demonstrated sufficient capacity to take on another school.

Merton group got off to a flying start in their relations with the DfE. June's previous DfE work would have helped enormously and she alluded many times to confidential information which she couldn't tell parents about, but which helped the application immensely. They had also been able to gain quick approval as an approved sponsor of academies. As this process requires significant evidence of financial and governance experience, we can deduce that the capacity of Merton was not in doubt. However, Merton was based principally overseas and, although overseas applicants to become sponsors are not discouraged, the DfE advise in their application guidance that *"you'll also need to show that you have good knowledge of the British education system."* (DfE, 2014) After all, this overseas expertise had appeared insufficient with the heads of LII and Anne Frank. However, this was not the reason given when campaigning came to an abrupt halt in mid-September, just weeks before ASP's bid was due to be submitted.

Local need questioned: a failure to work with the council

"Sadly, Merton's plan to open a bilingual free school in Luxham must be abandoned. Yesterday afternoon we received a message from the DfE saying 'even with strong parental demand there is no need at the present time for a free school in Luxham'. Merton understands that the DfE has received new figures from Luxham Council showing that there is no predicted shortage of primary school places in the borough. Without the support from central government it is impossible for Merton to proceed with the project." – Merton's official press release

Amelie was guarded about sharing her understanding of what had happened, as she was concerned about the impact on relations with Luxham local authority, given that they might need to cooperate on any future projects (see 8.4). She did,

however, reveal that the DfE had previously advised Adriana and LII not to contact Luxham authority in the first instance during the first campaign. Therefore, it appears that the first contact that Luxham council had was when June Poole approached them after getting the initial nod from the DfE. It is alarming that the DfE appear to have advised the campaigns to delay contact with the local authority and the quote above implies that the DfE should have taken a bigger role in determining a local need. Indeed, it continued:

"Merton understands that the DfE has to ensure public money is spent wisely. However, we deeply regret the distress and disappointment that the DfE's change of heart has caused to the many parents who have supported the school."

Nonetheless, campaigners and sponsors should shoulder some responsibility. In the other BFS cases, founder parents had reached out very early to the council. Although Amelie exhorted followers of the campaign to contact their councillor to ask for support, no official approach was made by LII. It is perhaps understandable that Luxham might therefore have reacted unfavourably if they had not been consulted. Following the second refusal, parent campaigners initially questioned the accuracy of Luxham's council's claims that they could accommodate all growth themselves, and sought a meeting. Amelie was convinced that the council were deliberately trying to block free schools as Luxham council was Labour-controlled. There was also a vocal 'Luxham free schools: no thanks!' grassroots campaign which had attempted to block several other campaigns locally, including Anne Frank, who responded by moving to an alternative focus area (Ch5).

In terms of Merton's failure to recognize a lack of need, Merton's other bids rationalized the need for those schools more in terms of quality, given the number of 'failing schools', rather than overall shortage of places locally. Although June spoke of meetings with MPs and councillors in the other local authorities, one of the councils changed from Conservative to Labour control during the campaigning stage and this may have contributed to the eventual failure of these two campaigns as well, given that a lack of local need was again one of the reasons cited:

"[The] DfE explained in their letter that both boroughs have surplus places in existing schools rated as good or better by Ofsted; and they also told us that it was unlikely that they would be able to find suitable, value for money sites in either location."

However, it was not just the local authorities who stood to lose politically. The DfE would have ultimately been more concerned about the worsening press around free schools than there was, say, when LII applied to open its first free school.

Amelie showed strongly ambivalent feelings towards Luxham council. Although she really saw them as the obstacle in preventing the free school opening, we will see in 8.4 that individuals within the authority were open to working with her further. Nonetheless, overall, failing to work with them sooner clearly hindered the campaign, which might have had more success in another location, as Anne Frank did. Ambivalence about free schools was fairly widespread locally. Despite several sympathetic media articles, one did quote the ‘Luxham free schools? No thanks’ campaign in claiming *“Evidence for free schools has shown that they can lead to increased social segregation, lower standards and are a way for profiteers to make money out of education”*, blaming them for the cutting of school building grants. Many parents did support ASP’s campaigns, but this was against a background of considerable doubts. How ASP sought to overcome these to establish considerable parental support is the focus of the rest of this section.

Community consultation: reframing local need

Although the sponsor-initiated origins of ASP were different from the other BFS, the early evidence of demand survey was similar. However, unlike SABS and DGA, there were no local public meetings for the campaign with LII. Nonetheless, word spread through several balanced and favourable articles in different online and print forms. ‘Street campaigning’ probably exposed the group to the most diverse views on the school and Lizzie diplomatically referred to these responses as ‘mixed’ and some parent campaigners therefore felt uncomfortable using this approach. However, Amelie was quite determined, and encouraged other parents to use an NSN leaflet defending free schools (NSN, 2013) to answer common concerns. Nonetheless, talking with both Lizzie and Amelie when campaigning highlighted their limited knowledge of the details. LII’Ss failure to respond to individual emails, and its simple redirections to the original LII school’s website, rather than fleshed-out-plans for Luxham, would have presented considerable constraints for those trying to envisage the school. This would not have helped local legitimacy.

The second time around, with Merton, there were many more public meetings, which were presented as opportunities to “ask June Poole anything” and quick turnarounds of online responses. However, it is unlikely that many outside the parent community would have heard about the plans, given the short timescale. Nonetheless, they were able to legitimize themselves considerably through their active local parent supporter base. Amelie lived directly in the centre of Luxham, and publicity photos used local landmarks. This was a far more focused, local campaign, than Anne Frank’s, for example. But raising their local credentials alone wouldn’t be enough to persuade parents to sign up. They needed more of a selling point, namely raising the spectre of local shortages of places.

Although one of the early newspaper articles during the first campaign highlighted Luxham’s growing population and shortage of school places, this was swiftly followed by the fact that Spanish was widely spoken locally, by the highest percentage of Latin-Americans in the UK, which is a fairly niche understanding of need. LII’s website also failed to justify a specific need in Luxham. Therefore, during the campaign, Amelie realized that ASP’s appeal needed to be widened to gain support:

“At the beginning I would say, ‘would you like your child to be bilingual?’ And... that was not the right approach, because lots of people would go ‘what’s she on about? She’s going to sell me something’. I.. changed that and I approached people saying, ‘I’m a mother, and I live in Luxham and my son is due to start school soon. Are you aware there are lack of school spaces in Luxham?’ And then people would be interested. Because that was.. going to affect them as well.”

Lizzie and Amelie’s publicity materials and tweets also began to refer to the proposal as “easing the pressure” on existing schools. After the original bid was submitted, Amelie produced a video where parents highlighted the school shortage as a motivator far more than in my early conversations with parents. By the second time around, the marketing strategy repeatedly reminded parent volunteers to emphasise the local place shortage.

Given this approach, and the figures mentioned in the newspaper, we can perhaps now understand better the campaigners’ disbelief when the council said they could accommodate all the anticipated extra demand. However, Merton’s campaign had a second prong: the rather more specific lack of bilingual education in Luxham, contrasting this with other bilingual state schools in neighbouring local authorities. In this way, Merton were also highlighting their uniqueness, which was

the key way in which ASP gained legitimacy with the four hundred families who signed up as first choice applicants.

Balancing distinction and mimesis in the local school market

People signed up, some because they speak Spanish and they want their child to be fully bilingual and biliterate. Some others because they struggled all their life to learn languages and they don't want their child to go through the same... ... some others because they don't like the model that the government is offering.... ...when you apply for a school for your children, what's the difference between one school and the other?.. In the model of education..? Not very much, so some of them.. were keen on this school because it was a different model... - Amelie

The main claim to distinction was loud and clear in the opening of ASP's otherwise sparse website:

"Most parents aspire to having their children exposed to culture and languages. In today's world it's a huge asset... ...Language immersion, to develop fluency with language and grammar, begins at an early age which is why we introduce our immersion programme on entering the school in reception (age 4). It is a key opportunity that only comes once – during their optimal window of language development"

Like SABS, this distinction was usually framed in terms of research on cognitive benefits and comparisons with the private sector:

"Sadly in this country, languages are not given sufficient priority in mainstream education. Unless you are educated privately, you rarely see children becoming fluent in a second language."

We already noted in 8.1 that the early parent campaigners highlighted the lack of fees regularly, and Merton also highlighted its success with Oxbridge entrance and proposed exchange visits to its international schools, which Amelie contrasted with the council's admittedly "*really good*" schools. As we can see from the opening quote of this subsection, many parents did buy in to these exclusivity-based arguments. But, like the other BFS, this was balanced alongside ASP's proposed similarities to existing schools.

If SABS' federation with All Saints was the "ultimate mimesis" (Chapter 7), ASP's plan to be built on LII in another city was pretty close, until LII began experiencing difficulties (8.1). The ability to point to LII'S policies, plans and curriculum was especially important given the inability to answer individual inquiries during the first campaign. However, LII was also a free school, and Adriana was at pains to point out similarities to other schools too: "*there's a normal routine, we follow the national curriculum. The only difference is we deliver it in both languages*".

With Merton, many parents were impressed by the professionalism of the website and meetings. As many of the parents had connections to multiple countries and heritages, the use of Merton's international schools instead of English state schools as a model may have been less of a concern. June Pool, however, did mention how they had reached out to, and learned from other bilingual schools in England as well. However, neither campaign explicitly worked with, approached or compared itself with the best local schools, unlike previous cases. This may well have happened over time if approved. However, their claims for distinction did appear to target an audience somewhat inconsistent with the local demographic, potentially costing them further legitimacy in some quarters.

Target audience

Though Amelie's quotes on page on p239 initially appear to assume a non-Spanish-speaking audience, they also indicate an attempt to counter an assumption that the school was primarily for Spanish speakers. In fact, Amelie admitted that Latin American families were not signing up in the numbers she expected. Indeed, when LII first proposed a second school, the meetings were first held in the affluent West of the city, an area popular with families from Spain, where Merton also proposed its other two free schools. Therefore, it appears that the Luxham-based Latin American population had never been the prime intended audience. Furthermore, promotional materials, the website and surveys were only in English, despite repeated requests by parent campaigners for Spanish resources. Previous research has highlighted how the Latin American community in similar areas often have less means as they are often not confident in English, and therefore are limited to lower-paid jobs (Kelsall, 2012). However, this also gives them less means to improve their English. Perhaps unsurprisingly, therefore, Amelie found many said they *"wanted their children to integrate.. So.. English, that was the main concern..."* However, Amelie also saw this as *"a huge mistake to think like that because, lots of them, their kids can't even speak Spanish properly.."* This is a contentious point. Many US Spanish-English bilingual programmes are rationalised based on a desire to improve mother tongue literacy first which, in turn, would facilitate greater progress in English (2.1). However, Amelie's rationale also appears to be based on a strict, fixed concept of bilingualism involving written and spoken fluency in two discreet languages, rather than a more multilingual view. A full examination of these arguments is beyond the present thesis. However, many families may have

felt even more put off if they had any inclination that their family's multilingualism was viewed as a deficit.

The campaigners found it hard to access the Latin-American community. ASP were aware of some playgroups that were in Spanish in the surrounding area, but could not find contact details, as they were not online. Obviously more affluent, networked groups were easier to approach and were therefore more likely to be represented amongst those signing up. Merton admitted that most people signed up through personal contacts, or two key nurseries, and the fact that the vast majority of materials were available only in English exacerbated this further. Amelie sought to overcome this by getting some materials translated for the second campaign, but this was not totally straightforward, as misunderstandings arose over nuanced details about the liberal Christian vision which appeared to make ASP incompatible with what Amelie understood to be more Conservative Latin American families. This is backed up by another open day where June tried to explain the 'broadly Christian ethos' as in no way teaching creationism and that children would learn about many religions, which might worry those with conservative beliefs more than a secular education would. Religion had become a barrier, but in an unanticipated way. The promotional video also did not feature a wide range of class backgrounds amongst the Spanish speaking community. There is no reason to think this was a deliberate attempt to exclude those with less capital who spoke Spanish, but since there had been a significant effort to recruit African heritage and working class English speaking families, the video may have inadvertently presented ASP as not primarily for the actually quite sizeable population of working class Latin-Americans.

Amelie had personally worked hard to try to overcome many obstacles. Through street campaigning she met families she wouldn't have through her own networks, and she pushed Merton's meetings in to parks where she knew diverse families might be. But there clearly was an assumption that the families would speak English well. A subtler assumption was that of the aspirational and responsible monolingual English speaker, who might regret the 'only once' opportunity for their child to become bilingual (p239). Like the other cases, there was also an assumption that self selection would inevitably favour those most 'suited', namely either Spanish and or English speakers, rather than those dominant in a third language. However, roughly half of Luxham's nursery-aged population at that time

fitted this latter demographic. When I asked Amelie about these families, she responded that:

"A: People probably would not put the bilingual school as a choice.

K: Why not?

A: Because if their kids don't speak Spanish or English, they want their child to go to a fully English-speaking school...

K: So, actually the school is not really aimed at those.. families?

A: I don't think so...

...K: In some ways, the selection would be a self-selection if it was a free school, is what you're saying?

A: Yeah, exactly. Exactly..."

However, when she compared ASP with the possibility of a bilingual stream in a council school, she was adamant that ASP would have been more inclusive, as the entry criteria were independent of language ability, which she was convinced council streams made a prerequisite.

"a free school would have been inclusive because, if you want to send your child there, you can apply to do it and, regardless of your background, your child would have gone in... Because, the bilingual free school really would have catered for all.. would be assuming that no children would speak Spanish, so they would really start from scratch with everyone, and the parents will... make a choice and if their daughter doesn't speak Spanish and doesn't speak English... ..they probably won't put them there."

This indicates a fundamental tension between the values of inclusivity and self-selection, to the implicit benefit of the bilingual programme, given that they could appear to be inclusive, when self selection would actually bring those more desired.

Like many campaigns, uncertainties over the site made many reluctant to commit, particularly those living further away, as the lack of an admissions lottery during the first campaign meant they might not get a place. The second time around, Merton's admissions lottery places might have helped to secure Spanish speakers from further away, allowing those with more means to travel to swell the support. However, this change in policy and implicit target audience was, in a way, too little, too late. Any increasing legitimacy amongst families in the wider area was ultimately pointless in the face of the lack of legitimacy with the council.

In summarizing 8.3, it is clear that both campaigns failed to secure the necessary legitimacy in a number of domains. Although both sponsors initially had good working relationships with the DfE, LII's capacity issues and both campaigns' lack of consultation with local authorities ultimately meant the ASP campaign was

never likely to be approved. However, it is unclear exactly where the blame for this lies, as the DfE themselves appear to have given unhelpful advice to the sponsors to delay contacting the local authority. It may be that the DfE had initially hoped it could push approval through despite the authority, and realized otherwise as free schools began to be slated.

With local families, although ASP managed to recruit significant support in the latter stages principally by highlighting its distinctive bilingual approach and the significant capital of Merton group to signal borrowed legitimacy, it had also missed opportunities. Self-selection was acknowledged, and though Amelie had worked hard to rethink campaigning, had translated some materials, and used street campaigning to reach more families, this was too little, too late to win a broad base of support in the key Latin American community. However, Amelie's persistence and hard-won support meant that she would not accept the ultimate constraint of the council denying a bilingual school. ASP was not going to be a free school, but could anything be salvaged? Several hundred families were keen, but what about the local authorities? Section 8.4 examines the emerging legacy.

8.4 Emerging values

In this section we examine how the campaign for ASP evolved after both sponsors withdrew and what the effect was on the project's core values. Of all the cases, ASP had the least developed set of values, given that it was never actually approved to open. However, like the other campaigns, implicit values were embodied in the emerging policies and campaigning practices. The impact on who appeared to be choosing demonstrates some signs of potentially aggravating social segregation within the Spanish speaking community. The only core value which survived ASP's journey thus far was the teaching of Spanish through an immersive approach. In order to protect this, ASP (principally Amelie) accepted the compromise of almost all other advantages associated with free schools. This ultimately shows what other BFS also claim: that opening a free school is merely an opportunity to shortcut potential bureaucracy involved in realising bilingual education by other means.

Working within the local authority

At the end of 8.3, we noted the dissatisfaction of ASP's parents with the assertion by Luxham local authority, accepted by the DfE, that there was no projected need for another school locally. The head of education for Luxham agreed to meet with the parents, and said they were, according to Amelie, *"keen to consider alternatives to setting up a bilingual school"*, due to the rising number of Spanish speakers in the area. Spanish-English bilingual education was suddenly still a possibility, although it would require individual existing head teachers to want this for their schools.

Around this time, Amelie met with an experienced bilingual teacher who lived in the city and began to plan potential models for working within state schools. Luxham invited Amelie to a cluster meeting of local heads and, although this was cancelled at the last minute due to a busy agenda, Amelie persisted and one headteacher expressed an interest, due to an increase in her Spanish-speaking student population. She had at least one bilingual Spanish-English teacher already working with these students, but the council said there was no budget specifically for a bilingual programme and Amelie was concerned that there was no plan for Spanish progression up the school. There were not enough staff currently who spoke Spanish to envisage a full bilingual stream, but Amelie was sure she could drum up voluntary support. That said, the headteacher was unsure about relying on volunteers and, at the time of writing, six months after the last meeting, Amelie had no new updates. Furthermore, Amelie was aware that her son was getting too old for a potential programme and the other parents' children would probably be ineligible too.

The key problems in Amelie's mind were the time that it would take any council programme to be initiated and differences in understanding about what a bilingual model entailed:

"When I had the meeting with the council they said, oh yeah, we can do a bilingual stream in certain schools, which is great, but... who knows about bilingual education in the council? No one, because they were telling me, oh 'cause we can have a teacher who speaks both languages.. Aha, it's not quite like that.. So it's going to be a long journey to get in to.. common understanding of what bilingual education is... especially in the setting that will be a four-form school, [with] one that's bilingual, it's going to be a minority.. How bilingual is that class going to be? That's my main thing with the council, it will take forever... ..because it's not a priority, so headteachers say, well, I have tonnes of other things on my mind, why should I take this on?"

However, Amelie obviously had no other choice now to realise the goal of bilingual education in Spanish in Luxham, and she was already accustomed to compromise in her journey between sponsors, evidenced by the changing degree of Spanish immersion.

How much Spanish?

In section 8.3 we noted that Merton were, like many other BFS sponsors, aware that LII'S 50/50 model would be hard to achieve given the pressures of early testing in English. However, Amelie also thought the Merton model was superior as more lessons would be delivered exclusively in Spanish. But would a council stream actually involve more, or less, Spanish? Given Merton's lack of UK experience, a council programme might have fewer legitimacy concerns, as an existing school would have an established track record. Any potential blip in the bilingual programme's performance would also bring in local authority support, before the DfE involvement, and most routines would be firmly established already, minimizing the ongoing legitimacy issues faced by Anne Frank and DGA, for example. Nonetheless, the council plan might be hard to win some over to, as Amelie noted of her son's school leaders: *"I was told by the head of.. reception and the nursery, oh, for us the priority is for the children to develop in English first."* Many Latin American families also favoured an 'English First' approach (p240), which could still undermine any plans to offer Spanish immersion in Luxham schools.

Like the previous cases, the presumption of offering Spanish, rather than another language, was rarely questioned. For Merton, it was obvious given their expertise in, and links to, Spanish-speaking countries. June also rationalised Spanish in terms of its increasing popularity over French with many parents, which could lead to possible business outreach opportunities. Interestingly, LII's name, promotional materials, and meetings with Adriana focused on the bilingual, rather than Spanish, goals, with the website quotes on pages 228-229 a good example. And, although some parents like Amelie actively sought Spanish because of their or their children's heritage, many parents were not bothered about the choice of language itself. Bilingualism in general and its advantages were the goal, although most usually referred to the alternative being French rather than any of the more widely spoken languages in Luxham. By targeting these parents seeking bilingualism in

general, the campaign was able to possibly undermine arguments of being for an exclusive niche, but this target audience also changed somewhat over time.

Changing target audience

In some ways, ASP appeared to have missed its main potential target audience somewhat, namely most of the local Spanish speakers. The local Latin American community groups were not much involved. Although we cannot ascertain definitively who was choosing due to data protection concerns, the parents I spoke with, and in the video, were limited to active choosers, and although most had connections to another language, they also spoke good English. The majority of committed parents still came through personal networks and, although some families with African heritage were recruited, this involved considerable effort by Amelie. The choosers were diverse, but underneath the diversity evident in the video, the choosers seemed to under-represent the large African heritage minority, speakers of a third home language, and Latin Americans in the area. 8.3 highlighted that the leaders were somewhat aware of this but were more focused on numbers than inclusivity.

In terms of a future council programme, Amelie claimed that a parallel class, or bilingual stream, rather than a whole school, still brought up issues of selection, as a council school might target Spanish speakers to the exclusion of English speakers as *“schools want results so they don’t want a class to be dragging because kids don’t know Spanish... ..head teachers want to see results. Obviously they want OFSTED to mark them well.”* This demonstrates just how much inclusion of English speakers was a more central value than Spanish speakers. The ASP project had made efforts all along to reassure non-Spanish-speaking English speakers (8.3) and, despite increasing awareness of the difficulties reaching Latin American families locally, and some effort to approach playgroups, the fact that many materials had not been translated made this harder. It could be possible that working with a school with an already large intake of these pupils might make reaching this group easier, but a continued preference for using English might form an ongoing constraint on realizing the dream of Spanish-English bilingual education.

Most importantly, the momentum created among the initial supporter families may have already been lost. As Amelie acknowledged:

"what I am doing with the council is not even going to be open, if it happens at all, that.. bilingual class would not start for a couple of years and maybe also one school would do it, and if it's a school, [a] class of 30 children."

If the ASP campaign survives, the target audience will have shifted again, and possibly more towards the local Spanish speakers already in Luxham's schools. Well, at least in one school initially.

To summarise 8.4, the future of Spanish-English bilingual education in Luxham is still being written. In order to have reached this place, though, one core value was protected, namely Spanish immersion across several curricular areas. All the other associated 'freedoms' of a free school, like the parents' choice of location, timescale, a possible preference in admissions and an ability to have a greater say in school governance than other schools were all, in the end, secondary values. A vaguely religious ethos, with Merton, was worth playing with, in order to see the campaign through, and even the particular model of bilingual education, or sponsor's own interests, were no longer important, with LII themselves facilitating the move to Merton. Bilingual education, in Luxham, was the protected core value, at least for Amelie and a committed few. Arguably, this was the only remaining selling point too, given the reasons for the refusal of the campaign (p235). However, the ability of Amelie and the council to persist in working together is something quite remarkable, given the lack of earlier consultation which might have created barriers. Not all parents would have the time, energy and determination to see this through. Nor would all local authorities give the space and time to explore further opportunities. Compromise was needed on all sides.

Conclusion: what went wrong?

In many ways the most obvious answer to how the campaigners for ASP failed to secure bilingual education through a free school is the failure to establish local legitimacy. However, in response to the first research question and strand, there was a notable lack of advocacy coalition building. The parents who were recruited did not constitute institutional entrepreneurs and lacked the experience, expertise and capital of parents in other campaigns. They also lacked the network of language community groups, which is particularly notable in their failure to

harness the potential of the Latin-American community locally. However, it is worth reminding ourselves that the parent campaigners were also not true founder parents and, given their dependency on LII, it is surprising that they rebounded at all when LII experienced troubles.

In considering the second research question, what freedoms were (planned to be) taken, the financial and strategic interests of both sponsors to expand operations may well have blinded them from establishing a local mandate, which they left largely to Amelie and some of the other parents. Crucially, however, this oversight meant that, in response to the third question, they failed to consult the local authorities early on, which meant considerable wasted effort. Although Merton group appeared to partner better with the parents, their pursuit of their own interests meant the potential to shift locations earlier, as Anne Frank had done, was therefore not recognized, and potential lessons learned from other BFS were also missed. However, the DfE itself appears to have misadvised the campaigns on this front and it appears that the ASP campaign, by now quite popular, was a victim of a power struggle over local school planning.

Given this situation, it appears remarkable that the local authority and Amelie were able to investigate continued opportunities to provide Spanish-English bilingual education. In response to the fourth research question then, the form of bilingual education emerging evolved remarkably to one which was much more focused on a group previously marginalized in marketing attempts by ASP: namely the local Latin-American community. However, this does indicate, as Amelie feared, that bilingual education in Luxham is presumed to be for those already fluent in the minority language, rather than the wider school-aged population. Nonetheless, given the desire of many Latin-American families to immerse their children in as much English as possible, any future programme based on a changed target audience might still continue to struggle with legitimacy issues in Luxham. There are clearly further questions around who bilingual programmes are intended to serve which need to be tackled but, most importantly, this case shows how parents with less capital and networks struggle to navigate the free schools process.

In a way, ASP's free school proposal was a momentum builder, which showed the possibilities that bilingual education could potentially offer in any form of state-

funded school. However, the timescale and range of stakeholders involved in any council-based plan limits the ability of parents to determine the language and location of parents' choosing compared with the other cases. Nonetheless, Amelie was perhaps still naïve about the considerable constraints of free schools legislation when she declared:

"the BFS would have been the shortcut. You would have a free school opening, showing the door. You can then work with the council.. you know, influence the council and maybe get the council to adopt.. within the existing schools.. If you have an example to show.. then they will be more likely to adopt it..."

... I spoke to one person and she's Labour and she's dead against the free school and I said, listen, what you're doing, you've been doing for years and I want to achieve.. I want to do a shortcut. And then work with the council..."

This ability to influence bilingual education practice and policy more widely was a dream shared by all four cases. Therefore, in the next chapter we will examine the use of capital, networks, legislative freedoms and relationships with the wider community and authorities across the quintain of cases, in order to highlight the potential for, and limitations of, free schools' legislation to secure innovation in language learning in England.

Chapter 9: Cross-case analysis: navigating constraints

Introduction

In this final data chapter, we discuss the results of the cross-case analysis by working through each research question in turn, thereby illuminating how different stakeholders involved in the quintain of BFS campaigns are navigating the legislative opportunity afforded them to secure bilingual education. Towards the end of the chapter, we will therefore be able to reflect more fully on the shape of the emerging bilingual free school institution. This, in turn, will enable us to consider how far such changes might represent innovation in language learning in England.

9.1 Forming a coalition with capital

This first section highlights the importance of institutional entrepreneurs who are not only skilled at brokering coordinative discourse (p63) but also able to utilise their own networks with high social capital. The cross-case analysis emphasises that the ability to retain support through considerable personal legitimacy also makes a difference, even when sponsors fail to offer the support anticipated.

Founder parent networks and expertise

Of all the cases in this thesis, St Alcuin (SABS) highlights just how far accessing prestigious networks can benefit your campaign. Although the founder parents downplayed their own role, the fact that two of them worked at one of the top independent schools in the country was a huge bonus for accessing significant resources in terms of governance and premises for events. However, it was their church affiliation which secured the CofE sponsor, partner school and headteacher, whereafter everything else “*just gave*” (7.1), including better relations with the council. SABS went even further than the studies cited in 2.2 by brokering the advice of three different academics on bilingualism with social, pedagogical and cognitive foci to build a formidable advocacy coalition. This required deep reflection and constant communication between the bricoleur executive head and project manager who had been handed control by the founder parents.

All four campaigns exhibited considerable institutional learning, benefiting from previous applications, but the last of these, SABS, benefited the most from learning from 'early mistakes' (Haunschild & Chandler, 2007). However, something SABS did not have, but both Anne Frank and De Gaulle Academy (DGA) enjoyed was a tight-knit language community with pre-existing institutions to tap in to, like the Cuban community in Miami (Ovando, 2003, p7). In contrast, the Anglo-Spanish project (ASP) never really established a home base in a particular language community, mainly attracting individuals with an interest in Spanish who were only loosely connected. Amelie and the other parents also lacked the capital of the founder parents of the other campaigns and ASP was also not a founder parent-initiated campaign. Furthermore, although Amelie had the enthusiasm and developed many of the communicative discourse skills necessary to gather support, she did not have the democratic participation expertise, for example, of Paul Webb at Anne Frank, so she struggled to broker the coordinative discourse necessary to build a lasting coalition.

The right sponsor

SABS' greatest asset recruited, then, was clearly the sponsorship of ClDB and, through this, the partnership with an existing CofE school and the services of their executive head. ClDB's record as a sponsor was also impeccable, unlike EES, who sponsored Anne Frank. This meant that both Anne Frank and DGA were presented with additional legitimacy issues which they handled differently, in close consultation with (and with some pressure from) the DfE. For Anne Frank, their considerable parent capital and expertise, notably in the institutional entrepreneurial figure of Paul, meant that they took over governance responsibility, managing to navigate a reduction in German before, in the third year, the services and expertise of EES in language learning could be properly utilised again. DGA had a rather abrupt change of sponsor at the last minute before opening, which chimes with Shelby-Caffey's (2008) participants' resentment, which was felt by many DGA early adopters as it became clear that STRATA's sponsorship would mean a reduction in French, although this was complicated by a change in location too. There was a clear clash of values for some in DGA, especially given the sizeable parent community by then. This contrasts with SABS, who partnered early on with ClDB, before they had recruited many families, allowing smoother relations. Furthermore, the values of SABS' parent group being

first and foremost Christian meant that the founders were actually delighted to hand over significant control to a trusted CofE sponsor.

If we consider ASP, however, the relationships with their first sponsor, LII, were chaotic, with parents being handed information very late and almost being used simply to drum up demand. In contrast, ASP's second sponsor, Merton, did involve Amelie and others more but, crucially, neither sponsor understood the local situation and norms sufficiently (Mintrom & Norman, 2009, p653).

Recruiting early adopters

All four campaigns ultimately gathered plentiful support by the time they submitted their bids to the DfE. However, it is worth contrasting again the capital of early adopters of the successful three campaigns with ASP's. Both DGA and Anne Frank benefited enormously in the early stages by being embedded in the French/German language speaking communities. This meant, when issues over the Anne Frank site arose later, Paul's experience and skills in democratic participation were utilized to rally 'troops' (Sabatier & Weible, 2007, p201) to help identify a site. Meeting parents one to one to reassure them also created an involved community before the school was even open. DGA's experience differed, as many French-speaking parents left before opening, causing a considerable threat to legitimacy for some time post-opening. Here Charles, as head and bricoleur, was key as he was able to establish coordinative discourse with a significant core of parents in order to just about allow the school to open. The fact that he retained these parents while creating 'new audiences' (Suchman 1995, p587) shows how key he was to DGA's legitimacy.

SABS' experience is somewhat harder to understand. There was no home language community, although the church aspect was an attractive draw to many groups in the highly diverse community. Furthermore, many parents indicated that it was the bilingualism, rather than French itself, which was attractive, suggesting it was the significant symbolic capital which was desired (p64). However, the fact that admissions were completely reset, removing any chance of the first round of applicants getting a place the second time, might have been expected to cause considerable legitimacy issues. Nonetheless, if we understand this campaign as a more locally-based campaign, situated in an area of intense need for places, new audiences were not difficult to identify.

It is important to note that charisma by itself was not enough. All four campaigns benefited from a strong sense of moral entrepreneurship (Suchman, 1995), particular citing the importance of passing on bilingual education to the wider community, as conduits of hope. However, DGA's founders pre-opening were not as charismatic as Paul and the enthusiasm of Amelie, who worked hard to retain momentum between campaigns, still wasn't enough to keep momentum going after the second sponsor failed. Her coalition vapourised. This was, no doubt, due to a lack of 'home base' and a lack of capital and experience among the other parents she had recruited. ASP's parent group included no teachers and nobody with financial or governance experience, unlike the other campaigns. However, what DGA and SABS show is that many roles can be successfully passed on from founders to new institutional agents, acting as bricoleurs, to navigate the post-approval complexities.

Shifting power: head teachers and governing bodies

Above, we noted the importance of Charles as bricoleur in DGA and David similarly became key figurehead for the SABS campaign, showing that institutional entrepreneurship may indeed be simply a stage before a transitioning of power to other institutional actors. However, unlike Pagden's 2015 model of discrete stages in shifting temporal agency, the role of parents in particular seems to be ongoing, so agency and power are more recursive. This is evidenced by Paul Webb at Anne Frank, who was handed power again as chair of governors after the first head left. Parent power is Anne Frank's strength - its governing body is unique in its almost total dominance by parents of the school: parents with considerable capital. However, both other governing bodies currently still enjoy chair or vice-chair positions occupied by founder parents, which is still considerable power. Nonetheless, it is worth noting that there is some evidence of institutional control by both DGA and SABS sponsors, particularly in removing admissions procedures favourable to early parents. However, comparing the two campaigns also shows considerable dissent still at DGA, with Charles working hard to establish coordinative discourse, unlike SABS where no such dissent was apparent, even though the removal of all places for early applicants had a far greater impact. As noted in chapter 7, SABS' founders were happy to trust the experience of the SABS team on almost all points and, crucially, saw some of their policy suggestions still

adopted, which was not the same as DGA's parents with STRATA, although Charles did listen and change pedagogical practices from time to time. The difference is that the control of SABS by David and ClDB was more subtle and there from the start, which made questioning it seem harder, especially given the allusion to a higher power in the justification of the name change "*after much prayer*".

ASP's campaign never reached the stage of a shadow governing body and, although Merton group involved Amelie more, the parents never had the same say and weren't involved in writing the bid. The control by ASP's sponsors meant that parents were unable to answer more in-depth questions about admissions and this lack of coordinative discourse ultimately prevented important questions being asked about contacting the authorities. It also meant that the key Latin American potential target group were under-recruited. We will return to the distribution of power in 9.2.

First, to summarize 9.1, in answering the sub-question 'which networks and resources are campaigners able to deploy', each successful campaign was able to recruit from several different networks and resources, with either a solid base in the second language community or church community. These home bases also brought significant additional capital on to governing bodies and helped secure suitable sponsors. However, ASP lacked the home base, had inexperienced parent campaigners lacking capital and lacked sponsor-parent coordinative discourse over key aspects of the bid. It is therefore surprising that Amelie was able to carry on at all, which is testament to her personal legitimacy and charisma, in common with other entrepreneurial figureheads. However, charisma alone is insufficient, as ASP's failure ultimately demonstrates.

9.2 Utilising legislative freedoms

In turning to the second sub-question, this section will show that, despite initial claims of bilingual innovation, the three open schools ultimately made little use of most legislative freedoms available. However, those freedoms which they did use appear to have positioned them advantageously in their local school markets, in line with Lubienski's findings on education markets in general (2009, p39). This section is therefore split in two, in order to reflect the framework suggested by

Lubienski that markets encourage more administrative innovation than process or product innovations.

Administrative freedoms

At the end of 9.1 we noted that, administratively, parents had a much larger say than in community schools in the decision making and governance of all campaigns, particularly in Anne Frank. All three successful campaigns had founders or early adopters in key governing body positions, but Anne Frank was almost entirely governed by parents at the school. This would be almost impossible in other state schools and, although not highlighted in existing literature, parent power is a key freedom for these free schools, albeit constrained by the transfer of power to sponsors in DGA and SABS.

Administratively, all four campaigns used limited freedoms over setting their admissions to prioritise original supporters who were widely distributed. Both Anne Frank and DGA's policies were originally very similar, unsurprisingly, given their shared sponsorship in the early stages. Both prioritized siblings, starting with year 2, then year 1 allocations in the first year, giving priority to early adopters' children once again. Although the intake of Anne Frank may not be as linguistically or ethnically diverse as neighbouring schools, there is no evidence of social segregation, so the lottery remains. In contrast, at DGA, with a change of sponsor, evidence of social segregation and a disappointingly low first intake, leaders first changed admissions to prioritise pupils eligible for the pupil premium (who would also bring more money) and then removed the lottery completely. Such tinkering to admissions would not be possible in other types of schools.

SABS ended up favouring neither most early adopters nor widely-distributed French speakers as it had no lottery. Instead, it went against the CofE advice and reserved places for church goers, although this went uncontested, possibly as most existing CofE schools reserve a far higher amount of places for faith adherents. Parents in all three successful campaigns also spoke of moving closer to the school to guarantee a place, which suggests that sponsors would find it harder to actively target a niche market (see p30), on which the market relies, if this was a more marginalized group. Therefore, although Lubienski (2009) found markets allow suppliers to target their offering and select families more than parents select them,

this is also a highly constrained freedom that largely reflects the desires of those with more capital, although sponsor control means that even this is not a given.

Another key administrative freedom which often worked in parents' favour was the short timescale. ASP were clear as to why they were pushing for a second attempt so soon after the first failed: otherwise their children would be ineligible. In the three successful campaigns, schools were open within three years of being conceived and SABS made the contrast with the years of consultation which would be required to make their partner school a bilingual one (p200). The short timescale also appeared to limit opposition for DGA and SABS due to the short statutory consultation period required. However, Anne Frank admitted that the short timescale was also a big constraint as it meant that leaders were overwhelmed and they suffered a high turnover of staff, similar to Gebhard (2002). Finally, the switch of timescale at SABS by delaying for a year, and resetting admissions so none of the original planned intake were thereafter eligible, also removed this parental advantage.

Cirin (2014) concluded that financial advantages were the only significant freedoms for academies in England (2.4 p19). However, with BFS, this appeared to play out differently in each campaign, highlighting the fragility of funding and its potential to be a significant constraint, rather than freedom. Although each campaign benefited from the financial and human resources of its sponsor, the amount of support varied between sponsors. DGA, for instance, massively under-recruited families and needed significant financial support in year one. For SABS and ASP, it appeared that the proposed partner schools stood to gain significantly: All Saints school was a small school and partnership would allow pooling of costs, as LII would have achieved if ASP had opened. For both SABS and ASP, partnerships with the private education sector were also highlighted which, although not a unique feature of free schools, may be far easier to negotiate before a school is open. Furthermore, the respective private school institutions stood to gain by exemplifying their commitment to working for the 'public benefit' through free school sponsorship (Wilde et al, 2015). It is clear, however, that such involvement was far from a case of financing product innovation. So was there any evidence of product or process innovation in the BFS?

Product & process freedoms

Lubienski (2009) argues that it is really only innovations of product which facilitate choosing by parents. One freedom which straddles process and administrative freedoms is the freedom to hire unqualified staff. All four campaigns mentioned the potential to reward staff differently, but it is interesting that they also generally forsook the freedom to hire unqualified staff. Anne Frank navigated this by keeping German-speaking teachers and assistants qualified elsewhere as peripatetic or support staff, rather than class teachers and, although SABS said originally it would hire foreign-trained staff who they would support to QTS, this was not the case in the first year. This limitation on the number of bilingual staff recruited therefore severely constrained the ability to deliver a bilingual curriculum.

Despite the freedom to choose otherwise, all four campaigns highlighted following the national curriculum. Nonetheless, they all chose some freedom over the language of delivery. This plan to offer the curriculum in both languages was innovative, taking in its widest definition (p68). However, each campaign started off intending to offer 50% immersion in another language but drastically reduced this when faced with staffing issues and, most importantly, under pressure from the DfE to prioritise teaching and testing in English. Although Anne Frank appears to be moving forward to re-introducing some immersion again, DGA's leaders now speak of their school as being 'language focused' rather than bilingual, although some parents were not happy about this. The way DGA tackled some dissent was to offer 'social French' at lunchtimes and by providing extra-curricular French in an extended day until up to 7pm, which SABS similarly plans to do.

Although a less tangible 'ethos' might be hard to pinpoint analytically as either product or process, the choosing of a faith-based ethos in SABS remained unchallenged, once again showing the power of early founders' decisions. Again, this is not something that can be easily changed in existing schools. The choice of language for immersion was also a de facto 'choice' of the founders (or early adopters in SABS' case). Again, this is a freedom unparalleled in existing schools. The data chapters also outline a degree of freedom over the location of the school, a tangible 'product' for parents when choosing. In Anne Frank's case, parents threatened to withdraw support unless the school was in their neighbourhood and

worked hard to identify potential buildings there. However, for the other cases, the availability of suitable buildings in the area which the EFA could secure was a significant constraint.

In summary of 9.2, then, we can see that not only were legislative freedoms under-used by all four campaigns, but they were also severely constrained. It appears that innovation, which in its widest sense includes the type of bilingual education proposed (even if not enacted), is much harder to achieve with the multiple concurrent priorities of being a new school. Many freedoms were eschewed completely, such as the freedom to hire unqualified staff. Therefore, like Berends (2015) noted of schools of choice in general, 'free' schools almost appear to be a false umbrella, given the limited range of freedoms they have available to enact, coupled with the isomorphic constraints and failure of the market mechanisms, which we turn to in the next section. It does appear that the freedoms most used were administrative, principally through flexibility over admissions to attract different groups. In addition, one significant freedom all four campaigns shared was the power given to founder parents and early adopters to determine the language, location of school and religious affiliation and, particularly in SABS' case, the support of private institutions and a network with considerable capital to govern the school.

9.3 Establishing legitimacy

9.2 highlighted a significant number of constraints for those seeking to establish bilingual free schools. So, in 9.3, we consider how the BFS cases in the present study gained legitimacy despite these constraints. The cross-case analysis highlights the significance of institutional bricoleurs, adept at coordinating discourse between stakeholders with differing interests, particularly in response to the intense coercive isomorphic pressure of central government regulations outlined above. Mostly, the BFS campaigns responded with compromise and flexibility. However, sponsor control of discourse and institutional learning were equally important for SABS and DGA. Managing communicative discourse was also important for gaining public legitimacy and we see how, in balancing mimesis of

the best local schools with their own distinctiveness, BFS appear to be targeting their offering, at least in the early stages, towards families with greater capital.

Relations with the DfE

Like Mehisto and Genesee's cases (2015), all the BFS planned carefully in order to tackle constraints. They worked hard to pragmatically legitimize themselves with lists of skills and experience and detailed policies in their DfE applications. The depth of research in to specific questions anticipated by SABS also demonstrates institutional learning and, in addition, they were able to flag up significant expert advice on bilingualism, which Mehisto and Genesee (ibid) also highlight is a key response to constraints. For SABS, it seemed to work. Like Giles' (2010) and Gebhard's (2002) cases, in the USA, BFS' compromise and flexibility over the degree of bilingualism was also significant in securing ongoing relationships with the DfE. However, leaders from all three successful cases also confided that there was little choice but to comply with this coercive isomorphic pressure (Di Maggio and Powell, 1983) by putting English first, due to the need to sit three tests, conducted in English only, in the first three years of schooling.

The leaders of all three successful campaigns spoke positively of their DfE advisor but Charles at DGA was most deft at demonstrating how he played the 'game' by having a "*traditional curriculum*" while still incorporating French where possible. Anne Frank's case also shows that, once a positive Ofsted report is obtained, DfE praise can then be used to bolster legitimacy with potential parents too in a positive feedback loop. This also meant that leaders were able to use DfE advice to defend more controversial decisions at times. Therefore, although national regulators placed considerable pressure on school leaders, they were able to turn this to their advantage. Of course, the DfE, with a new coalition government in place, had their own legitimacy concerns, given the deeply unpopular introduction of free schools. It is perhaps unsurprising, then, that they exhibited so much control.

Local authorities and public legitimacy

In line with existing research (see 2.4 pp41-42), the cases received mixed levels of support from their local authorities. This support did not actually follow party lines, necessarily, as SABS appeared to enjoy the greatest support (once their

prestigious partners were on board) and more politicians were Labour than Conservative in their area. SABS' continued desire to coordinate admissions with its authority also helped, exemplified ultimately by the resetting of admissions, which would prevent families from removing their child after taking up council spaces. However, the need for school places around SABS was also the most intense of all four cases and its local authority had already expanded existing schools as much as they could. They had also started talking to the council very early on, as did DGA and Anne Frank, whose flexibility over location by negotiating with three local authorities in the early stages was a useful strategy which allowed them to discard Luxham, where ASP were later trying to establish. Indeed, we can contrast the successful campaigns' approach with ASP which failed to engage early with local authorities. However, this lack of engagement appeared to be tacitly supported by both the DfE and first sponsor. Nonetheless, if the lack of support had been realized earlier, ASP might have demonstrated the flexibility of Anne Frank and relocated to another area, especially given the ambivalence of both sponsors about the exact location. Indeed it is also worth noting how critical the shortage of school places was in bolstering the legitimacy of each campaign with the DfE applications, discussions with the local authority and reaching out to the public and potential families to join the school. ASP's failure to fully establish the need for school places with the local authority was ultimately a large part of its failure.

Nonetheless, public legitimacy was also threatened for each campaign.

Nonetheless, despite negative feedback focusing on their free school status, even ASP's campaign shows that local authorities attempted to look beyond the vehicle to the opportunity. The fact that ASP were subsequently able to handle negotiations with the council over potentially opening a bilingual stream in existing schools indicates a flexibility on both sides. In ASP's case this ended up being solely down to the key, by now, entrepreneurial figure of Amelie. However, without a wide-based coalition, it remains to be seen how far ASP will be able to achieve its bilingual education goals.

One of the key struggles in seeking public legitimacy was over the site for each school: not only in identifying one which parents could envisage working in their busy lives, but also one which the wider public found acceptable. All campaigns struggled to identify a site, but similarly distinguished clearly between the role of the EFA in identifying and financing a site and that of the DfE in approving and

supporting the school leaders pre-opening. However, local authorities also played a part, particularly with DGA's campaign. First, Charles indicated that it was the council's failure to approve planning which meant that they had to move to a temporary site but also that the council itself wanted the original site for a proposed sixth form college. This meant that Charles had an important role as bricoleur of the interests of families signed up, the EFA and the council with their competing interests. Furthermore, by coordinating the discourse of still being a 'language focused' school with an international feel, despite a massive reduction in French, he managed to retain enough of the original supporters to open while creating new audiences (Suchman 1995, p587). He also worked hard to hone communicative discourse about the highly controversial parkland site to such an extent that it did not put potential applicants off. Despite the site ultimately being beyond the 'zone of tolerance' (see Dorner 2010) of local families, Charles demonstrated considerable personal legitimacy. Ultimately, this meant the biggest compromise to ensure legitimacy was the removal of the admissions lottery, which thereby, once and for all, removed the ability of critics to claim that it was not a local school.

SABS was able to signal broader public support than DGA to the DfE and the public during consultation through its use of surveys over the language choice and focus groups pre-opening and by far the biggest mass leafleting campaign. However, the second survey over a name change also indicated significant control of discourse, when it disappeared and the less popular 'St Alcuin' was selected "*after much prayer*". The resetting of admissions, by removing advantage for most original supporters, also helped secure public legitimacy. Most importantly, however, SABS was also adept in balancing its distinctiveness with isomorphic reassurances in dealing with parents. Coupled with its active control of discourse, this inevitably limited dissent.

Balancing distinctiveness and mimesis in the local school market

All four campaigns were highly successful in recruiting significant interest from local families, even before opening. This was achieved in each case by carefully balancing claims of distinctiveness with both conscious and tacit (p81) mimesis of other schools.

The distinctiveness of offering a bilingual curriculum was certainly a draw in each case. However, the language of immersion was less often raised as a point of distinction. The exception was DGA, where the term 'bilingual' was entirely removed, albeit leaving French lessons, French cultural practices and the name of a French hero. Nonetheless, the community of language speakers at DGA was still a draw two years in and even more so in Anne Frank. But the bilingual nature was not the only point of distinction.

Each school, in different ways, aimed to position itself alongside those in the private sector, consistent with existing research on free schools (Higham, 2014; Morris, 2015b). ASP's second sponsor, Merton, ran a number of private schools internationally and publicized its resulting financial strength at open days. SABS used its relationship with OHS, a top international school, even more tangibly to host its open days, in addition to governance support. More subtly, its choice of blazer and tie, like DGA, alluded to private schools and, to some parents, discipline. In this sense, they appeared to be consciously using an elite ethos as a proxy for technical success (Suchman, 1995, p593). An extended day and small school size were also distinctions for DGA and, for Anne Frank, small class sizes were also similar to the private sector.

The schools' partners were less often raised as points of distinction. This may be due to the rather controversial nature of academy and free school sponsorship in general, but also because several of the sponsors concerned had their own legitimacy issues in other schools. The exception is SABS, where its CofE sponsor had an excellent reputation in supporting existing state-funded schools and SABS were also able to highlight significant partnerships with several universities. This also meant they were able to defend more controversial points and control discourse further by referring to a range of unspecified advice sources.

Faith affiliation was not always a clear cut point of distinction by itself. For ASP, it caused more confusion than attractiveness in the Latin American community. SABS' CofE status, however, was a huge draw for parents. Some might find this surprising in such a diverse area, but there were very few CofE schools available and, furthermore, the CofE flag in particular facilitated what I termed in chapter seven the 'ultimate mimesis'. Not only did SABS enjoy the perfect sponsor in its CofE local diocesan board, which had numerous successful free schools already

but, additionally, a partnership with one of its existing state-funded voluntary aided schools. This meant that the partner's existing staff and students were recruited for events, pictures were used in publicity and its policies, curriculum and networks could all be exploited. Most importantly, the two schools shared an executive headteacher, giving parents tangible confidence. This type of mimesis as partnership was less successful for ASP in its first campaign, partly because its sponsors' existing school was struggling itself and also because its resources were not exploited at events. Nonetheless, all four campaigns stated that they would follow the national curriculum and policies evident on websites and other options, such as term length and timetables, were identical to other local schools, which they consciously highlighted in some open days. This was not just normative isomorphism, but a deliberate choice to forego freedoms available (9.2).

This certainly suggests that the proposed bilingual innovation, while aiding distinction, was also sheltered by mimetic and normative isomorphism of almost all other aspects of school life. In a way, the schools were handling their uncertain positions by appealing to the common denominator of the overarching institution of primary schooling more than by focusing on distinction and reform (p79; Scott & Meyer, 1991). In this sense, they also echo both Peters (2005, p35) in deploying stock responses which follow a logic of appropriateness in order to normatively pass as legitimate; and Lubienski (2003, p423) in reserving curriculum innovation as distinction for non-core areas while mimetically and normatively conforming in core areas.

Target audience

The question now faces us as to how far the distinctiveness of BFS and their mimesis of the private sector indicate the seeking of a more desirable target audience as an explicit, or implicit, strategy to gain legitimacy.

Three of the four campaigns spent most of their pre-approval time networking within the second language community and the mainly middle-class organizations to which the founders belonged. However, all four campaigns ended up reaching out further. Part of this may be due to coercive isomorphic pressure from regulators to prove themselves as legitimate schools in terms of serving the wider community. However, it would also appear that over-relying on the second language community put DGA at risk when both the sponsor and site change meant

many French speakers withdrew support. Charles, head of DGA, and the sponsor STRATA, responded in a number of ways, including slowly changing the admissions policy to favour those eligible for the pupil premium and removing the lottery. However, before concluding that the target audience had therefore changed completely, existing parents were still actively recruiting from French-speaking networks and Charles used private day nurseries to drum up interest, which are broadly more associated with middle class parents.

SABS started with a different target audience from DGA. They did not target the French-speaking community and appeared to reach out far earlier to a wider sector of the local population through surveys and focus groups (see above). However, open days were held some distance away in the formidable venue of the top private international school and several parents said that a lack of public transport and uncertain site meant they ruled the school out. David, SABS' executive head, admitted the advantage of attracting parents who were more invested, but the decision to reset admissions ultimately removed the privilege of those who were risk takers the first time round. Nonetheless, all three successful cases show that an involved community (particularly Anne Frank); a generally international feel (notably DGA) and associations with elite institutions (SABS) created a *habitus* familiar to the already privileged (p64). Individual parent interviews mirrored existing research highlighting that the majority, and especially working class choosers, prefer local schools and certainty, established reputations and therefore choose conservatively (p70), meaning the BFS are less actively chosen by many groups. Despite the niche target audience, it does appear from Anne Frank and DGA's success that, despite considerable opposition, BFS can gain enough cultural endorsement from actors with the 'right' capital to gain legitimacy from these groups alone (Deephouse & Suchman, 2008, p55). However, both cases never tested this to the limit and it appears that coercive isomorphic pressure from regulators, and society at large in DGA's case, meant that concessions were made.

If we turn to the failed case, ASP, we note that the largely English-only publicity actually created a barrier for many in the Latin American community and, therefore, the school was at risk of becoming associated with more affluent sectors of the Spanish-speaking population, reinforcing divides among language-speaking communities similar to research on complementary schools (p44). It was also clear

in ASP that families who spoke neither Spanish nor English at home were not presumed to be a target audience and, although SABS, for example, tried to prepare for this in their bid and policies, leaflets were only ever provided in English, not the numerous other languages spoken locally. Therefore, it appears that BFS appear to be targeting mainly speakers of English or the second language speakers chosen by the school, and principally from middle class communities, although some efforts are being made to counter this with admissions policy changes.

To conclude 9.3 then, BFS appear to be gaining legitimacy through a combination of balancing their distinctiveness with conscious and tacit mimesis of the best, often private, schools. The role of bricoleurs able to identify new audiences, broker discourse between different stakeholders and respond flexibly with compromise was also key, which ASP did not have to the same extent as the other campaigns. Most of the legitimization was therefore pragmatic and subtly normative (pp73-4). However, personal, moral legitimacy, particularly through the key bricoleur figures and conscious strategy were also important in navigating the immense isomorphic pressure from both regulators and the public at large in order to guarantee their opening. We noted above that this often involved significant compromise of the target audience and degree of second language immersion. The final section now examines the impact of this legitimacy struggle on the emerging values of the BFS quintain.

9.4 Emerging values

In 9.3 we noted that, in the process of gaining legitimacy with regulators, local parents and the public at large, significant compromises were negotiated by the institutional bricoleurs. We now consider the impact of these compromises and the nature of the freedoms afforded in 9.2 on the values of bilingual free schools as an emergent institution.

Who are bilingual free schools serving?

Is there any evidence that BFS are serving an elite population, as hypothesised from existing literature at the end of Chapter 2, and in line with the apparent target audience outlined above? The sparse data available from the national pupil

database for the two open schools seems to raise more questions than it answers. DGA's intake is highly diverse ethnically but it does not take its fair share of children eligible for free school meals, particularly compared to its next door neighbour. Therefore, there might be some reason to believe in a micro-segregation effect, confirmed by conversations with parents. However, is this reflective of a deliberate targeting of the elite? The removal of an admissions lottery and prioritizing those eligible for the pupil premium in admissions appear to suggest they are not, but the use of blazers (unlike its sponsor's other schools), French name and a highly-involved international parent community suggest otherwise. Anne Frank's data shows the opposite of DGA: they take their fair local share of children eligible for FSM but are less ethnically diverse than almost all other local schools, except their nearest neighbour. However, many families at Anne Frank chose not to disclose their ethnicity and, furthermore, it is impossible right now to determine whether the increased number of children with EAL are French or German speakers and, therefore, whether there is a potentially unrepresentatively low intake of children who speak neither of the school's languages. Similarly to existing research on free schools (p46) it is too early to say definitively whether social segregation is occurring.

Although we have no intake data for SABS and ASP, their own data and observations highlight that, for SABS, there is little concern that the school will not represent the religious and ethnic diversity of its area, despite its CofE affiliation. This may be due to the established reputation of CofE schools as legitimate local schools but there was evidence that some parents were choosing the CofE affiliation for its potentially less Asian intake than other local schools. Certainly, SABS' early recruitment featured many associations with elite partners, but the resetting of admissions removed most early adopters' privilege and, once the site was secured, renewed marketing in a local premises became possible. It will be interesting, over time, to note whether this is sufficient to challenge data from Higham (2015) suggesting faith and private-sponsored free schools take fewer pupils eligible for FSM.

In terms of power and language planning agency, it is clear from each case that parents enjoyed more power than in other existing schools. However, it was only in Anne Frank that parents continued to enjoy most of this power and it seems the history with their particular sponsor is largely responsible. Their case, then, shows

that existing research which demonstrates that a lack of leadership vision often results in language learning innovation failure (pp42-43) can be challenged when parents as language planners are given increased power. Contrast Anne Frank with DGA, who started with the same sponsor and strong founder parent power, but increasingly found STRATA asserting a more local, less French ethos, often through structural means such as reshaping governing body makeup. In SABS, the handover of control was amicable, but early parents still helped choose the language and educational partners. Therefore, although there is repeated evidence that BFS are able to serve the interests of early parents as language planners disproportionately by choosing language and location, sponsors (or the council in ASP's case) may mitigate this and redefine who the schools are serving.

In all four cases there was a tacit acceptance that there may be some social self-selection into the school. Comments by stakeholders in several cases, exemplified by nursery leaders close to those at Anne Frank, seemed to suggest that free schools legislation is particularly appropriate for those who are more privileged as they are better able to take risks. This goes against the grain of existing literature, principally from the USA, which extols the ability of market reforms to provide niche schools for marginalized groups (p35). The bilingual free schools emerging certainly do not explicitly seek to serve these minority groups. Indeed, the language planning of the parents, regulators and sponsors involved with BFS is also, therefore, helping to shape the status and hierarchy of languages in England.

It is worth briefly noting again how the BFS in England so far, as reflected in these four case studies, are highly dependent on a lack of school places (9.2) and a large enough population of speakers of the other language. Therefore, the BFS institution appears to be both serving and reflecting the interests of families in the London and South-East (i.e. London commuter) areas. Thus, although the emerging BFS institution is an English institution, it is also a South-Eastern institution, given that currently no campaigns in other areas have been approved.

Reinforcing a hierarchy of languages

In each of the four cases presented here, the story is the same: despite starting campaigning with a promise of fifty per cent language immersion in two languages, the non-English language was dramatically reduced, particularly once the schools were open in DGA and SABS' case. The result was a clear message: English comes

first. From name changes (German Grundschule to Anne Frank), through recruiting English monolingual staff, overwhelmingly English displays and signs, moves to English-only monolingual publicity and newsletters, and 'protecting' core curricular instruction as English only, the message was clear. It was English which counted most. Campaign leaders were clear that this was due to the immense coercive isomorphic pressure which national compulsory baseline testing at age four, English phonics testing at age six and standardized tests at age seven presented, all of which are only conducted in English. However, several leaders also rationalized the dominance of English as preparing their students for British life (David at SABS) and promoting inclusivity as the common language of society (Stella in Anne Frank). For SABS, discussion of 'British values' (increasingly commonplace in English schools) was tangibly bolstered by CofE affiliation, which is a very English institution, and it was notable that far less of their publicity talked about French cultural practices than DGA.

Nonetheless, it was DGA who actually moved furthest away from the immersion model, ultimately deeming their school as 'language-focused' rather than bilingual. Given their change of sponsor to a non-language-focused one, coupled with the legitimacy concerns at Anne Frank and other BFS pioneers at the time, this is perhaps unsurprising. Although, like other free schools, they promoted the ideal of 'social learning' of French, this was little evident and there appeared to be a distinct clash of ideals between founder parents and sponsor over the core values. This was most evident in discussions over whether to stream the classes to allow more French provision, which went against the inclusive ideals of many, particularly Charles and STRATA, and was, therefore, not adopted. However, changes to admissions also reflected a changing target audience. Like SABS, DGA and ASP's reductions in the second language prior to opening also reflected institutional learning from Anne Frank and others' cases, demonstrating that value drift is often an inevitable part of diffusion of innovation in an emerging institution (Schmidt, 2011 p61). But hope still exists, as Anne Frank seemed to be increasing the amount of German once it was assured of a positive outcome from its first Ofsted inspection and SABS were challenged to dig even deeper in to academic research and form partnerships with researchers to ensure deeper thinking and alternative bilingual methodologies. However, the result has yet to be seen and indications at present are that bilingual free schools offer little more than the best

existing language-focused state schools, other than perhaps comprising an intake with more speakers of the target second language.

One notable impact of the language planning taking place through the emerging institution of BFS is not only that English comes first, but also which other languages are given status by being the target languages of the programme. May (2000) and Ovando (2003) have highlighted that schooling in minority languages can raise their status and impact broader ideologies around language learning in general. Although much of this discussion goes beyond the present thesis, it is worth noting the implicit language hierarchy which is emerging as a result of which BFS are approved and proceed to opening (see Appendix 10). As part of the wider study, I tracked campaigns for other schools offering immersion in Portuguese, Polish, Welsh, Mandarin and Russian as well as French, German and Spanish (See Appendix 1). Only the last three were approved and proceeded to opening, once again reinforcing a second rung in the hierarchy of the 'big three' dominating not only secondary MFL provision but now primary bilingual immersion. This dominance is reflected perfectly in SABS' early decision to survey parents on which language to offer, based on the British Council's 2013 languages of the future report. Not only did they limit the survey to the top five, which were not spoken widely in their area, but, more significantly, Arabic and Mandarin were removed due to their 'difficult scripts'. In addition, David, executive head, admitted that the choice of a French saint's name was deliberate in highlighting that they were not a bilingual school offering '*Asian languages*'. The overall lack of free school campaigns from other even more widely spoken languages in England indicates a fourth rung in the hierarchy, as these language community groups did not feel empowered enough to even attempt a campaign.

Although each campaign spoke of welcoming and respecting other languages, first and foremost DGA, Charles acknowledged that French was what the 'market' would tolerate as bilingual education and DGA in particular highlighted the significant cultural capital associated with French. However, this language hierarchisation means that, once again, the majority of primary bilingual learners (1 in 5 currently) experience only subtractive provision (Andersen et al 2008). If we consider Cooper's 1989 definition of language planning research as studying 'who plans what for whom and how', free schools are still, like Dorner's study (2010) allowing the voices and the interests of the dominant to rule and their

'background ideational abilities' (Schmidt, 2010, p4) to create a habitus familiar and comfortable to a European, middle-class target audience. The exception to this is only where the council appears to have re-taken language planning control of the ASP vision and attempted to redefine it for more marginalised Spanish monolingual speakers, the very group which had largely failed to respond to the ASP campaign. However, it remains to be seen when, and if, this comes to fruition. Nonetheless, there is evidence of a positive competitive effect emerging. Both Anne Frank and SABS had neighbouring schools which were increasing language learning provision far beyond the statutory regulations, including aims for Spanish immersion at one, and daily short teaching of Mandarin from age four at another. Therefore, the emergence of BFS may not be only associated with negative competitive effects on language hierarchies and the poaching of students (Lubienski, 2003).

In summary of 9.4 then, the emerging values of BFS are still, inevitably, unclear. There is, however, evidence to suggest an ongoing reproduction of linguistic privilege for middle-class, French, Spanish, German and English speakers, reinforcing the existing language hierarchy in England. As Johnson and Watson (2015) noted of other organisations, as BFS become an emerging institution, the new social orders they embody become normalized too, particularly the power of those with capital, which in this case will be a few language community groups only and a limited number of sponsors. Institutions are not only shaped by societal norms, but set boundaries for what is thinkable in turn (Meyer & Rowan, 2006, p208). Therefore, the institutional power given to parents and a few selected sponsors, and the resultant reinforcing or shaping of a language hierarchy, is important as existing institutional literature highlights the path dependency of many institutions and the persistence of norms established early on (p81). Nonetheless, the biggest tale of the emergent values of a potential BFS institution are that English and local, British values very much come first. When legitimacy was threatened, for example at DGA, the decisions taken were to ensure it was, first, a good local, English state school, before being bilingual, echoing Peters (2005, p35) description of the use of stock responses in times of crisis as demonstrating the logic of appropriateness (p73). The flipside of this is that,

despite reinforcing a linguistic hierarchy, BFS are perhaps not being associated as much with elitism as predicted, principally due to the intense coercive and normative isomorphic pressure of the wider state-funded school institutional context, in effect, reeling them in.

Conclusion

In chapters one to three, I noted that BFS might appear to be a paradox in offering innovation in product, namely a bilingual curriculum, in the English state-funded education system, contrary to existing research and institutional theory. This chapter, however, shows that this assumption that BFS are offering an innovative 'product' in terms of their bilingual curriculum can be questioned. The chapter also clearly shows that BFS, like schools in existing markets (Lubienski, 2009), are under similarly immense isomorphic pressure to locate themselves as legitimate, local schools by following national tests and mimetically adopting practices indistinguishable from schools at the top of local and national hierarchies.

However, we can still offer a partial answer to how stakeholders are navigating free schools legislation in order to secure bilingual education. Three of the four campaigns have opened successfully and all offer languages from age four. Although one no longer claims to offer bilingual education, perception of innovation is often the key measure, rather than a measurable outcome (p68), particularly maybe for those viewing bilingual education as symbolic capital. So how are the different stakeholders navigating the constraints? In each case, it is clear to see that conforming with regulations and active mimesis to balance distinctiveness has allowed the schools to pass as legitimate. Although the brokering of the compromises needed meant a reduction in the second language, the flexibility demonstrated by leader bricoleurs also meant that language learning innovation was protected and may still lead to more widespread diffusion of bilingual education across the quintain and beyond, by sheltering the innovation in non-core areas.

Although innovation of product may, indeed, have been little evident, as predicted by institutional theory, innovation of administration was, like in other studies, evident. This was notable through a flexible admissions policy and by giving significant power to parents as planners both pre-opening and, post-opening on

governing bodies. However, both these administrative freedoms do not appear to be convincingly leading to a simple social reproduction of linguistic privilege as non-parent stakeholders have been able to use flexible admissions to favour other groups in the community.

Despite removal of parent power by subsequent leaders in two cases, all four cases show that bilingual free schools allow significant language planning opportunities for certain groups of parents (see Fig 3.3). However, 9.4 highlights that the selective approval of only those groups of parents with significant capital and networks means that their choice of language and location are given priority, reinforcing an existing languages hierarchy, with English very much on top, followed by Spanish, French and German. This is language planning for a few and, even on a meso- level, significant barriers exist for parents not immediately in the local area, particularly in the early years of a school's evolution, when path dependency is set. It is simply too early to say definitively, however, whether social segregation is occurring.

If we compare this with Mehisto and Genesee (2015)'s framework (Table 2.1), we see that many mechanisms and some forces are still missing, particularly on the teacher training and supply side and international and local agreements around languages and bilingual education. However, these don't appear to be the main constraints that BFS leaders and parents are having to navigate. Adapting Mehisto & Genesee's framework slightly, therefore, we can summarise the opportunities, constraints and counterweights for those leaders and parents navigating free schools legislation as outlined in Table 9.1.

Opportunities	Constraints	Counterweights
Home base language community with capital	Status of second language	Locate new audience?
Experienced sponsor	Sponsor with difficulties	Change sponsor
Parent power	Control by sponsor	Parents regain control
Choice of language Choice of location	Site suitability & availability Unsupportive LA	Parent sourcing Use EFA/LA interests Approach several LAs
Admissions freedoms (to position or reposition)	Need for legitimacy as 'local' school	Flexibility to change admissions
Short timescale	Short timescale!	Delayed opening?
Budgeting freedom	Budgeting risk	Large scale/size sponsor

Hiring unqualified staff	Need for legitimacy as 'proper' school	Partnership Mimesis of 'best' schools
Following different curriculum	Lack of bilingual staff Testing in English	Extending school day
Flexible local authority (LA)	Politician/ policy/party's own legitimacy concerns	Smart timing

Table 9.1 Opportunities, constraints & counterweights when establishing BFS

Perhaps most notably, rather than exemplifying an exception to the general finding of existing educational markets failing to generate innovation, what the BFS cases show more clearly is the way in which stakeholder relationships are being reshaped in this new educational market, particularly in terms of parent power and language planning (p262). Although three of the cases saw this power being reeled back in by sponsors, in lieu of local authorities, the schools retained the location, language, and in Anne Frank's case, admissions and governance structure favourable to early parent supporters. Whether the bilingual innovation goes the way of failure of other language learning initiatives in England (pp42-43), only time will tell, but path dependency is being established and 9.4 noted the beginnings of a competitive effect on local schools.

To sum up, what is required to realise bilingual education, from the cases in this thesis, appears to be not just the legislative opportunity to determine the language, location and admissions favourable to a group of parents alongside a lack of school places locally, but also access to networks with considerable capital, spearheaded by institutional entrepreneurs. However, it is important that these parents can also act as bricoleurs when the school faces the inevitable constraints afforded by the wider institutional context of state-funded education, or else hand power to those able to so on their behalf. Such bricoleurs must then be willing to not only broker compromises between parents, authorities and the public at large, but also identify new audiences in order to gain sufficient legitimacy to be seen as a good local school. The result of this compromise, however, is that the emerging bilingual free school scene may yet be characterised simply as providing for the needs of middle-class French, German or Spanish speakers, reinforcing the existing language hierarchy and associations with elitism. Many questions remain and we will discuss these briefly in the final chapter of this thesis.

Chapter 10: Conclusion

Introduction

In this final chapter, the main research findings will be summarized, after which I will highlight the way in which this thesis extends and questions existing literature on free schools, quasi-markets in education and language planning. I will then discuss the extent to which the conceptual framework developed in chapter three supports the analysis of the case studies, which will highlight deviations, limitations of the study and possible directions for future research. The chapter concludes with some possible implications for policy makers and language planners at multiple levels before closing with a reflection on the thesis' personal impact.

10.1 Key findings

The purpose of this thesis was to explore how language planning agents are managing to establish bilingual education through free schools legislation, as this appears to run counter to expectations of both limited language learning provision in England and the general failure of similar market-based reforms to facilitate curricular innovation (1.1). The research therefore tracked four case study campaigns for a primary bilingual free school in England for six to twenty-one months, during which I attended field events, interviewed parents and leaders and collected publicity, official documents and online media and forum posts. Through abductive engagement with data in parallel with existing literature on social capital, advocacy coalitions and neo-institutional theorisations of change in organisations, a four-part framework was developed in order to answer the overarching research question of how stakeholders were navigating free schools legislation in order to secure bilingual education. I will therefore now highlight the key findings in relation to the four research strands outlined in chapters two and three (pp.49; 81-82).

The first research question asked which networks and resources campaigners are able to deploy in their quest for bilingual education. Throughout the case study chapters, it is clear that a pre-existing base organization, either linked to a language community or church, is extremely fruitful for building an effective

coalition. This is particularly true when this space is frequented by those with significant capital, which can then be utilised not only in pre-application planning but, later, to bring financial and other expertise on to emerging governing bodies. For one case in particular, choosing a religious ethos enabled them to be sponsored by a church organization, thereby overcoming the significant hurdle that weak sponsorship can mean. Campaigns also benefited hugely when a figurehead with significant personal legitimacy and charisma was able to deftly balance the interests of different stakeholders in the free school planning and opening process. This was either a highly skilled and experienced parent, head teacher or a member of the sponsorship team, but their ability to both utilize pre-existing networks and identify new audiences were key. It is also worth noting that this figurehead may change over time as power is transferred, often, but not exclusively, away from parents to professionals. Although this transfer may be by mutual agreement, it may also involve institutional control by sponsors or leaders.

Secondly, I posed the question 'how far are campaigners and parents able to utilise legislative freedoms?' The answer is that only a few freedoms are used and only to a limited degree, due to regulatory constraints and the need to ensure legitimacy. Of potential freedoms, administrative ones were realised more than product freedoms and, although BFS are free of local authority control over their budget, financial independence was also a liability for several schools. All four campaigns did utilise the limited freedom to determine aspects of their admissions policy. However, although this often seemed to favour early supporters through the use of a lottery (rather than distance criteria) and priority for church attenders, subsequent leaders also used the freedom to change these policies to reverse some of these advantages. However, the freedom of parents to: harness the networks of their own choosing to raise sponsorship and capital; determine the ethos and values of the school through, for example, uniforms and communication methods; and enjoy greater representation on the governing body are freedoms unparalleled in other state schools. In addition, two key product freedoms were available to the early parents: the freedom to determine the language and rough location of their choice. Nonetheless, the latter was constrained by the complexity of site planning and the shortage of suitable sites. It is also worth noting that all four cases also eschewed several freedoms available to them, including the freedom to not follow the national curriculum. In each case, the reasons for under-utilising freedoms to

innovate their products became clear as the immense pressure to gain legitimacy with not only parents, but also regulatory authorities, was outlined.

Therefore, the third research strand posed the question of how campaigners gain legitimacy with regulators and parents. On a basic level, campaigns needed a shortage of school places in the area in order to appeal to both local and national authorities as well as convincing the public of a need for their school. However, beyond this, the answer also appears to lie with the abilities of a key bricoleur figure who is able to coordinate discourse which respects the interests of different stakeholders, whether local or national government, the public at large and original, or potential, parents. In the case studies above, these bricoleurs were key in navigating the compromises needed in order to meet the intense regulatory demands exhibited by testing regimes in English at ages four, five and seven which, ultimately, demanded an 'English first' approach to the curriculum. However, when some stakeholders were unable to accept this, institutional control of decision making also achieved the same ends, principally enforced by governing bodies and sponsors. All four campaigns also managed their communicative discourse to carefully balance their distinctiveness with mimesis of the best local, and often independent, schools and this was most successful when the founders had recruited a partner school and experienced headteacher pre-opening. However, by adopting many traditional practices associated with the private sector, it appears that the schools might be targeting a middle class, aspirational audience, with the potential to aggravate social segregation on a local level.

This leads us to consider the secondary aim of the research project, reflected in the fourth and final research question, which was to describe what kind of bilingual education is emerging as a result of this quest for legitimacy. First, we must note that there is little conclusive evidence of social segregation occurring in the first few intakes of the bilingual free schools in this study, when compared with their neighbours. However, it is clear that the power to choose the language, location and ethos of the schools is limited to the first intakes of families and these intakes in particular appear to be somewhat unrepresentative of their local areas. However, in two cases, the sponsor and governing body were able to exert institutional control over admissions to mitigate this somewhat. The second main finding about the type of bilingual education emerging as a result of the quest for legitimacy is that the teaching of a second language was reduced so much that, in

at least one case, it was no longer considered bilingual education at all. In other cases, however, even though the second language was reduced, it was still sheltered, and appeared to be possibly re-emerging. It is too early, of course, to evaluate outcomes in terms of student's bilingual proficiencies to determine whether any of the BFS could be considered to be delivering bilingual education, but it is key to note the influence of the intense coercive isomorphic pressure exerted by government regulation through statutory testing in reducing time spent in the second language. We will consider the implications of this further below.

However, it is worth briefly highlighting one more finding first. In addition to the schools clearly being English first, rather than bilingual, the languages which have been approved and opened, namely French, German and Spanish, also do not reflect either the range of free school applications, nor predominance or range of languages spoken in England. The emerging bilingual free school institution therefore appears to be reinforcing a hierarchy which sees English first, above the 'big three', thereby missing the opportunity to diversify language provision and harness many of the languages already spoken by 1 in 5 primary aged school children in England.

10.2 Contribution to knowledge and relationship to existing literature

The present study offers three principal unique contributions to knowledge. Firstly, by reinitiating the application of a neo-institutional theoretical lens to unpick the role of micropolitics and interactions in bilingual education planning, this study highlights how both conscious strategy and normative isomorphism are involved. While this has important parallels with existing institutional studies, the application of the framework developed here to explain both the apparent innovativeness yet constraints in terms of bilingual education planning in a quasi-market is novel and has potential for application in other contexts where similar legislation is being used for bilingual education planning. Specifically, the present thesis builds on existing knowledge in a number of ways: not only was the forming of a large enough advocacy coalition with considerable capital essential for mobilizing the needed changes (Sabatier & Weible, 2007, pp201); but institutional learning was significant too (Haunschild & Chandler, 2007) in negotiating the 'bilingual education' which conformed with the logic of appropriateness (March et

al. 1996) to the overarching institution of English state-funded schooling. Consistent with the work of Mintrom & Vergari (1996; 2009), campaigns also often benefited from figurehead institutional entrepreneurs or subsequent bricoleurs (Peters, 2012, p116), able to spot opportunities and mobilise coalitions, as well as brokering the needed compromises to gain legitimacy.

Secondly, by employing a case study methodology with multiple stakeholder perspectives, the thesis offers unique insight into the processes involved in establishing free schools, thereby also offering unique insight in to how they may be contributing to potential social segregation. In particular, this study shows that educational quasi-markets offer not only potential for innovation and social segregation, but also, through tight regulation, the means by which both of these may be undermined through coercion and the normative logic of appropriateness in the struggle for legitimacy. Although by using an in-depth multi-case study I am only able to confidently assert findings to the quintain of bilingual free schools portrayed here and offer more tentative assertions about the emerging BFS institution, through the rich detail of the case studies, I am aware that readers will apply findings phronetically to similar contexts. Therefore, this thesis also offers new insight into how free schools in general are emerging, by examining the micro-politics involved from diverse perspectives. In this vein, it goes even further than existing studies such as Morris (2016), who notes the unique strength of her multiple stakeholder study of school choice in free schools.

The thesis' third principal contribution to knowledge is the way in which it challenges the existing understanding of language planning agency by highlighting the complicated and under-appreciated role of parents in setting the limits of the emerging institution of bilingual free schools. The findings show that one key administrative freedom exercised was that of parent power over early decisions and on governing bodies, despite three cases also highlighting a subsequent transfer of power from founder parents to their sponsors. By utilising a multi-case and multi-stakeholder study design, this thesis therefore complicates the role of parents as language planners beyond that portrayed in existing studies (see 3.1). Family language planning is not merely restricted to the home or exercised through school choice but, in England at least, can influence the direction of state-funded language learning and bilingual education. In this thesis, I argue that this has a legacy - not only on the individual schools - but also reinforces the idea that

language learning and bilingual education serve mainly middle class English, French, German and Spanish speaking families in the South-East of England. However, given that sponsors were able to change policies to target other groups, the findings are not entirely consistent with Dorner's 2010 findings that the active choosers and parents with the loudest voice necessarily determine entirely the direction of bilingual education planning.

The thesis also extends existing knowledge in other ways. The last case in particular demonstrates how those with less material and social capital face a greater struggle in applying to run or attend bilingual free schools, consistent with Higham (2014). However, Bourdieu's (1977; 1986) concepts of capital and habitus are perhaps more useful in explaining how the emerging bilingual free school institution as a whole is reflecting the values of the dominant, as the capital required to form a coalition and be approved (and for individual parents to 'fit in') is a considerable barrier for some groups, leading to the social reproduction of linguistic privilege for middle class English, French, German and Spanish speakers, as the schools create a habitus comfortable for them. Nonetheless, the quantitative findings do not fully support the conclusion that this inevitably leads to social segregation and, therefore, the present study adds significant evidence to existing literature that shows some potential signs of social segregation as a result of free schools, without being able to locate definitive evidence (Green et al, 2015; Morris, 2016).

It also extends the literature on the potential for innovation in free schools. Although consistent with government-commissioned audits (Cirin, 2014; NAO, 2013) in highlighting that little use is made of legislative freedoms by those setting up free schools, the exception is the freedom for parents to exercise considerable planning agency in determining the language choice, location and at least initial ethos and policies of bilingual free schools. However, several cases built their own hierarchies of power around the bricoleur figures, who were able to navigate the necessary compromises which mitigated this parental power (See also Owen-Smith & Powell, 2008 p602; Huerta, 2009). The resulting compromises means that the original assertion in the thesis' opening chapters that bilingual free schools appear to be innovating with language learning, counter to expectations of quasi-markets' relative inability to facilitate innovation (Lubienski, 2009), needs revising. In all four cases, the percentage of time spent in the second language was

reduced significantly, with at least one no longer having the chief overt aim of fluency in two languages and the others also struggling to establish this goal. Although this thesis defines innovation as something perceived to be innovative, even if not necessarily novel (p68), it appears that many stakeholder parents and leaders sought the additional capital and distinction offered by a bilingual or language focus, rather than the 'innovation' of immersion itself. As Figure 3.2, which extended Huerta & Zuckerman (2009), showed, it is the institution of state-funded education and its logic of appropriateness which constrains the entire quasi-market to which bilingual free schools belong. Therefore, consistent with Lubienski (2009), product innovation was rarely seen, although administrative freedoms were sometimes utilised, particularly over admissions and governance power. Nonetheless, Figure 3.3 still allowed for a third, emergent plane in the institutional nesting of bilingual free schools, thereby complicating Huerta & Zuckerman's 2009 conceptualisation. In the BFS, by establishing symbolic legitimacy in the core areas, bilingual or language learning innovation in non-core areas was indeed protected. Innovation could therefore also potentially 'seep' back and reshape the institution of state primary schooling as a whole. In two cases presented here, adjacent schools were indeed beginning to innovate with early immersion or language learning, adding potential positive competitive effects to Higham's emerging findings (2015) on the negative competitive effects of free schools.

10.3 Limitations and directions for future research

In the above sections I have demonstrated how the conceptual framework developed in chapter three is able to explain well the 'mystery' of the emergence of bilingual free schools in England despite a lack of existing state provision and similar innovations in other quasi-markets by highlighting how the bilingual aspect is compromised and marginalised in order to guarantee legitimacy. Nonetheless, some questions still remain and this section is intended to discuss these and future directions for research.

In 4.7 I noted this study's limited generalizability due to its sample of just four cases. It is also worth noting again the limited ability to generalise beyond the South-East of England, since all four cases (reflecting all open schools) were in this

wider region, although there have been campaigns in other regions which could learn phronetically from these cases. Therefore, I do not attempt to offer here generalized findings for all free schools, let alone all educational quasi-markets. However, important questions should be raised about the limited potential for free schools to stimulate the innovation they were intended to. Therefore, a comparative study of different forms of bilingual education or language innovation and the factors which support their implementation in England would be a welcome addition to existing literature on establishing bilingual education.

Given the rapidly changing landscape of free schools over the three plus years during which I generated data and wrote up, an emergent design was a practical choice, although I am aware that this has limitations in its dependence on myself, as the main research tool, when selecting cases, literature, events and interviewees. I therefore have to recognize that, had I succeeded in retaining access to the case of withdrawn consent, for instance, this thesis might have different findings. In addition, finding emergent campaigns was challenging and it is plausible that I missed some. Additionally, although I enjoyed greater access to the internal processes of establishing free schools than most other researchers, my sampling within each case was still restricted, particularly given the understandable concerns that leaders had about the political spotlight being shone on free schools. In one case (Anne Frank), several leaders failed to respond to repeated requests for interview and in another (ASP), repeated approaches to parents for interviews went largely unanswered. Even in the other two cases, the endorsement by campaign leaders of my research project meant, in SABS, almost all participants were overwhelmingly positive, even though I was at pains to highlight my separateness from the campaign. In every case except SABS, every parent was an active chooser, which is a chief limitation of many studies examining parent choice. Even when I interviewed non-choosers in one nursery, parents thought I was affiliated to the school and I spent considerable effort trying to correct this. A survey-based study might have been more successful in gaining wider, anonymous views, but this would have been at the expense of depth and flexibility of design.

On reflection, the contribution of the quantitative element in two of the case studies is also limited. The relative youth of the case study schools and contradictory intake data between cases means that my findings cannot be read as

evidence for social segregation occurring. However, this is something that should be explored in future research, particularly once access to data on language background is obtained and several years' data from several schools is available. In addition to this and the comparative studies of different forms of bilingual or language learning innovation mentioned above, further research would also be welcomed on parents as language planners in other educational quasi-markets. Finally, a secondary, emergent finding of this thesis was how bilingual free schools appear to reinforce existing hierarchies of language in England through their 'English first' discourse and the emic concept of French being a language the education market in England accepts (p188). Further exploration of the way in which bilingual free schools actively construct or deconstruct ideologies of language would therefore also be welcomed.

10.4 Implications for policy and practice

The findings of this thesis have several implications for policy makers and practitioners. For those interested in establishing bilingual free schools for their own children, anchoring a campaign in an existing community organization with significant resources is key. Thereafter, seeking the support of an existing institution (or network of institutions) with an excellent reputation may also facilitate legitimacy. The choice of language and location must be well researched and justified locally from the start and early monitoring to ensure that no sector of the local population is under-represented may prevent delays later in securing legitimacy. Finally, compromises should be expected, and any reduction in the degree of immersion may not need to be permanent. However, the struggle for legitimacy may involve compromises that make their own children ineligible (see table 9.1).

Those sponsoring free schools and looking to expand should consider actively scouting for demand in multilingual communities with a shortage of places, but also a lack of economic and social capital to spearhead their own campaign. However, care should be taken to give parents considerable agency and power over decisions, in order to safeguard ongoing legitimacy. Advocates of language learning and bilingualism, particularly from the teaching profession and academia, might therefore also consider facilitating the networking of under-represented

groups with existing resources in other sectors, following the example of the partnerships with SABS in chapter nine. However, it is also important to support groups in recruiting expertise in the English education system and not just international bilingual pedagogical practices, in order to avoid threats to legitimacy.

For policy makers, this thesis highlights clearly the limits of free schools legislation as a vehicle for innovation as well as its potential for exacerbating social segregation. If stimulating innovation genuinely is a goal of the 2010 academies act, then campaigns need greater support which nurtures and shelters their innovative offerings and protects them from the intense regulatory testing regimes. Given the number of bilingual free school applications, it may also be worth considering recruiting advisors familiar with bilingual pedagogies. In addition to the potential for social segregation within campaigns, which DfE monitoring is already designed to apprehend, the last section of chapter nine highlights that the emerging institution of bilingual education as a whole is at risk of reinforcing an association of language learning with elitism. Many community groups and languages are unrepresented in the emergence of language-focused or bilingual free schools and, therefore, a greater number of groups need to be resourced and networked in order to access the application process. Alternatively, given the obvious local demand revealed in each case study, local authorities are also able to offer support in lieu of sponsorship and are often better resourced to do so in many communities. Enabling and supporting local authorities to identify and set up bilingual streams would allow more equitable provision of bilingual education in diverse areas for diverse groups, rather than depending on the 'holy grail' of a well-networked group of parents gaining the interest of a sponsor at just the right time as a vehicle for realizing bilingual education and language learning innovation in England. In this way planners therefore might also be able to overcome the inherent geographical bias in relying on free schools as a vehicle for bilingual education, given that they rely so much on shortage of school places and multilingual parental demand, which is currently restricting the majority of campaigns and all open schools to the wider London/ South-East area.

Closing reflection

In chapter one I highlighted the stark contrast of bilingual free schools emerging in England when currently almost no state-funded bilingual education exists. In the course of researching and writing this thesis, this nascent field has shifted considerably and it seems now that bilingual free schools have largely been reeled in by the wider institution of state-funded primary schooling, with little additional language learning, let alone bilingual immersion, evident. However, signs exist that this may only be temporary and time will tell which schools are able to overcome the constraints and gain sufficient legitimacy to allow them to develop their bilingual vision more fully. After all, additional language learning is now happening in every primary school, which was not true at the start of this thesis. However, since Britain's referendum vote to leave the European union, the future regarding both free schools and languages education is uncertain. Quite possibly the appetite will wane for innovative language learning approaches.

However, this thesis still offers much, not only to those interested more generally in the potential of quasi-markets to unleash innovation, but also specifically in understanding the processes by which values are shaped in emerging institutions. Taking an institutional lens was not something I was immediately comfortable with, as I felt that it removed the possibility of agentic interpretations. However, the framework developed here, by utilizing other social and organizational concepts alongside a neo-institutionalist framework, has allowed me to understand the importance of politics on a micro-scale, within emerging institutions, while still recognizing the full ecology within which they are emerging.

In the present study, as an advocate and passionate teacher of bilingual education, it was hard to note how bilingual free schools, rather than changing their institutional context, are actually reinforcing an existing language hierarchy and targeting themselves, sometimes unwittingly, at middle class audiences. However, it is still my hope that this thesis will enable this situation to be ultimately challenged, by motivating and equipping those considering setting up a school or sponsoring schools, as well as those already in the schools, to phronetically apply the findings to their own contexts in order to be better able to navigate the constraints.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 Case selection grid

*The campaigns are recorded in roughly chronological order of emerging. Those selected are in bold. Two converters and one which still had no immersion 18 months post-opening (**) are excluded. Others either failed early on or did not grant sufficient access.*

<u>Language</u>	<u>Region</u>	<u>Type of trust/ sponsor</u>	<u>Outcome</u>
Spanish	South-East	Parent & teacher-led trust	Open
French & German	South-East	Converter (previously a European school)	Open
German	London	Local secondary school academy chain	Open**
French	London	Parent-led	Not known
Spanish	London	Activist/teacher-led	Not known
German	(concealed)	Parent-originated; International not-for-profit education company	Open
French	(concealed)	Parent-originated; International not-for-profit education company; then national academy chain	Open
Portuguese	London	Parent/teacher/activist-led trust	Failed first time; Approved 2016
Spanish	Midlands	Local primary academy chain; then new academy chain trust	Approved but lacked demand; Failed second time
Mandarin	London	Parent/teacher-led	Approved but cancelled months before opening
Russian	London	Parent/teacher-led	Unsuccessful
Spanish	(concealed)	Parent-originated; trust running another school; then international for-profit education company	Unsuccessful; then advised not to proceed
French	South-West	Parent-led	Not pursued to application
French	South-East	Parent/teacher-led	Not pursued to application
French	(concealed)	Faith group sponsor	Opened Sep 2016
Spanish	London	International for-profit education company	Unsuccessful
Welsh	London	Converter (existing independent)	Unsuccessful
Polish	London	Parent/teacher-led	Not pursued to application
French	South-East	Parent/teacher-led	Not known
Chinese	London	Parent/teacher-led	Not known
Mandarin	North-West	Complementary School-led	Not known

Appendix 2 Document Summary Form

NB This reflects initial research questions (subsequently rewritten)

Name of document & file location:

Date:	Time:	Venue:
Contacts involved:		Context/event:

What were the main issues or themes that stuck with you?

Summary of info gained/not gained for Key Q

Question	Info gleaned
What values around bilingualism/language learning are emerging?	
Who is the explicit & implicit target audience of the school?	
(How do leaders justify the school?)	
How do families rationalise their response?	
Who is choosing?	

Anything else interesting/unusual

What new/remaining key Q need pursuing?

Appendix 3 Data by case

<u>Case</u>	<u>Interviews</u>	<u>Field Events</u>	<u>Documents</u>	
Anne Frank School	1 governor	2 open days	Email newsletters	Website
	3 parents	1 nursery visit	Media articles	Application form to DfE
	2 feeder nursery leaders		Job advertisements	DfE impact assessment
			School policies	Publicity – flyers, prospectus
De Gaulle Academy			Consultation report	Online forum threads
			Website	Governing body minutes
			Media articles	Application form to DfE
			Job advertisements	DfE impact assessment
			School policies	Publicity – flyers, prospectus
			Consultation report	Online forum threads
			Online petitions	School policies
St. Alcuin Bilingual School			Newsletters	Social media threads
			Email newsletters	Website
			Media articles	Application form to DfE
			Job advertisements	Government press release
			Surveys	Publicity – flyers, prospectus
Anglo-Spanish Project			Consultation report	Social media threads
			Social media threads	Media articles
			Bid from sister campaign (2 nd campaign)	
			Flyers	Email newsletters (2 nd campaign)
			Websites	Surveys

Appendix 4 Example information sheet

NB This reflects an earlier stage in the emergent design process

Katya Saville
Doctoral student
London Centre for Leadership in Learning
Tel [REDACTED]
Email [REDACTED]



Leading education
and social research
Institute of Education
University of London

How are new bilingual schools shaping ideas about language learning?

A doctoral research project April 2014 – December 2015

My name is Katya Saville. I am a teacher and a researcher. This leaflet is about my PhD research. Please email me if you have any queries.

Why is this research being done? Bilingual schools offer new hope for language learning. State funding means more can access this, but setting up schools is challenging. I am interested in leaders' & parents' experience of establishing a school, their ideas about language learning and bilingualism and how they might be changing. I am also interested in the views of parents who are considering applying to the schools.

Who will be in the project? Headteachers, campaigners, sponsors, advisers and parents who have chosen, are considering, or who haven't heard about the school yet. Teachers and pupils will not be involved.

What will happen during the research? I will collect publicity materials and interview leaders in several campaigns and open schools. The level of anonymity will be agreed with each person, as there are few bilingual schools. I will also conduct surveys and some in-depth interviews or focus groups with parents from open schools and feeder nurseries. Pseudonyms will be used and data stored securely. General findings may be shared to support understanding of bilingual education.

What questions will be asked? I will ask leaders how they became involved; their role; their experience of campaigning/leadership, support & networking; and their views on, and experiences of, language learning

What will happen if you take part? I will make a digital recording of our talk and type it up. I am not looking for right or wrong answers. All views are important. All is confidential unless someone is at risk (which is unlikely). You decide how much to take part. Even if you say 'yes' and give consent, you can still drop out later or say you wish not to answer.

How will it help you? I will be asking parents who may not have heard about the school what their views are so I am happy to feed this back to leaders. I can also share general findings from the project at the end.

Thank you for reading this information leaflet

Appendix 5 Example Leader interview schedule

Date:

Time:

Venue:

Interviewer:

Interviewee:

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed. Just to remind you, the purpose of this research is to understand how new bilingual schools are shaping ideas about language learning. This interview is conducted as part of my doctoral research and I have no affiliation to a campaign, sponsor, trust or department for education. During the next *half an hour* or so, I'll ask a number of open-ended questions. You don't have to respond but feel free to ask for clarification, correct or interrupt me if you need to. Some questions may seem silly and some challenging, but each person is different. There is no right or wrong answer to any of the questions. I am interested in your experience as you see it. To help me reflect on the interview, I am going to use a digital audio recorder and I will write out our conversation in full afterwards. The results will always be kept confidential and you will not be identified individually. You may, of course, withdraw from the project at any point without giving a reason. If you are happy to go ahead, *please sign the consent form/Do I have your verbal consent?*

1. First of all, could you outline your journey to becoming executive head of StA?
- Has your involvement or role changed over time?

2. Have you been involved in similar projects before?
What? How?

3. These might seem like obvious questions, but I'd really like to hear your views.
Why this school in this area?
(Why French, why free school, why C of E)

Did you or the founders consider any other alternatives? (e.g. complementary schools; private; supporting state schools)

4. I would like to ask more about the process of setting up the school
Who have been the key players? Who else has been involved?
What obstacles have you faced?
(How) did you overcome them?

6. I'd now like to ask about the response to the idea of the school from others in the community.
What kind of response have you had from families? Other community groups?
Has this been as you expected?
How have you spread the word so far?
How do you plan to spread the word from now?

7. Have there been any significant changes in the evolution of the school?
- (Why? What, if any, implications do you think that it's had?)

8. Finally, I'd like to ask about the future. What is next? What is your vision?
How do you envisage the partnerships progressing from here?
How do you plan to work with those outside of the emerging school community?

If you have five more minutes I wondered....

Can you tell me about your experiences of different languages? Language learning?

How would you describe yourself with respect to your languages or cultural affiliations?

Thank you for participating. I appreciate your time given. This information will be really useful in helping me understand your experiences. If you want to contact me for any reason, please do so. If I have any further questions, are you happy for me to email you?

Can you think of anyone else I should talk to about this?
Do you have anything else to add?

Appendix 6 Example Parent interview schedule

NB this was modified for those already attending a BFS

Date:

Time:

Venue:

Interviewer:

Interviewee:

Thank you for agreeing to this interview. Just to remind you, the purpose of this study is to understand how parents choose their school, and what they think about a bilingual school opening nearby. This interview is conducted as part of my PhD research and I have no connection to the school. During the next 30 minutes, I'll ask a few open-ended questions. You don't have to respond and feel free to ask me to repeat or clarify a question or interrupt me if you need to. Some questions may seem silly and some challenging, but each person is different. There is no right or wrong answer. I am interested in your experience as you see it. To help me reflect, I will make a digital recording and I will write type up our conversation afterwards. The results will be confidential and you will not be identified individually. You may withdraw from the project at any point without giving a reason. If you are happy to go ahead, please sign the consent form.

1. First of all, could you tell me a bit about your family?
2. Other than at home and school, what kinds of activities do you like to do with your child?
 - Are there groups that you go to with your child?
3. a) Do you have an idea of what your current top choices are for primary school?
b) How *are you deciding* which schools to apply to?
 - Are you using any information sites?
 - Who are you talking to about this?
 - What open day visits have you been on? – what were they like?
4. Now I'd like to know more specifically about [REDACTED].
 - a) How did you first hear about the campaign?
 - b) What would you say is the main attraction of the school? What else?
 - c) Is there anything that's concerning you? Other drawbacks?
 - d) What did you think about the meeting? How did it leave you feeling?
5. What experience have you had of speaking and learning languages?
 - What about the rest of your child's family?
6. And do you have experience of a religious group or church?

Do you have anything else to add?

Thank you. I appreciate your time. This information will be really useful in helping me understand how parents go about deciding to apply to schools. If you want to contact me for any reason, here are my contact details. I would also like to stay in touch and offer you a copy of my final report. Could you give me your contact details? Once again, these will be kept confidential.

Appendix 7 Transcription conventions

Notation	Meaning
“ ”	direct speech
‘ ’	Oft-used terms or non-directly-quotable references (for instance from field notes)
..	Brief pause (<3 seconds)
...	Extended pause (3 seconds or more)
... ..	Text removed for conciseness
[<i>and</i>]	Interrupted speech (spoken over)
[which]	Word added during transcription for clarity or sense

Appendix 8 Abbreviated parent schedule

Date: _____ **Interviewer:** _____ **Interviewee:** _____
Recorded? _____
Time: _____ **Venue:** _____ **Further contact?** _____
C. age: _____

I am a researcher at the Institute of Education and I am interested in how parents are choosing which primary schools to apply to. My research is independent and I have no connection to any of the schools. I have a few short questions which should take less than 5 minutes to answer. What you say is confidential and your name will be changed. If you want to skip a question, that's not a problem. There are no right or wrong answers: I'm interested in how you see the process of choosing.

1. Are you currently thinking about applying for a primary school place? (<i>check 'How old is your child?'</i>)	
2. a) What are your top options right now?	
b) Why?	
3. What or who is helping you with your decision?	
4. Have you heard of [redacted] school ? (skip if named in 2)	
(If <u>yes</u>) 5 a) i) How did you hear about it?	
ii) What do you think about it? (<i>only if not named in 2b</i>)	
(If <u>no</u>) 5 b) "It is a new free school which has just been approved. It will open in September 2015 in Central [redacted] and will teach some subjects in French from Reception and the remainder in English. It will be a Church of England school." (<i>If asked, there is a proposed building but the exact location is not being revealed because they haven't actually bought it yet</i>)	
i) Is it a school you might consider ?	
ii) Why/why not?	
5. Finally, I would like to monitor who I am asking, and missing.	
a) How would you choose to describe your child's ethnicity?	b) What languages does your child speak and understand?
c) You don't have to answer, but some families can get help from government (show sheet) with school costs. Does this apply to you?	d) What is your postcode?

Thank you. This information will be really useful in helping me understand how parents go about deciding to apply to the bilingual school. If you want to contact me for any reason, here are my contact details.

(Would you be interested to discuss this more? _____ When? _____)

Appendix 9 Example email responses

Katya Gabriele Saville
Mon 23/02/2015 20:38

Dear Silva,

Thank you so much for your thoughtful responses. I hope you don't mind me asking a few more questions to understand the way you are choosing your school. I'm sorry, but I forgot, is your daughter already at school, or at nursery? How was that process, to bring her to start school in England?

I also wanted to know a bit more, if you don't mind, about the advice your teacher friends gave you. What did they say?

Finally, how did you hear about the bilingual school?

Thank you so much for your time and interest!
Katya

Tue 24/02/2015 10:10
Dear Katya,

As follows the answer of your questions...

My daughter is already attending reception at a school in [REDACTED] The process of registering her at school was good. Although the Council did not gave me a school place from the list of schools each parent should present. They told me there are no empty spaces in the schools I had chosen.

Anyway I am on the waiting list...hoping for a free place. This is exhausting...

At the same time I bring my daughter at the school the Council appointed. She is doing quite good. From day to day we can see her progress. We work with her a lot at home as well.

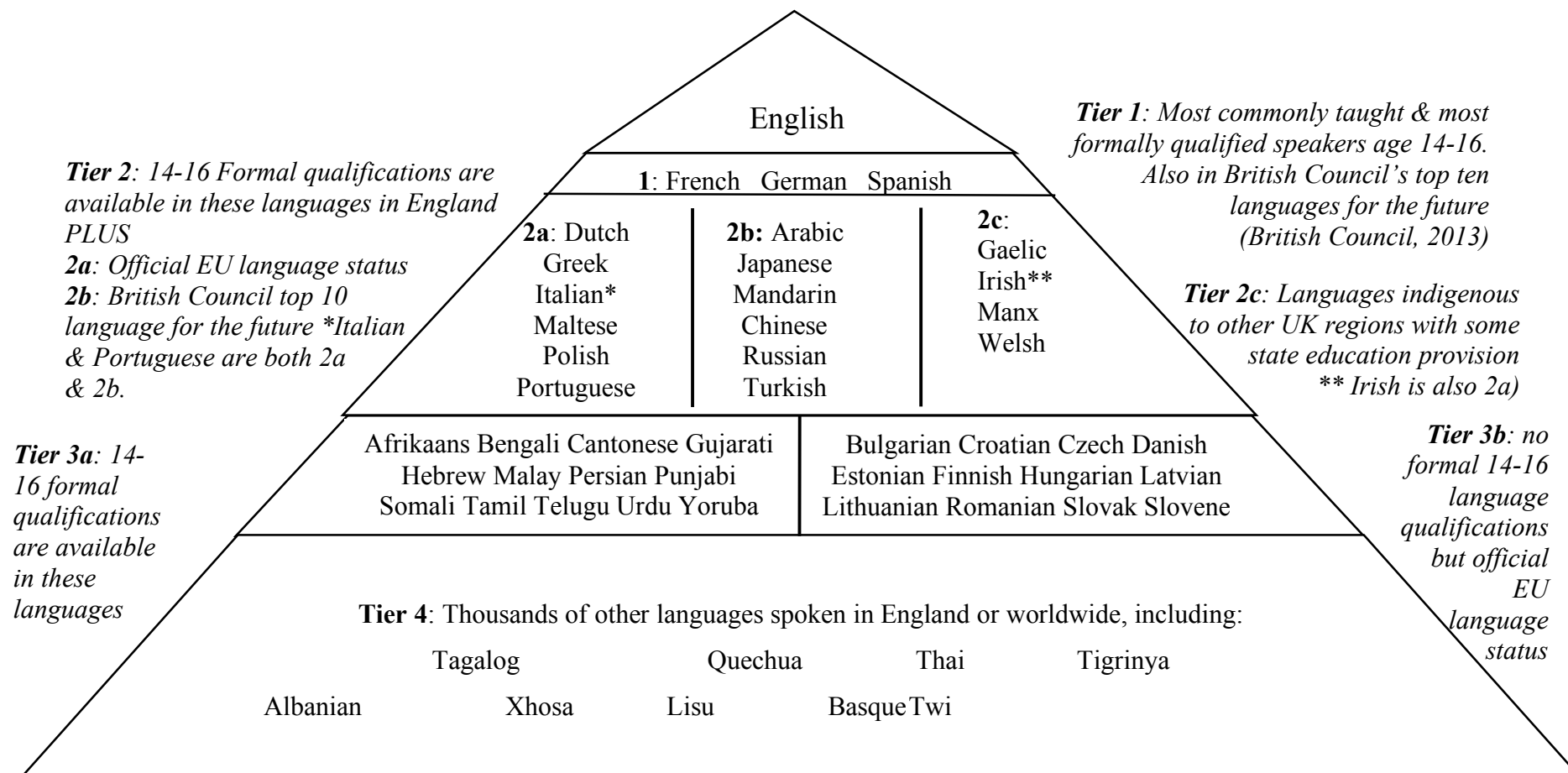
My friends advised me about the process how to register her, how to select schools and about the importance of the outstanding schools.

About the bilingual school I heard on the internet on the Council website.

Best regards,
Silva

Appendix 10 Language Hierarchy in England

(Developed Jan 2015) NB Language hierarchies are constantly shifting and are dependent on local context and political timing.



Appendix 11 Consent form

Katya Saville
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Tel + [REDACTED]
Email [REDACTED]



Leading education
and social research
Institute of Education
University of London

How are new bilingual schools shaping ideas about language learning?

A doctoral research project
April 2014 – December 2015

Consent form

I have read the information leaflet about the research ☐ (please tick)

I agree to be interviewed ☐ (please tick)

I understand that anonymous data from this project may
form the basis of a report, publication or presentation ☐ (please tick)

I understand that participation is voluntary and I can stop
at any time without giving a reason ☐ (please tick)

Name _____

Signed _____ date _____

I have discussed the project and answered any further questions.

Researcher's name _____

Signed _____ date _____