

**The hidden curriculum in a hidden marketplace:
Relationships and values in Cambodia's shadow education system**

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Abstract

The concept of hidden curriculum has become well established. It addresses the contexts of learning, the actions of students' peers and teachers, and other domains which shape learning but are not part of official syllabuses. The concept of a hidden marketplace for private tutoring, widely known as shadow education, is less established but also becoming part of general understanding of the complementarities of regular and supplementary instruction. This paper brings the two literatures together to examine the values transmitted, mostly unintentionally, by shadow education in Cambodia. Most of this shadow education is delivered by regular teachers, commonly to their existing students and in their existing schools. The paper considers the impact of shadow education not only on the students who do receive it but also on those who do not. Patterns in Cambodia differ from those in more prosperous countries, but have parallels with other low-income countries. The authors suggest that much more attention is needed to the dynamics and impact of shadow education, including relationships between actors and the values that shadow education transmits as part of the hidden curriculum.

Keywords: Cambodia; hidden curriculum; private supplementary tutoring; shadow education; social inequalities

In the domain of educational studies, the concept of the hidden curriculum is well known. The term was coined by Jackson (1968) in his book *Life in Classrooms*. He highlighted (p.33) “the crowds, the praise, and the power that combine to give a distinctive flavor to classroom life”, suggesting that they “collectively form a hidden curriculum which each student (and teacher) must master if he is to make his way satisfactorily through the school” (pp.33-34). Jackson contrasted these demands with the official curriculum of academic content to which educators paid most attention. Three years later, Snyder (1971) published a book entitled *The Hidden Curriculum*, focusing on campus conflict in the USA and suggesting that much student behaviour was shaped by peer pressure and other social norms. Subsequent works with hidden curriculum in their titles have included books by Burford and Arnold (1992), Gatto (1992), Margolis (2001), and Smith Myles et al. (2004) alongside a host of articles and chapters (e.g. Martin, 1976; Giroux and Penna, 1979; Zhang and Luo, 2016).

Jackson drew heavily on works by Durkheim related to socialization processes in schools. Although Durkheim did not specifically mention hidden curriculum, in *Moral Education* (1961) he noted that schools

taught students much more than was presented in the textbooks and teachers' manuals (Kentli, 2009). Jackson (1968) and Dreeben (1986) conceptualized the term within a structural-functionalist paradigm, stating that through hidden curricula schools serve students by transmitting social norms and beliefs and prepare them for the industrial society. Neo-Marxist scholars extended functionalist definitions of hidden curriculum by noting that schools are means not only of socialization but also of social control (Giroux and Penna, 1979). For Vallance (1974), schools were a 'microcosm of the social value system' (p.6) where hidden curricula could be found in every educational context, including student-teacher interactions, learning settings, and classroom structures. Giroux and Penna (1979) also placed hidden curriculum in the centre of attention, writing that 'at the heart of the social educational encounter is a hidden curriculum whose values shape and influence practically every aspect of the student's educational experience' (p.32). Some scholars have combined the foundational works of Durkheim, Jackson and Dreeben under the heading of consensus theory, which broadly speaks about socialization processes in schools that are not part of the official curriculum (Margolis et al., 2001, p.6).

Another literature has focused on private supplementary tutoring that parallels regular schooling. Such tutoring may be provided by teachers on a part-time basis, by students and others earning extra pocket money, or by professional tutors working independently or through companies. Supplementary tutoring is commonly called shadow education because much of its content mimics that in mainstream classrooms – as the curriculum changes in the schools, so it changes in the shadow (Bray, 1999a, p.20). Within this literature, an early work by Hussein (1987) in Kuwait was entitled 'Private Tutoring: A Hidden Educational Problem'. Two decades later, Silova et al. (2006) produced a book entitled *Education in a Hidden Marketplace: Monitoring of Private Tutoring*, focusing on Eastern Europe and Central Asia; and Burch's (2009) book about the USA was entitled *Hidden Markets: The New Education Privatization*. These authors argued that educators and policy makers focused overwhelmingly on schools and similar institutions, and that private tutoring was outside general awareness and therefore hidden.

The present paper brings together these two literatures, with the aim of showing the importance of shadow education to the wider domain of curriculum studies in at least some societies. The hidden curriculum is now much less hidden than it used to be, and the same applies to shadow education. Nevertheless, much greater awareness of the scale, mode of operation and implications of shadow education is needed, including analysis of relationships between actors and of the values transmitted. This article uses the lens of literature on hidden curriculum to expand understanding of one particular form of shadow education. The paper examines the hidden curriculum of private tutoring in Cambodia as evident in dynamics of teacher-student interaction, hidden aspects of pedagogy, and implicit values taught and learned in school. This includes remarks on what might be called the pedagogy of uncare, to contrast with what has been called the pedagogy of care (Noddings, 2005; Valenzuela, 1999). At the macro level, the paper links hidden curriculum to social inequalities exacerbated by demand and supply forces of shadow education; and at the micro level it describes social dynamics in classrooms, including teacher-student relationships, teachers' discursive practices (unspoken messages and non-verbal signals), teachers' varied expectations, and enactment of different pedagogies in government and tutoring classes.

Geographically, the article focuses on central Cambodia. In this location, most shadow education is provided by teachers, commonly to the same students for whom the teachers are already responsible and in the same classrooms as for their regular public-school lessons. This format for shadow education has parallels elsewhere, particularly in low-income countries (see e.g. Ille, 2015; Majumdar, 2014), but differs from that in societies where most shadow education is provided by commercial companies and in which full-time teachers rarely if ever provide paid supplementary classes (see e.g. Watanabe, 2013). The article focuses on patterns at the secondary level of schooling, but many of its remarks could also apply to the primary level.

The paper first elaborates on literatures about hidden curriculum and shadow education, to provide a conceptual framework. It then provides background information on Cambodia and on the province in which the research was conducted. The next section explains the methods for collecting and analysing the data. Turning to substance, the paper considers relationships between students and teachers. Some students receive tutoring, while others do not; and similarly some teachers provide tutoring while others do not. Students interact with their peers as well as with their teachers; and likewise teachers interact with their peers as well as with students. The paper enhances understanding of social inequalities and of power relations in and beyond the classroom.

Variables and conceptual framework

A starting point must be with the literature on hidden curriculum – which, as indicated, has now developed to a point at which most forces are arguably no longer hidden. The first part of this section extracts core themes from this literature before turning to counterpart themes on shadow education.

Historically, the notion of hidden curriculum has had a range of definitions. Some scholars referred to the same concept using different names, such as: ‘unstudied’ curriculum, the ‘covert’ and ‘latent’ curriculum, ‘non-academic outcomes of schooling’, ‘residues of schooling’, and ‘by-products of schooling’ (Vallance, 1974, p.6). Vallance (1974) herself defined hidden curriculum as a phenomenon that had ‘non-academic but educationally significant consequences of schooling’ (p.7) and that occurred systematically but implicitly in schools. Zhang and Luo (2016, p.218) pointed out that the hidden curriculum ‘is classically defined as the unwritten, unofficial and often unintended lessons, values and perspectives that students learn in school’. They added that while the ‘formal’ curriculum covers the lessons and content that educators teach intentionally, ‘the hidden curriculum consists of the unspoken academic, social and cultural messages that are communicated to students through various indirect means’. The focus of Zhang and Luo was on migrant children in China, who were subject to discrimination despite formal mechanisms to promote educational equality. Like many others (e.g. Davis, 2013), Zhang and Luo cited the concepts of economic, social and cultural capital put forward by Bourdieu and Passeron (1990). Schools, they pointed out (p.218) tend to impose the norms and values of dominant classes, exerting ‘symbolic violence’ on groups that possess limited amounts of capital and reducing them to subordinate social status. Related notions have been advanced in what may now be considered the classical literature by critical theorists including Giroux and Penna (1979), and Apple and King (1983). More recently, Dunne and Adzahlie-Mensah (2016) have focused on the operation of schooling in Ghana which, like

Cambodia, is a low-income country that can be viewed through a post-colonial lens. The Western model of schooling was imported through the colonial processes and utilises syllabuses, timetables and forms of examinations part of the apparatus of power relations in which teachers exercise strong control and ensure that students receive messages of subordination.

The literature on shadow education is less developed than that on the hidden curriculum. The shadow metaphor dates from the early 1990s (Marimuthu et al. 1991; George, 1992; Stevenson and Baker, 1992), but only since the turn of the century has extensive research begun to develop. This research considers various categories of shadow education in diverse cultural and economic contexts. One category is exemplified by the *juku* in Japan (Watanabe, 2013; Yamato & Zhang, 2017) and the *hagwons* in Korea (Kim, 2013; Kim & Lee, 2010). These are commercial enterprises operating largely independently of schools albeit to a large extent serving converging objectives. The tutoring is commonly provided in classrooms or even lecture theatres, though the companies may also serve students on a one-to-one basis. University students and others who operate informally are another category of providers. These people usually serve primary and/or secondary students one-to-one or in small groups in the homes of the tutors or students and/or in public spaces such as libraries, and may be found almost universally. The third category of provider, which is the focus of this paper, is of teachers who provide tutoring on a part-time basis to supplement their incomes. This category has long been evident in Sri Lanka and Mauritius, for example (de Silva, 1994; Mauritius, 1994), and has emerged in countries as diverse as Egypt (Hartmann, 2013), Georgia (Kobakhidze, 2014), Kenya (Mercy and Dambson, 2014), and Vietnam (Hong and Tuan, 2011).

Where teachers provide private supplementary tutoring, a range of perspectives may be identified. Some teachers argue that they are the best qualified persons for such work, since they have been professionally trained and know school syllabuses well. The teachers may also know individual students well, and supplementary lessons can be dovetailed with content of regular classes already taught by the teachers. However, many education authorities perceive a conflict of interest. This is especially obvious when teachers give extra classes to the students for whom they are already responsible, since the teachers may be tempted deliberately to restrict the content of regular lessons in order to promote private demand (Ille, 2015; Jayachandran, 2014). Even when teachers do not tutor their existing students, they may allocate less effort to their core duties, for which they will be paid anyway, in order to reserve energies for the private work.

In a marketplace, prosperous consumers have more choice than low-income consumers over both quality and quantity. A major issue with shadow education is its role in maintaining and exacerbating social inequalities. Indeed the shadow sector may undermine basic principles about fee-free education, because when most students receive supplementary tutoring the minority either have to join in or risk being left behind. Nobel prize-winner Amartya Sen made this point with reference to surveys by the Pratichi Trust in West Bengal, India, in 2001/01 and 2008/09. The surveys focused on both primary schools and Sishu Siksha Kendras (SSKs) operated by communities as alternatives to primary schools. The second report showed that some of the problems identified by the first report had been alleviated, but Sen noted (2009, p.13) that:

The proportion of children relying on private tuition has gone up quite a bit (64% from 57% for the students of standard primary schools, and 58% from 24% for SSK children). Underlying this rise is not only some increase in incomes and the affordability of having private tuition, but also an intensification of the general conviction among the parents that private tuition is “unavoidable” if it can be at all afforded (78% of the parents now believe it is indeed “unavoidable” – up from 62%). For those who do not have arrangements for private tuition, 54% indicate that they do not go for it mainly – or only – because they cannot afford the costs.

Sen pointed out that in these circumstances the official position that schooling was free of charge was undermined by strong pressures on families to invest in supplementary tutoring. Similar remarks apply to patterns in Cambodia.

With such matters in mind, this paper focuses on a number of key components. First are estimates of the numbers and characteristics of students who receive (and do not receive) shadow education at different levels and in different subjects. Second are observations on the numbers and characteristics of teachers who provide (and do not provide) such shadow education. And third are the perspectives of the students and teachers on the nature and impact of shadow education. Deeper consideration of the dynamics requires attention to prices, locations and content of tutoring, and of the backwash on regular classrooms where tutoring may influence peer relationships and in which students who have not received tutoring may be disadvantaged.

Cambodia and its education system

Cambodia’s long and powerful history is epitomised by the ancient Angkor Wat temple of which an image adorns the national flag. Concerning more contemporary times, however, Cambodia is commonly associated with the 1975-79 Khmer Rouge regime which led to the deaths nearly two million among the country’s seven million people, and during which over 75% of teachers fled or died (Chandler 2008, pp.255-276). Some scars of that period remain evident in the present article. During the 1980s, Cambodia was administered by a Vietnamese occupying force, following which a United Nations Transitional Authority provided a temporary government. Since the early 1990s, much effort has been made to reconstruct the education system and other components of infrastructure. Significant achievements have helped the economy to approach lower-middle-income status with an annual per capita income of US\$1,000 (Madhur and Rethy, 2015, p.1), though much poverty remains and the education system is seriously underfunded.

Cambodia has 24 provinces, among which this paper focuses on one, Siem Reap. This province has approximately one million people, forming 6.7% of the country’s total population of 13 million. Siem Reap town is adjacent to the Angkor Wat temple, which is a major tourist destination and earner of foreign exchange. Outside the town, however, incomes in Siem Reap Province are below the national average (Asian Development Bank, 2014, p.27).

This paper is concerned with secondary schooling, which is preceded by six years of primary schooling and has a 3+3 structure, i.e. three years of lower secondary and three years of upper secondary. Although primary school enrolment rates exceed 90%, in 2014/15 Siem Reap’s gross enrolment rates for lower and

upper secondary schooling were 52.2% and 22.9% (Cambodia, Ministry of Education, Youth & Sport [MoEYS], 2015, p.41), which was close to the national average.

Provision of supplementary classes by regular teachers has been widespread since at least the 1990s (Sophonnara, 1994; Asian Development Bank, 1996; Bray, 1999b). A major driver has been the low level of teachers' salaries which despite periodic revisions have been constantly eroded by inflation and have remained inadequate to meet the living costs of a typical married teacher with two children (Tandon and Fukao, 2015, p.19). Teachers then need supplementary incomes, and feel justified in giving less than full effort to their official duties. Among the consequences is significant absenteeism during school hours (Benveniste et al., 2008, pp.66-71; Sopha et al., 2015, pp.29-43), even though the official school day is short. Another consequence is use of position power to earn supplementary incomes from students. The Ethical Code for the Teaching Profession states that 'Teachers shall not raise money or collect informal fees or run any business inside the class' (Cambodia, 2008, Article 13), but this is widely ignored.

Methodology

The research design through which data were collected was informed by broader cross-national work led by the first-named author of this paper both in Cambodia and in other locations (Bray & Bunly, 2005; Bray et al., 2015). The fieldwork itself was conducted by a Cambodian Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) in Siem Reap, This Life Cambodia (TLC), in conjunction with the authors. The researchers sought depth in illustration of variations around the province rather than statistical representativeness. With this in mind, they chose six schools for investigation: three high schools with Grades 7-12, and three lower secondary schools with Grades 7-9. These schools were selected from an initial sample identified jointly by the NGO and the external team, following which the NGO sought approval from the provincial authorities and then from the schools themselves. Among the six schools, three were urban or semi-urban and three were rural.

Within the schools, the researchers focused on Grades 9 (all six schools) and 12 (the three high schools) because these are transition points marked by national examinations. The Grade 9 examination concludes the lower secondary stage, after which students either leave the system or proceed to Grade 10. Grade 12 is the last year of schooling, after which students either join the labour force or proceed to post-secondary studies. As in other countries (see e.g. Bray & Lykins, 2012, p.24), the watershed examinations have strong impact on the demand for private tutoring. At the same time, the surveyed Cambodian students recalled experiences in earlier grades, including the links between tutoring and internal tests rather than national examinations.

The research employed both quantitative and qualitative methods in a mode that, in the words of Sammons and Davis (2017, p.477), could 'go beyond the findings and interpretations that can be achieved from reliance on only one methodological perspective'. Team members commenced by visiting each school to explain their purposes to the teachers and students in the relevant grades. The researchers then asked the students to take home a written explanation and obtain parental consent for the students to participate. In the next visit to each school, the team secured consent from the students themselves and from their teachers. The team then distributed questionnaires to students and teachers, at the same time inviting respondents to participate in

interviews if selected. This paper particularly draws on 48 student interviews and 24 teacher interviews. A broader picture was provided by questionnaire responses from 1,274 students (662 in Grade 9 and 612 in Grade 12), and 72 teachers.

The design for student interviews had envisaged for each grade a balanced sample of (i) male students without tutoring, (ii) male students with tutoring, (iii) female students without tutoring, and (iv) female students with tutoring. However, some students who had initially agreed to interviews subsequently declined and had to be replaced; and in some schools it was difficult to find willing interviewees who were not receiving tutoring. The final interview sample had 31 females but only 17 males. This reflected the larger proportions of girls in the classes, and also the greater willingness of girls to be interviewed – perhaps because they were commonly higher performers. The sample also had only nine students who were not receiving tutoring compared with 39 who were receiving it, because relatively few students were not receiving tutoring and not all were willing to be interviewed. Nevertheless, these proportions broadly matched the picture identified by the quantitative data.

Among the teacher interviews, by contrast, gender equality was achieved: 12 interviewees were female and 12 were male. This closely matched the proportion of 46.6% female secondary school teachers in the province. Among these interviewees, 11 were providing tutoring and nine were not.

The team analysed the questionnaire data using SPSS and interview data using NVivo software. The NVivo software offered new ways to clarify and analyse data, and enhanced the researchers' ability to make quick links between codes and concepts, retrieve text and easily locate the evidence. At that point the researchers noted needs for further institutional information on contexts and attitudes of actors. Team members returned to the schools for verification and follow-up discussions particularly with teachers, vice-principals and principals. This iterative process was beneficial for processes of continual validation and interpretation of the data as recommended by Johnson and Christensen (2012, p.442). The procedures did not permit detailed coverage of every dimension of shadow education and the hidden curriculum, which is unavoidably sensitive and requiring both trust and qualitative judgement. The authors were mindful of the need to respect boundaries in probing and disclosure of information (Farrimond, 2017; McTaggart, 2014). Nevertheless, the procedures did shed light on dynamics in a way that has not been done before either in Cambodia or elsewhere, and also pointed to avenues for further research and exploration.

The nature of shadow education

This section begins with information on scale and subjects in which tutoring is received and on the providers of tutoring. The focus then turns to the forms of tutoring delivery.

Scale, subjects and providers

Previous research in Cambodia has not yet delivered robust and nationally-representative statistics, but has indicated in a range of contexts that large proportions of students receive shadow education at both primary and secondary levels (Bray and Bunly, 2005; Brehm, 2015; Brehm and Silova, 2014; Harris-Van Keuren, 2016). Consistent with these impressions, among the Grade 9 students sampled for the present study 74.7%

reported that they received private supplementary classes, and among sampled Grade 12 students the proportion was 89.8%. Little gender difference was displayed, with the proportions being 82.8% among females and 80.9% among males. The rural/urban gap was also small: 83.5% of urban students reported receipt of shadow education compared with 80.9% among semi-urban and rural students. This gap was much less than in countries where tutoring is mainly a commercial enterprise concentrated in towns because they have greater incomes and population densities (see e.g. Bray and Lykins, 2012, p.12). The Cambodian figures reflected the fact that most tutoring is provided by teachers who are as much available in rural as urban areas. They also showed that the existence of tutoring has become a norm for most households. Tutoring may also be received during school breaks and vacations, delivered either by teachers or by other providers, but was not a prominent component for the students sampled by the present research.

The next question concerns the subjects for tutoring. Among the students who received tutoring, 79.0% did so in mathematics. This matched patterns in other countries (see e.g. Suraweera, 2011, p.20), since mathematics is a core subject which also assists other subjects. Second on the list was Chemistry (68.8%) followed by Khmer (60.1%), Physics (59.7%), and Biology (44.2%). Only 28.4% of students received tutoring in English, suggesting that it has less importance in Cambodia than in many other countries (see e.g. Hamid et al., 2009; Suraweera, 2011). At the bottom of the list were Earth & Environmental Studies (4.5%), Geography (3.4%), History (2.7%), and Morality/Philosophy (1.4%). Over half the students received tutoring in three or more subjects, with 10.1% receiving it in two subjects and 13.4% receiving it in only one subject.

The team asked about the identities of the tutors in three of the six schools (one semi-urban and two rural), having adjusted the questionnaire half way through the process in order to do so. Among the respondent students receiving tutoring, 57.7% stated that their tutoring was from their own teachers and 40.9% from other teachers in their schools. Just 1.2% stated that their tutoring classes were from teachers in different schools, 0.6% from self-employed persons or university students, and none from a company. Following up with teacher interviews in the urban schools, the researchers were informed that companies were beginning to emerge in Siem Reap town but that they were still small and that the bulk of the tutoring, as elsewhere in the province, was provided by teachers. Interviews with both students and teachers indicated that most tutorial classes were in the schools already attended by those students and teachers, but that some classes were held in teachers' homes, NGO offices, or elsewhere.

The reported costs of tutoring were fairly consistent across schools and teachers, though generally higher in urban than rural areas. Some students paid on a monthly basis, while others paid per lesson. Common monthly rates were 10,000 riels (US\$2.50) per subject, while common per-lesson rates were 500 riels (US\$0.13). The total financial burden on students depended on the number of subjects; and the total burden on families depended on the number of school-going children. The average per-student monthly costs for all subjects reported in the student questionnaires were 50,000 riels (US\$14.00). The US\$1,000 national average annual per capita income indicated above (Madhur and Rethy, 2015, p.1) would imply a monthly per capita income of US\$83.33, indicating that US\$14.00 would be a considerable proportion for many households. Among students responding to the question, 19.3% strongly agreed and 64.9% agreed that the costs were a

financial burden, and only 15.8% felt that the costs were not a burden. One teacher reported that some families even took bank loans to pay the tutoring fees.

While 43.9% of teachers indicated that they charged a standard fee for all students, the majority stated that they charged different fees according to ability to pay and that some students received free tutoring. Thus some teachers sought to maximise incomes – and indeed could earn more from tutoring than from their official salaries – but others were willing to assist at least some poor students. Some teachers also charged fees for other services such as copies of test questions or bringing notes to examinations (see also Brehm. 2015). Students presumably noted the hidden curriculum of different teachers behaving in different ways according to their personal values.

Forms of tutoring delivery

Brehm's (2015) research was also conducted in Siem Reap Province. His detailed qualitative study included an account of a Grade 7 private lesson taught by a science teacher and a comparison with patterns in that teacher's regular Grade 7 classes (pp.122-126). The findings from the present study matched the patterns recounted by Brehm. First, the chemistry tutoring class analysed by Brehm was smaller than the average government class (i.e. class in the public school). The questionnaire data for the present study echoed this feature: the government classes ranged from 32 to 75 students with an average of 48 students, while the tutoring classes ranged from 5 to 60 students with an average of 23 students. Second, the gender balance in the private class observed by Brehm was significantly tilted, with 23 girls and 14 boys, in contrast to approximate parity in the government class. The gender gap in this case was even greater than had been shown by the present authors' questionnaire survey, but the interviews also indicated that gaps were common. For example, when asked about the gender balance in his mathematics tutoring class, one teacher replied that even though his government class was balanced, girls were more likely to join the tutoring class. 'Girls tend to study more than boys', he said. 'Some boys are lazy, while the girls are serious.' As a result, he added, most of the top students were girls.

A further feature noted by Brehm and echoed in the present study concerned the classroom climate. In the teacher's government class, students wore uniforms; but in the tutoring classes they wore anything they wished. In the government class, students commenced with a *Sampeah* in which they placed their palms together at eyebrow level and chanted a formal greeting; while the tutoring class opened in a low-key way with the teacher chatting with different groups prior to commencing the lesson. Brehm remarked (2015, p.124) that the teacher 'seemed to have a friendly relationship with students in private tutoring unlike government school where rules, regulations, and formality defined the actions by student and teacher'.

Further differences exposed by the present research concerned the content of the lessons. As explained by one interviewee:

In the government class ... [teachers] just teach as quickly as they can in order to finish their lessons, but in the private tutoring class they explain each point and we can ask if we are not clear.

The students commonly viewed tutoring as an opportunity to practice exercises, usually unfinished ones from the government classes but sometimes exercises brought specially by the teacher. Teachers gave similar accounts. Many reported that they summarised the lesson that had been taught in government class and then dedicated most of the tutoring time to exercises. For example:

The students have a basic understanding already from government class. Mostly the students who attend my private tutoring class receive exercises.

Thus the shadow education classes were explicitly linked to the mainstream classes, but had different emphases. Some students reported not only that they did more exercises in the private classes but that they did more difficult exercises to prepare better for the examinations.

Further, the pedagogical methods in tutoring classes were different from those in government classes. Among the teachers who offered private tutoring, 81.6% stated that one of their motives was ‘to use other pedagogical methods not supported by the MoEYS’. Thus, in tutoring classes, teachers used pedagogical approaches which were not encouraged by the MoEYS in government classes, including teacher-centered instruction of a type considered easier for teachers to handle or more appropriate for teaching certain subjects (see also Ogisu, 2006).

Enactment of the hidden curriculum

This section highlights ways in which teachers and students enacted negative aspects of the hidden curriculum in classrooms. Components of the hidden curriculum were not applied equally to all students, and the fact that students constructed their own perceptions and interpretations contributed to variations.

The tricks of the teachers – and of the students

Among the studies of shadow education in Cambodia is a chapter by Dawson (2009) about the ‘tricks’ used by teachers to expand demand for their supplementary classes by deliberately slowing down in regular lessons and/or withholding key components. Dawson (p.65) quoted one teacher who had stated:

That’s the way we force the students to study in private tutoring. The teacher says the new math formulas are only introduced in private tutoring.

The present authors were alert to the possibility of such strategies, and listened with care to teachers’ explanations of their behaviour. When the teachers were asked during interviews whether they split the curriculum between mainstream and private lessons, two thirds (16 out of 24) categorically denied that they did so but others acknowledged that they had done so at some time. Students also indicated that this occurred. A typical comment was:

I feel that for Biology, we don’t study exercises in government classes. We have fewer exercises, so if we don’t attend private tutoring we will not understand at all. I would not know how to solve the problem when doing the exam.

Three students went further to state that their teachers did not allow students to do exercises during

government classes, even when they had time. Instead, the teachers released the students early from the government classes, signalling that those who wanted the exercises should come to the private sessions.

A further element concerned coverage of the syllabus in private lessons ahead of the government classes. As explained by one student, the teacher:

usually teaches the lesson at private tutoring before the government class. Then when the teacher covers that lesson in the government class, the teacher calls on students from private tutoring to solve the problems because the students who do not attend private tutoring do not know how to solve them. As a result, we couldn't understand and the teacher didn't explain it well... [The teachers engage in] kinds of trick in order to encourage the students to study in the private tutoring with them.

Granting higher marks to tutored students was interpreted as another marketing trick. Another student explained that:

students who study in the extra lessons will get higher scores than the students who don't study in the extra lessons. Teachers will add more scores to the students who study in the extra lessons.

Teachers also recognised this practice. As recounted by one:

Usually the students who attend private tutoring are given high scores even if their [real] scores are not good. But the students who don't study in the private tutoring don't get the scores.

In these cases, teachers were using their power to set and grade internal tests, even though the signals sent by those tests might not be consistent with the scores eventually received by the students in the national examinations. This is in line with the view of Giroux and Penna (1979, p.31) that 'the nature of hidden curriculum is nowhere more clearly revealed than in the system of evaluation'. Teachers' hidden rules of evaluation formed a sub-text which was communicated to students. The unspoken signals could discourage not only tutored students but also non-tutored students from working hard, since the latter were set up for potential failure.

At the same time, the research exposed what might be described as the tricks of the students. Studies elsewhere (e.g. Chan and Bray, 2014, p.378) have indicated that students have taken private lessons more seriously than government classes because they were paying for them. These were students with different tutors rather than the same teachers for both public and private classes. The Cambodian situation contrasts insofar as the same teachers, or at least related teachers in the same school, covered both classes. As in other parts of the world, most interviewees indicated that discipline was better in the tutoring classes. Nevertheless, three interviewed students indicated that because students paid money to study in the private classes, they took the liberty to be noisier and not to listen – and because the teachers were operating in a market environment with clients, they were more tolerant of the behaviour. Such actions suggest that in these students' perceptions, education when 'purchased' becomes a service that can be treated differently.

Also among 'the tricks of the students' was misuse of the money provided by parents for the tutoring. While some teachers collected fees on a monthly basis, most collected it on a daily basis. As a result, children had to bring cash each day; but some chose to skip the private classes and instead spent the money on snacks

or other items. Of course it might be argued that young people have to learn to handle money, and that they would still bring cash which was intended for snacks. Nevertheless, the monetised nature of the tutoring service increased the temptations and in some cases the abuses. Some students were reported to have cheated on both sides: telling their parents that they had attended tutoring while actually hanging out elsewhere, and telling teachers that they missed the private classes because their parents were sick and they needed to be at home. One teacher added that her willingness to provide free tutoring had been abused by some students who had pretended to be poor but in fact were able to afford the fees.

Teachers' expectations

Educational literature has long emphasized the importance of teachers' initial expectations in relation to children's chances of success or failure. Some authors have related teachers' expectations to self-fulfilling prophecy or what Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968) called the Pygmalion Effect. Classroom dynamics reflected in students' and teachers' responses indicated the pertinence of this theme to the Cambodian context. Along lines identified by Giroux and Penna (1979), the hidden curriculum communicated teachers' beliefs and expectations about tutored and non-tutored students.

Although the majority of teachers claimed to treat tutored and non-tutored students equally, they exposed contradictions when comparing two groups of students. The teachers' perspectives of students who received and did not receive tutoring varied. The teachers described the students who received tutoring as 'smarter', 'more motivated', and 'having higher sense of responsibility' than those who did not receive tutoring. Students not receiving tutoring were described as disengaged and slow learners, further indicating the danger of labelling and stereotyping. For example, one teacher remarked: 'My observation is that the students who attend the private tutoring are more clever than the students who don't attend the private tutoring'. Another teacher from a different school echoed this sentiment:

I love my students equally both in the mainstream class and the extra class but their knowledge is different. The students that have learned in the extra class are smarter than the students who didn't learn in the extra class. I teach the same way in the extra class but the students' knowledge is not the same.

Similarly, students indicated that peers who received tutoring were 'smarter', had 'more ideas', and 'answered teachers' questions', and therefore 'scored higher' in tests. Such expectations may lead students to divide the class into two groups: those who receive tutoring and are therefore expected to succeed, and those who do not and anticipate failure. Non-tutored students may be socialized into lower self-expectations, may internalize failure and may develop respect towards those of higher status. For example, some students were afraid that if they did not study in private tutoring class, they could become slow learners. One student reported that some teachers mainly called to the blackboard the students who attended the private tutoring classes, because they were ready to solve problems, while non-tutored students would generally stumble and feel embarrassed:

In the government school, the teacher calls on the students who attend the private tutoring class, because if the teachers call the students who didn't attend the private tutoring, then they don't know

how to do it, so the students get embarrassed.

The teachers confirmed that they devoted more focus to the tutored students in government class because these students were generally more active. This meant that the tutored-students received favoured teaching time in government lessons in addition to tutoring class. This further widened the educational gap between tutored and non-tutored students.

Within the framework of hidden curriculum, the teachers' actions may be understood as discursive practices transmitting negative messages. One clear indication was not setting unequal expectations for tutored and non-tutored students. Further, ability sorting by some teachers kept tutored and non-tutored students apart. The teachers blamed non-tutored students for their academic disengagement without considering the full range of reasons for not receiving tutoring. One reason declared by the students for not receiving tutoring was inability to pay, but the teachers mainly emphasized low interest in learning. This attitude did not help nurture the students' desire to learn in government class. It could keep disadvantaged students disadvantaged and reinforce social inequalities. The students in socialization process may absorb hidden messages and signals from teachers which may shape their personalities, future aspirations and values. This evidence can be considered as an empirical example of 'how the structural production of inequality goes along with the socialization to assent to and believe in that inequality' (Margolis et al., 2001, p.16) and have far-reaching implications for students' lives.

Teacher-student absenteeism and lack of commitment

Data indicated that teachers were sometimes absent from school and that many came late to class. Interviewees felt that their low salaries justified lax attention to their government classes, and some teachers indicated that alongside their school work they operated businesses, raised animals and/or worked as tour guides. While the teachers did not directly acknowledge the impact of absence and lateness on students' learning, they did recognize that they were commonly unable to complete the syllabus during standard hours. Student absenteeism was also reported. This may be understandable if teachers lacked commitment, and in addition students commonly needed to help their families in agricultural and domestic roles. The major unspoken message in the hidden curriculum was that other commitments could be valued more highly than teaching and learning during standard school hours.

Pedagogy of uncare

Following the works of Noddings (2005) and Valenzuela (1999), the pedagogy of care has become an established concept in educational literature. Noddings (2005) used the term Ethic of Care to describe the relational practices in classrooms that promote mutual recognition, empowerment, growth and development. She argued that caring pedagogy should be in the centre of education systems and even should be part of the formal curriculum. Noddings (2005) described caring pedagogy as core to good learning, indicating that it can provide a climate in which teacher-student relationships flourish (p.xv). Both Noddings (2005) and Valenzuela (1999) advocated for caring educators who set high academic expectations while fostering supportive relationships with students. While forms (or lack) of care are not always explicit, the

pedagogy/ethic of care provides important insights into dynamic relationships between teachers and students in Cambodia as well as elsewhere.

Specifically, the Cambodian data indicated gaps in teachers' relationships and styles of pedagogy in the government and tutoring classes. The teachers' responses during interviews showed that most enacted their instruction in government classes with little passion, care and enthusiasm. Six students recognized teachers' low engagement manifested in 'fast teaching', a strategy adopted by some teachers to complete the syllabus within the designated time. The teachers did not strive to make points clear to students because they rushed to finish the curriculum. In contrast, the students felt that in tutorial classes the teachers explained better, with more detail and examples.

In the government class... [teachers] just teach as quickly as they can in order to finish their lessons, but in the private tutoring class, they explain clearly each point and we can ask if we aren't clear. We can also ask our teachers in the government class, but mostly no one asks.

Another student made a similar point about uncaring in government classes:

It's hard to understand mathematics and physics due to the teachers not teaching well, as they have done at their private tutoring. They can explain to us clearly at the private tutoring class but at the mainstream school they don't care whether students can understand the lesson clearly or not, they just try to finish the lesson.

Similar comments from students indicated that some teachers exhibited observable behaviors that students interpreted as uncaring and inattentive. Noddings (2005) emphasized that "responsiveness is in the heart of caring" (p.xxv), and such responsiveness which was not a strong feature of government classes. For example, some teachers were unavailable for questions in government classes, but showed willingness to respond to students' needs in tutoring classes. This pattern highlighted problems in teacher-student relationships and represented a form of uncaring pedagogy.

Other accounts shed light on the characteristics of teachers as relatively uncaring instructors in government class and contrast with the same teachers' more caring styles in tutoring classes. One teacher even made this explicit:

[In] the government school it's up to us whether we care or not, but [in the private sector] we must care about [teaching] because the students want the quality. For the government school, the salary is not adequate so we have less care about the teaching. [Even if] we try hard, our salary is still the same. We therefore don't try our best [in teaching] but we can get the same salary.

These comments indicate that in tutoring classes, students were valued more because of their payments to teachers. Yet this pattern also did not suggest a "caring pedagogy"; paying for tutoring classes constructed market relations between teachers and students in which "care" could be understood as a marketing strategy to attract more students. This arrangement reinforced a privatized view of students as consumers and signaled problems that educational privatization brought to public schooling.

As evident from analyzing teachers' voices, most teachers felt more responsibility in tutoring than in government classes. When asked why they enacted more caring pedagogy in tutoring than in government classes, teachers explained that taking money from students made them feel responsible for students' learning. The following was a typical comment:

In the private tutoring class we charge money from [students]... So we try to find different ways in order to make them understand well.

Examination of teachers' comments showed that perceptions about professionalism and commitment to public education were shaped by the socio-economic contexts in which they worked and lived. Such varied attitudes towards their responsibilities in tutoring versus in government classes led teachers to invest less in public education and instead prioritize their private tutoring roles.

Two literatures on hidden curriculum and caring pedagogy can be brought together to explore in depth classroom dynamics in Cambodia, especially showing teachers' varied attitudes, expectations and relationships with the students in government classes compared with tutoring settings. Lack of attention and uncaring attitude in government classes may contribute to less visible aspects of hidden curriculum that in turn may disadvantage the students who cannot afford tutoring.

A parallel in the way that uncaring pedagogy was part of the government class may be drawn with patterns in Ghana where Dunne and Adzhalie-Mensah (2016, p.223), citing Miller (1990), referred to "undertones of a deep and tragic sense of powerlessness" in the student body and "a poisonous pedagogic relationship between teachers and students, which negatively shape the conditions for learning and undermine any possibilities for democratic engagement". Dunne and Adzhalie-Mensah made no mention of shadow education in Ghana, even though it is known to be a widespread feature in at least some communities (Antonowicz et al., 2010, p.21). This Cambodian research showed that more caring pedagogy seemed to contribute to the positive aspects of the hidden curriculum in private tutoring classes, and further explained the students' willingness to join tutoring classes. Such factors might similarly operate in Ghana and elsewhere. Despite its many problems (Macpherson et al., 2014), the neoliberal approach can make providers of education services more client-operated.

The teachers who do not offer tutoring

Different signals in the hidden curriculum were sent about the teachers who chose not to offer supplementary classes. As indicated, among the 24 teachers interviewed, 13 were providing private tutoring and 11 were not. Some teachers stated that their subjects were not in demand, naming History, Geography, and Earth & Environmental Studies which were not core subjects. Also apparent was a gender difference: males were much more likely to be providing tutoring, with nine of the 12 males were providing it (75.0%) in contrast to only four of the 12 females (33.3%). The research did not explore in detail the reasons why fewer females provided tutoring, but the impression was that they were more committed to family duties and perhaps could rely on their husbands to secure the necessary incomes. One female teacher in a rural school did indicate that her students had

requested her to offer private classes but that she had replied that she did not have time to do so, especially because she would have considered it necessary to undertake additional preparation. By contrast, one male teacher interviewed chose not to offer tutoring even though his subject was mathematics because he preferred to devote his time to a business providing greater remuneration.

Conclusions

The above account presents clear messages about the hidden curriculum of shadow education in this part of central Cambodia. Repeating an earlier point, in this province almost all tutoring is provided by teachers rather than by commercial enterprises, and patterns would be different in Cambodia's capital city, Phnom Penh. A considerable majority of the students were receiving private classes: 74.7% of the responding Grade 9 students, and 89.8% of the Grade 12 students. The default position was that students received the tutoring on the school premises either from their own teachers or from other teachers in their schools.

Among the signals sent by these processes was that supplementary tutoring was a standard and legitimate approach to daily routines, even in a system which was officially free of charge; and when enrolment rates reached high levels, the students who did not receive tutoring were likely to feel under even greater pressure than when enrolment rates in tutoring were relatively low. Particularly in the cases of teachers who did not complete the curriculum during government classes, or who did so at great speed, tutoring was perceived as necessary to complete the whole of the government curriculum on which the national examinations would be based. Referring back to the vocabulary of Bourdieu and Passeron (1990), disadvantaged groups experienced 'symbolic violence' which reduced them to subordinate status. More recent commentary by Dunne and Adzahlie-Mensah (2016) points to related forces in Ghana, but those authors did not include shadow education in their analysis. In Cambodia, such factors contribute to social inequalities, which have been explored further in a related paper (Bray et al., 2016). Further challenges relate to the pedagogy of uncare during regular classes that appears to be at least partly underpinned by the prevalence of shadow classes. At the same time, within general patterns were variations including students who could afford private classes but chose instead to spend their parents' money on snacks and other items. These dimensions point to a major agenda for research not only in Cambodia but also in other settings.

Among other themes deserving further attention in Cambodia would be the variations in subjects. Further detail is needed to contrast patterns in the subjects with very high rates of tutoring – most obviously Mathematics followed by Chemistry, Khmer and Physics, with subjects having much lower rates such as Earth & Environmental Studies, Geography and History. Further qualitative research would compare more deeply the patterns among teachers tutoring their own students and teachers tutoring other students but in the same school; and although in this sample just 1.2% of students received tutoring from teachers in different schools and only 0.6% received tutoring from self-employed persons or university students, the dynamics in these cases also deserve analysis and comparison.

The findings suggested that teachers delivered different curricula in government and tutoring classes, grounded in implicit and explicit low expectations of non-tutored students. Some teachers transmitted low

expectations of non-tutored students, viewing them as disengaged and less motivated. The hidden curriculum had the power to create the Pygmalion effect (Rosenthal and Jacobson, 1968), carrying the danger of reinforcement of social inequalities. Moreover, the study found that the hidden curriculum was enacted through different qualities of instruction in government and tutoring classes, favouritism towards the tutored students, tricks of the teachers, and absenteeism. Such forms of discrimination towards non-tutored students in class constitute hidden, informal pedagogical procedures used by teachers with economically disadvantaged students who could not afford tutoring. This is in line with McLaren's (2008, p.75) statement that:

The hidden curriculum also includes teaching and learning styles that are emphasized in the classroom, the messages that get transmitted to the student by the total physical and instructional environment, government structures, teachers' expectations, and grading procedures.

McLaren (2008) and colleagues working on aspects of hidden curriculum mainly focused on social class, culture and gender in formal classroom settings and neglected the informal education sector including private tutoring. This paper contributes to the theory of hidden curriculum by focusing on and closely analysing the informal education setting, social relationships, and ways in which teachers' enacted uncaring pedagogy in government classes. These are new areas in the literature of both shadow education and hidden curriculum.

One can argue that the negative practices presented in this paper deprived students of their rights to quality education because those who could not afford tutoring received lesser quality of education. Certain discriminatory behaviours and attitudes of some teachers indicated that the schools legitimised the reproduction of inequality and produced stratified relationships among teachers and students. The paper also contributes to raising awareness on such issues and documenting evidence of negative aspects of hidden curriculum in a low-income context. Policy-makers, both in Cambodia and elsewhere, should perhaps examine these aspects and seek ways to reduce the negative aspects of the hidden curriculum.

Further research would also focus on the personalities of individual teachers and students, which were clearly shown to be important, and on broader categories of what sorts of people choose to provide (or not provide) and receive (or not receive) tutoring by age group, gender, urban/rural residence, etc.. Attention is needed to the fact that hidden curriculum may be experienced individually – students may receive and respond differently to the same messages. More research is needed to explore and differentiate the hidden curriculum at individual and institutional levels. School-level factors may also be pertinent, including teachers' daily schedules and peer dynamics among teachers. This analysis would similarly explore more deeply which categories of students receive and do not receive tutoring for specific subjects, why, and with what implications. Building on studies such as Edwards et al. (2014) and Kitamura et al. (2016), variations would be identified by socio-economic background, academic ability, and other factors. Such investigation might distinguish more fully between students who seek tutoring from a desire to learn more in contrast to students who do so from a desire to receive favours during regular lessons.

Nevertheless, the broad parameters are clear from this study. They show that policy makers and practitioners cannot focus only on official curricula and government schooling as if it provides the totality of students' learning experiences. The tutoring marketplace perhaps could be described as 'hidden in plain sight'

insofar as everybody knows that it is there but relatively few choose to talk about it. It certainly needs much more attention because of its huge implications for social stratification, the efficiencies/inefficiencies in teaching and learning, and the fact that it shows children from an early age that even education can be marketised and made available for a negotiable price. Insofar as the Cambodian patterns are more extreme than in such countries as Mauritius, Nepal, Georgia and Egypt (Bah-lalya, 2006; Jayachandran, 2014; Kobakhidze, 2014; Ille, 2015), they can expose patterns that may be more difficult to detect elsewhere but which are nevertheless of considerable importance.

Acknowledgements: The research on which this paper reports was supported by the General Research Fund (GRF) of the Hong Kong Research Grants Council (RGC), project 747113H. The authors also express appreciation to the TLC team and to the schools that provided information.

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