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Book Review

Private Tutoring Across the Mediterranean - Power Dynamics and Implications for Learning and Equity, M. Bray, André E. Mazawi, Ronald G. Sultana (Eds.), Sense Publishers (2013). 221 pp., US\$?????, ISBN: 978-94-6209-235-8

The impact of international academic achievement studies such as PISA and TIMSS resulted in a significant increase of research about educational outcomes, the structures of education systems, educational practices, as well as inequalities in educational attainment. Nevertheless, for a long time politicians and researchers missed to recognize the growing global private tutoring market, an educational industry besides formal school which is referred to as shadow education since more than two decades. Although research efforts increased with the perceptible expansion of worldwide shadow education over time, this field of study is still not well enough documented. For too long, government officials refused to acknowledge the existence and, as equally important, the influence shadow education has on students' everyday life and educational achievement. In particular outside of East Asia, research findings regarding shadow education experienced less attention, wherefore the scale and implications of private tutoring are less well understood in the Western world. With this collective work Mark Bray, André E. Mazawi and Ronald G. Sultana contribute to the growing body of literature revealing the true nature and scale of private tutoring in a great variety of countries and thus fill the still huge gap in research about shadow education by concentrating on one particular region: the Mediterranean.

Although no claim is made to provide a complete investigation about all Mediterranean countries, the editors were able to collect a great variety of national diverse investigations regarding the different, national specific economic, social, and cultural but also historical and political dimensions of shadow education in this particular region. Besides the multifaceted implications of private tutoring, the presented research lays special emphasis on equity issues, highlighting the effects of shadow education on social cohesion and the failure of state education in a changing world.

The book consists of 13 chapters in total, beginning with an introduction by the editors discussing purpose and content of this collaborative work. Following that, findings of studies mostly limited to single countries are presented by single authors or research groups through a wide range of different approaches and methods. These chapters provide insights in national specific data on the matter of shadow education - often for the first time in English language, opening a door to national specific research and educational debates concerning scale, extent and effects of private tutoring in these countries. Great diversity in economies, cultures, historical developments, as well as educational practices and traditions between the eleven discussed countries is reflected in this work. In addition, regional similarities are found for southern and northern Mediterranean countries that share distinctive features. Since a hierarchical structure has no meaning in this book, the presented case studies mostly contribute to educational research in one specific country, but may also be used to compare countries' shadow education systems in the Mediterranean area.

The impact of private tutoring on social and educational inequalities has always been the major issue related to this field of research. The believed exacerbation of social inequalities through unequal access to supplementary lessons is again certified by Boris Jokic, Andrea Soldo and Zrinka Ristic Dedic in their chapter about private tutoring in the former Yugoslavian states Croatia and Bosnia & Herzegovina. The shared past of these two countries is a great basis for the here carried out comparative analysis. With the transition to market economies, both countries faced new obstacles. The economically more developed Croatia experienced a faster economic growth and shows generally less economic inequalities than Bosnia & Herzegovina. Through a qualitative approach using semi-structured interviews their findings show that private tutoring is accessible and affordable for most students. However, although students with lower socio-economic background are able to afford private tutoring; there are differences in patterns and purpose of private tutoring lessons which were found to be crucial for the exacerbation of social inequalities. And despite the general awareness of the phenomenon, state officials tend to marginalize the shortcomings of public education as cause for the increased use of shadow education.

Comparable results are presented by Sarah Hartmann in her chapter about Education 'Home Delivery' in Egypt. Hartmann discusses the obviously existent shortcomings of public education and the need of students with disadvantaged family background to accumulate a high education to also compensate for their lack of social and cultural capital, which is essential for access to high positions in Egypt. But, great differences not only in the participation ratios for private tutoring according to social status are found; teaching quality and quantity is also varying depending on the teacher and form of private tutoring a family is able to afford.

In contrast, the contribution made by Anne-Claudine and Dominique Glasman shows that private tutoring is also not unlikely to expand in countries where the quality shortcomings of public education teaching are considered low. In France, the competition for the best schools increased heavily and created new academic stakes which are held accountable for the significant expansion of the French shadow education system. In addition, the mass dismissal of public school teachers enhanced the number of potential providers. The socio-economic background of a student is not determining whether or not students participate in private tutoring, since there are also forms of tutoring on a voluntary basis without charging fees. Still, this after school support is assumed to lack effectiveness in increasing students' academic achievement if compared to paid private lessons. The French public is deeply concerned about the increased privatization of education in their country. Although the government is aware of the role private tutoring plays in the life of students already, the problem of unemployed teachers and overfilled classes in public schools is not addressed. Instead, the government introduced two programs of private tutoring - fighting fire with fire.

A similar program was introduced in the 1980s in Greece, but abolished soon after these state preparatory centers were associated with having less effect on academic achievement than private tutoring institutions. The implementation of remedial courses and inclusion classes in public schools also failed in Greece, as Michael Kassotakis and Athanasios Verdis show in their chapter about shadow education in this country. The authors come to the conclusion that only radical reforms in higher education – particularly targeting the entrance examination system - are suited to counteract the obvious defects of the public school system and regain peoples trust in state education.

The attempt to resolve the problems private tutoring cause seems to be more legit than addressing and solving the problems that cause private tutoring in the first place. Discussing the Maltese case, Michael A. Buhagiar and Deborah A. Chetcuti plead for the reducing of unequal educational opportunities by creating an educational environment with room for both, private and public schooling, but also with qualifying educational supply independent of the financial background.

While most articles in this book attempt to explain the phenomenon of private tutoring in its different shapes by qualitative approaches, Iasonas and Thekla Afantiti Lamprianou made quantitative analyses. They argue that the introduction of state funded private tutoring establishments can be easily interpreted as official confession that public education has failed. In their chapter about Cyprus, they categorize three main types of out-of-school education: (1) legal tutoring as provided by private institutions or (2) state facilities and (3) illegal private tutoring, operating 'underground'. In general, private tutoring centers in Cyprus need a license to operate. Without having registered and being checked by the ministry of education, private tutoring centers have legally no right to teach students. In addition, the state itself created tutoring centers with the aim to provide tutoring for poorer students. High aspirations are also strongly represented in poorer households, who prefer private tutoring over state tutoring and actively engage in the competition for qualifications. The financial crisis that strongly affected the private tutoring market in most other countries did not show comparable outcomes on private tutoring in Cyprus. On the contrary, people try to make use of private tutoring to upgrade their employability. Therefore, this chapter's findings suggest that theories of social reproduction have to be empirically verified with regard to national context before jumping to conclusions when analyzing the education nowadays.

Another quantitative analysis was carried out by António Neto-Mendes and his colleagues in order to measure the impact of private tutoring on academic achievement in Portugal. They found empirical evidence that confirms the positive significant effect of private lessons for students who receive tutoring in comparison to those who do not. They noted that private tutoring has become an instrument for the already better off students to further increase their advantages in educational attainment. Thus, they are able to secure their admission to the best programs in higher education, wherefore private lessons clearly contribute to social reproduction. Nevertheless, positive effects on students and teachers are also found. Besides the possible increase in academic achievement, students' motivation, self-esteem and commitment in school class are promoted as well, although teachers often complain about students' increased misbehavior during classes.

Another outstanding chapter of this book discusses further positive aspects the private tutoring industry has once offered in historical retrospective. In her chapter about Italy, Giovanna Campani not only shows what dimensions the Italian shadow education system has reached today, she also discusses the long history of private tutoring and its deep embedding in society. As early as the 19th century, school teachers as well as famous intellectuals used to give private lessons to make a living since the average teacher wages were very low. In fascist Italy, private tutoring very often remained the only way for antifascist teachers or philosophers to survive and pass on ideology-free knowledge to the next generation. However, in current Italy private tutoring is encouraged through recent educational reforms and new educational directives as introduced by the Ministry of Education. The overall quality of

education is likely to even decrease more in the near future, preparing the way for the further expansion of private tutoring.

This work also stresses the necessity for further research and constant observation of this education sector, not just in the Mediterranean region, but worldwide. There is a shadow education market spanning its net all over world. Today, a big company such as the Turkish Öz-de-Bir runs its own research facilities with employees jetting around the world to learn how to expand their influence even further by consulting large enterprises in regions with a traditionally long history of shadow education, in particular in East Asia. In his chapter about Turkey, Aysit Tansel further discusses the relationship of private tutoring and inequitable opportunities, predicting the next boom of the private tutoring industry. Following that, Hülya Koşar Altinyelken discusses the demand for private tutoring in Turkey, giving special emphasis to the revision of primary school curriculum. Through interviews with school management and teachers, the concerns about the believed intensification of private tutoring demand are discussed. Like in many other countries, private tutoring has already reached a state where it is believed to be an indispensable addition to the public school system, leading to the conclusion that sports and cultural activities at school are a waste of time. The attempts to abolish or transform private tutoring centers into private schools in recent years are considered ineffective. Consequently, the author advises politicians to pay more attention to this phenomenon and acknowledge the so far conducted research results as well as to be aware of unintended consequences reforms of parts of the public education system might cause in the private sector.

Leaving private tutoring institutes aside, Armand Faganel and Anita Trnavcevic concentrated their qualitative analysis on Slovenian online chatrooms to explore the content and nature of discourses regarding private tutoring in Slovenia. As in most other contexts, the introduction of free market policies opened the door to a steadily expanding shadow education system in Slovenia, too. The transformation of education into a service industry is not just feared anymore, but already in progress. Students and parents compete for the best tutoring services by accumulating information from the internet. Research gaps remain though, since researchers have paid little attention to private tutoring and its implications in Slovenia until now.

In summary, this book is a valuable contribution to research about international shadow education in general, filling gaps of basic knowledge and providing conceptual analyses. In all presented country-studies, the connection between private tutoring demand and supply and public education is obvious. Shadow education is always to some degree mimicking the public education system but shows also outstanding, very own dimensions which cause problems on the one hand and provide learning opportunities on the other. Private tutoring is clearly no longer only the last choice for students with learning problems. At least since the beginning of the new millennium, shadow education flourishes more than ever before in nearly every corner of the world. Through this book, researchers in different fields of education, sociology and cultural studies as well as politicians are reminded that there is a need to rethink initiated reform measures and include the implications private tutoring has for the education market as a whole into decision-making processes when the public education system shall be changed for the better. Only then can unintended reform outcomes be avoided. For all these reasons, this book is recommended to be recognized by government officials as well as educational researchers in the Mediterranean and beyond. Shortcomings of this book

have to be mentioned though: there is little discussion about the impact of international comparative student assessments (e.g. PISA) on modern education policy. Future research should not only pay more attention to the change of school life and students' views on that, but on international student assessment and how this increases the competition between nations, regions, schools, students, and families. Naturally, increased competition promotes the demand for private tutoring in general.

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