

Shadow Education in Sub-Saharan Africa: Privatization Alongside and Within Public Schooling ☐

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Introduction

In their influential publication about ‘hidden privatisation of education’, Ball and Youdell (2008, p.14) distinguished between privatisation *in* education and privatisation *of* education. By the former, which they also called endogenous privatisation, they meant deployment of private-sector ideas, techniques and practices in order to make the public sector more business-like. By the latter, which they also called exogenous privatisation, they meant the opening up of public education services to private sector participation on a for-profit basis. These processes are commonly driven by deliberate government-led initiatives. This chapter addresses a third category in which private activities develop alongside the public sector but also have hidden impact within the public sector. The development usually occurs despite rather than because of government policies, and thus is related to what Verger et al. (2016, p.7) called privatisation by default.

The chapter focuses on private supplementary tutoring. In the academic literature, such tutoring is widely called shadow education because much of it mimics schooling. Thus, as the curriculum changes in the schools, so it changes in the shadow; and as the school sector expands, so does the shadow (Aurini et al., 2013; Bray, 1999; Hajar & Karakus, 2022). Such tutoring may be delivered by entrepreneurs who operate tutorial centres, by full-time teachers who provide tutoring as a side activity, and by university students and other informal suppliers. The tutoring may be provided in person and/or online on a one-to-one basis, in small groups, and/or in large lecture theatres. While some tutoring may be free of charge, this chapter is concerned with fee-charging provision.

In some parts of Sub-Saharan Africa, shadow education is very visible and longstanding. Elsewhere it is less visible but expanding rapidly. Major issues associated with the theme include marketization of education, financial burdens on households, and exacerbation of social inequalities. These themes are well known in much of Asia

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and elsewhere (Zhang & Bray, 2020), though even there they need much greater attention than they have received to date.

Also needing greater attention is the backwash of shadow education on schooling. In some cases the shadow curricula clash with those of schooling, partly in content and approaches but also in timing if students learn material from tutors ahead of schooling and then are bored during school hours. Shadow education also impacts on disparities in classrooms. Tutoring reduces disparities when it helps slow learners to keep up with their peers, but it exacerbates disparities when it helps fast learners to stretch further. Further, teachers who are also tutors may be tempted to neglect their regular lessons, for which they are paid anyway, in favour of their private tutoring in which revenue depends on performance. Sometimes teachers go further to pressurise their school students to receive tutoring outside school hours, and even cut components of their teaching in order to preserve the content for their private lessons. This pattern could fit under the heading of privatisation *in* education, though is rather different from what Ball and Youdell (2008) had in mind.

To set the scene, this chapter begins with some indicators on the scale and nature of shadow education in Sub-Saharan Africa. It then turns to demand, supply, and the impact of shadow education. These remarks permit identification of implications for policy makers, particularly concerning regulations. The final section links back to the broader literature on privatisation and education.

The Scale and Nature of Shadow Education

Mapping of enrolment rates in shadow education is difficult because few statistics have been collected on common measures. Nevertheless, two cross-national datasets provide an instructive starting point.

The first dataset is from the Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ). Table 1 shows data on enrolment rates in shadow education as recorded in a pair of SACMEQ surveys. The range in 2007 is noteworthy, from 75% in Mauritius to 1% in Eswatini. The 2013 repeat of the survey indicated striking expansion – for example from 6% to 34% in Botswana, and from 4% to 29% in South Africa. Shadow education was only a minor theme in the overall survey, and for methodological reasons the precise numbers should be treated with caution (Pavio, 2015). Nevertheless, the clear overall message is that shadow education even in those years was a significant phenomenon; and it is since likely to have expanded further.

Table 1: SACMEQ Data on Enrolment Rates in Shadow Education, Grade 6, 2007 and 2013 (%)

Country	2007	2013
Mauritius	75	81
Kenya	52	n.a.
Uganda	25	n.a.
Zimbabwe	15	n.a.
Seychelles	13	21
Tanzania	14	n.a.
Mozambique	10	21
Zambia	6	n.a.
Botswana	6	34
Malawi	4	14
South Africa	4	29
Namibia	3	6
Lesotho	3	n.a.
Eswatini	1	11

n.a. = not available. Reports for Kenya, Uganda and Lesotho either did not include any data on this topic, or did not clearly indicate the proportions of total populations receiving paid rather than fee-free tutoring. Reports for Zambia and Zimbabwe could not be located. Tanzania [Mainland] did not participate in 2013. Separate data are available for Zanzibar, but are not shown.

Sources: SACMEQ (2010, p. 1); SACMEQ national reports.

A similar message applies to the second dataset, from the Programme d'Analyse des Systèmes Éducatifs de la CONFEMEN (PASEC).¹⁰ Table 2 shows survey data from Grade 6 students in 2019. Whereas most countries in Table 1 are Anglophone, all countries in Table 2 are Francophone. Shadow education enrolment rates appear lower than in the Anglophone countries, perhaps reflecting different traditions on roles of the state and of non-state actors. Again for methodological reasons the precise numbers should be treated with circumspection, but the table shows that enrolment rates were substantial in several countries.

¹⁰ CONFEMEN is the Conférence des Ministres de l'Éducation des États et Gouvernements de la Francophonie [Conference of Ministers of Education of Francophone States and Governments].

Table 2: PASEC Data on Enrolment Rates in Shadow Education, Grade 6, 2019 (%)

Country		Country	
Benin	22	Chad	10
Senegal	22	Niger	10
Cameroon	20	Congo	8
Togo	16	Gabon	8
Côte d'Ivoire	14	Burundi	6
Guinea	12	Congo, Democratic Republic	6
Burkina Faso	10	Madagascar	1

Source: Bray & Baba-Moussa (2023), p.9.

Since Tables 1 and 2 refer only to Grade 6, data from other grades are also needed. In general, peak enrolments occur shortly before high-stakes examinations. In most cases this is at the transition from lower-secondary to upper-secondary schooling (commonly the end of Grade 9), and at the conclusion of upper-secondary schooling (commonly Grade 12). Table 3 summarises studies in four countries not represented in Tables 1 and 2. The high enrolment rate for Angolan students in Grades 11 and 12 is especially noteworthy.

Table 3: Further Cross-National Indicators of Shadow Education

Country	Patterns
Angola	Among the 8,513 students in Grades 11 and 12 in Luanda, Benguela and Huambo surveyed by Chionga (2018, p.90) in 2015, 93.8% were receiving or had received tutoring at some time.
Ethiopia	Melese & Abebe (2017) surveyed 866 upper primary students in four regions (two relatively developed and two emerging) plus the national capital. When asked if they had ever received private tutoring, 66.8% replied affirmatively.
Ghana	A 1999/2000 survey of 1,535 students in 39 schools sampled to represent four different types of community found private

tutoring participation rates of 32.8% in primary, 49.5% in junior secondary, and 72.3% in senior secondary (Montgomery et al., 2000, p.12). A 2018 report, though without details on the sample, stated that about 68% of school children received extra lessons after school, with 23% of them receiving home tutoring (Business Ghana, 2018).

Nigeria

A 2004 nationally representative survey of 4,268 households asked about household expenditures in the 2003/04 academic year. One third (33.5%) of households with primary school children spent money on private tutoring, and over half (53.2%) of households with secondary school children did so (National Population Commission & ORC Macro, 2004, pp.92, 102). Oyewusi and Orolade (2014, p.272) suggested that Nigeria had over two million tutorial centres, plus much individual tutoring in individual homes. Akinrinmade (2023) noted demand for tutoring among low-income as well as middle-income and high-income families.

The Angolan study cited in Table 3 recorded the locations of tutoring received by the sampled Grade 11 and 12 students (Chionga, 2018, p.103). Over half received the support in the homes of the tutors, while one third did so in tutorial centres, and 10% in their own homes. Only 3% received support through the internet and in other locations.

Elsewhere, schools are the default locations for tutoring, particularly when that tutoring is provided by teachers in those schools. In Mauritius, at one point this was even given official sanction. In 1988 the Minister of Education proposed a set of regulations to prohibit tutoring in Grades 1-3, partly to protect the health of young children (Parsuramen 2007, p.10). At the same time, the Minister decided to permit the use of classrooms for tutoring in Grades 4-6 in order to allow the activity to be conducted in appropriate environments rather than the “appalling physical conditions” of converted garages and other locations.

Much private tutoring in other countries also occurs on school premises, though it is usually done in the face of official disapproval. The literature documents these patterns for example in The Gambia (King, 2012), Kenya (Munyao, 2015) and Zimbabwe (Simbarashe & Edlight, 2011). The schools have apparent appropriateness

insofar as they are designated spaces for teaching and learning with facilities designed for educational use.

Other tutoring is provided in churches, mosques, cafés, libraries, and other public locations that may be less convenient in layout and facilities. The use of churches and mosques commonly reflects community participation in the phenomenon, providing support for families and recognising that shadow education is part of daily life. Munyao (2015, p.101) indicated that teachers in Kenya provided tutoring in out-of-school locations “to avoid being found out” in the face of official disapproval at their schools. Tutoring in cafés may be welcomed by the owners of those cafés seeking business and willing to provide space. In public libraries, administrators may be tolerant or even supportive on the grounds that libraries are venues for learning of different kinds.

Although the Angolan data did not indicate significant tutoring through the internet, in other countries it has become common as an alternative channel. Compared with counterparts in Europe, North America and East Asia, for example, African households are less likely to have domestic personal computers, and the reach and power of the internet broadband is more limited.¹¹ Coverage of mobile phones is considerably wider, however, and tutoring at a distance through technology will certainly grow.

Drivers of demand

The most obvious driver of demand for shadow education is social competition. Families see that educational qualifications are a major way either to improve their socio-economic status or to maintain their already high status. In previous eras, formal education was an adequate channel to achieve this goal, but contemporary families increasingly feel that schooling is not enough.

Perhaps ironically, a major background factor has been success in campaigns for universalization of primary and lower secondary education (UNESCO, 2015). In earlier eras, many families did not aspire for advanced education because it was an unchallenged tradition in their social class that instead their children left school to find employment or to manage family duties. With rising enrolment rates in primary and lower secondary education, families now find that upper secondary and even higher education are within reach, and develop aspirations that would not have been

¹¹ List of sovereign states by number of broadband Internet subscriptions – Wikipedia, accessed 16 December 2023.

considered by their parents (Bray, 2017). Nevertheless, avenues for education remain stratified, or become even more so. Thus, alongside questions about what level of education has been achieved are questions about the institutions and programmes in which the education has been achieved. Shadow education becomes necessary to reach the more prestigious institutions.

Within this process, high-stakes examinations raise demand for shadow education at key junctures. At higher levels, these examinations determine who can remain in the education system and who are pushed out. At lower levels, the examinations are part of streaming: individuals remain in the education systems, but enter less or more prestigious tracks according to their scores. Thus, especially crucial are the examinations at the end of senior secondary education, but also important are preceding examinations, which sort students into different strata.

The demands of examinations in turn shape the content of tutoring sought by students and their families. In all contexts, the most popular subjects are mathematics and languages (particularly English, French or Portuguese, according to the country concerned). This is partly because they are core subjects in the examinations, and partly because they facilitate achievement in other subjects.

Also important are perceptions of inadequate quality in schools. With reference to secondary education in Tanzania, for example, Martínez (2017, p.7) observed that many schools lacked enough teachers to cover all subjects, with particularly worrying gaps in mathematics and science. “Students sometimes go without teachers specialized in the subjects for months, and must often find alternative ways to learn these subjects or pay for private tuition, or fail exams as a result”.

In some settings, the pressure becomes greater because teachers themselves demand the right to provide tutoring. They usually justify these actions by pointing to inadequate salaries. Again with reference to Tanzania, Martínez (2017, p.47) remarked on “the often compulsory costs of remedial training or private tuition offered by teachers”; and in Nigeria, Oyewusi and Orolade (2014, p.273) observed that:

It has always been the belief of the Nigerians that the ‘reward of a teacher is in heaven’. Today, because of their involvement in private tutoring where they are receiving untaxed income they have always replied that their reward is now on earth.

This is not true of all teachers, of course, but has become widely evident across Sub-Saharan Africa.

Turning again to parents, the demand for tutoring, as one might expect, is fuelled not only by aspirations but also by feelings that they cannot themselves tutor their

children (see e.g. Akinrinmade, 2023, p.137). Sometimes such feelings are deliberately fuelled by tutorial companies so that they can then offer remedies. With reference to Japan, but having wider relevance, Dierkes (2013) described private tutoring as an “insecurity industry”.

Further factors in parental demand may include keeping their children productively occupied and under supervision while the parents are working. Kenyan parents interviewed by Paviot (2015, p.137) were anxious to avoid idleness and bad company. Their remarks included: “When left alone, children do not manage their time well so they need to be guided by teachers during their free time”; and “It avoids idleness and peer pressure from bad company”.

Diversity of supply

Elaborating on earlier remarks, it is useful to consider in turn commercial suppliers of tutoring, teachers in regular schools who provide tutoring as an additional occupation, and informal suppliers such as students and other self-employed personnel.

The commercial sector

Most urban areas host multiple commercial tutorial enterprises, as can be made immediately evident by a computer Google search with appropriate key words according to language. The majority of these enterprises are small and serve only their localities, but some have national and even international reach.

In 2017, an analysis of existing provision and market potential entitled *The Business of Education in Africa* was presented by a company called Caerus Capital. The report aimed “to shine a light on opportunities in education for investors” (Caerus Capital, 2017, p.12), and viewed much potential for the supplementary sector. It suggested that worthwhile investments over a five-year period might be made for US\$0.4 to 0.6 billion, generating revenues of 15 to 20% (Caerus Capital, 2017, p.101). Four major shaping factors were considered pertinent (p.26). First was an anticipated demographic shift. Sub-Saharan Africa was the world’s youngest region, with 50-60% of the population aged below 25. This, the report remarked, could generate a ‘demographic dividend’ while expanding public pressure to improve educational access, quality and relevance. Second was expansion of the middle class, with six million households expected to move from earning US\$5,000 a year to earning between US\$5,000 and US\$20,000 by 2025. Third was rapid urbanisation, with currently 40% of the population living in

cities and expected to reach 64% by 2050, which would create various economies in modes of educational provision. And fourth was the use of technology, with the region having 445 million unique mobile phone subscribers compared with 200 million in 2010, and the trajectory for use of both mobile phones and internet bandwidth expected to continue.

However, the report added, these factors impacted differently around the continent. Observations on supplementary education were included in the six countries taken as case studies and ranked in order of business potential. Top of the list was South Africa, recognising its existing economic strength and continued potential coupled with perceptions of qualitative shortcomings in public education that private tutoring could ameliorate. Already many tutorial enterprises operated in South Africa, but the report noted room for more. Next on the list was Nigeria, which had a much larger population but infrastructural challenges combined with issues of political and economic stability. Third was Kenya, with rising spending power and better digital coverage than Nigeria; and fourth was Ethiopia with a large population but lower per capita incomes. Senegal, ranked fifth, was the only Francophone country on the list. Given that its per capita GDP was higher than that of Kenya, it was perhaps surprising that after-school tutoring was described as unaffordable for most, but that may have reflected a widespread feeling that non-religious education was a government responsibility and thus that private tutoring was not a natural focus for household spending. Finally, at the bottom of the list was Liberia, which was still suffering from the legacies of civil war with weak infrastructures, low incomes and perceived negligible potential in the domain of supplementary education.

Among the commercial providers highlighted by Caerus Capital was great diversity. At one end was Kumon, established in Japan in 1954 and by 2023 operating in 51 countries around the world including Botswana, Kenya, Namibia, South Africa and Zambia.¹² Within this cluster of countries, the greatest activity was in South Africa with over 200 centres. The company employs a franchise model, and specialises in mathematics and English. At the other end of the scale are innumerable small companies serving their local neighbourhoods; and in between are medium-sized companies with branch operations.

Alongside direct providers are companies that match parents with tutors. A modest example, established in 2014, is Mak-Addis in Ethiopia. In 2020, Mak-Addis indicated that it had over 200 qualified tutors in its database “willing to provide tutoring

¹² <https://www.kumon.org/our-programmes/>, accessed 16 December 2023.

service for a very affordable price”.¹³ Much larger is PrepClass in Nigeria, also established in 2014 and by 2023 claiming over 50,000 tutors on its books.¹⁴ Initially, PrepClass operated only as a matching service that earned revenue from commissions on sessions taught by the tutors. Subsequently the company added online courses, earning revenue from registrations and from sale of materials and lesson notes. PrepClass online courses continued operation even when schools were closed in 2020 by the Covid-19 pandemic.

A related but lower-tech model employs SMS (Short Message System) texts on mobile phones, which generally have wider access than broadband. A leader in this domain has been Eneza, established in Kenya in 2011. The tutorial company has partnered with telephone companies so that fees are deducted from mobile airtime rather than requiring separate procedures. Each SMS message is necessarily short, but the company has tailored content to the national curricula of the three countries and includes basic content, quizzes, and examination preparation. The ‘Ask a Teacher’ function promised that learners could chat with live teachers who would respond to questions within an average time of five minutes (Joffre, 2021). Through its pricing and mode of operation, the company is able to target the lower parts of the income pyramid. From its base in Kenya it subsequently expanded to Côte D’Ivoire, Ghana, Tanzania, Togo and Rwanda.¹⁵

Nevertheless, in general face-to-face operations remain much more prominent than technology-based ones. Companies commonly stress individual and/or small group tutoring on the grounds that schools have much larger classes in which teachers cannot give personal attention to each learner. However, tutorial classes are not always small. In Benin, for example, Napporn and Baba-Moussa (2013, p.83) noted the operation of tutors able to attract senior-secondary (*baccalauréat*) candidates from a radius of 30 kilometres for classes accommodating several hundred students at a time.

Teachers as tutors

Teachers willing to offer tutoring may be especially important in rural areas which are not served by companies or other providers. With reference to The Gambia, for example, King (2012, p.3) observed that while urban centres “have a plethora

¹³ <https://makaddistutors.wordpress.com/>, accessed 19 June 2020.

¹⁴ <https://prepclass.com.ng/home>, accessed 16 December 2023.

¹⁵ [https://www.pioneerspost.com/news-views/20210104/the-largest-classroom-africa-how-text-messages-mean-millions-of-children-can#:~:text=In%20the%20Ask%20a%20Teacher,platform%20three%20times%20a%20week](https://www.pioneerspost.com/news-views/20210104/the-largest-classroom-africa-how-text-messages-mean-millions-of-children-can#:~:text=In%20the%20Ask%20a%20Teacher,platform%20three%20times%20a%20week;); <https://mastercardfdn.org/eneza-education-launches-shupavu-sms-learning-in-rwanda-in-partnership-with-the-mastercard-foundation/>, accessed 16 December 2023.

of ‘legitimate’ tutoring options and opportunities for both broader and higher educational attainment, teachers in rural areas are frequently among the few prepared to offer any supplemental services”.

Concerning school-based tutoring, variations may be found at the institutional level. In Kenya, Mogaka (2014) investigated 12 secondary schools in one district. Students from all 12 schools reported that supplementary tutoring was being offered in their schools, but in one school it was free of charge (p.44). Further, tutoring in that school was considered optional in contrast to its “compulsory” nature in the other 11 schools. In such circumstances, much depends on the views of the school principal, and also of course the teachers and parents. Mogaka added (p.46) that students in boarding schools, or in boarding sections of mixed boarding/day schools, received more tutoring than students in schools that only served day students.

As noted above, in many settings inadequate salaries are a major factor underlying tutoring provided by teachers. The pressures to expand education systems within the context of budget constraints led governments to devise lower-cost categories of teachers; and alongside, communities commonly recruited their own low-cost teachers (Teacher Task Force, 2020). Nevertheless, a study of teachers’ pay in 15 Sub-Saharan African countries found much diversity (Evans et al., 2021). In relation to comparable professions, teachers in Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire and Zambia were paid much more, but in Liberia, Niger and Sierra Leone they were paid less. At the same time, teachers had fewer working hours – one implication of which was that they were more readily available for private tutoring.

On a qualitative plane, a merit of tutoring provided by teachers is that they can be assumed to have basic pedagogic competence, even though many countries suffer from shortages of qualified teachers and of course some are better than others at their craft. However, some teachers may stretch considerably beyond their basic training in the forms and content of tutoring that they offer.

Other informal providers of tutoring

Alongside these categories of providers are many informal arrangements. Urban areas are not only more likely to have commercial enterprises, but also more likely to host universities which then supply students who secure extra pocket money through tutoring.

Urban areas may also have large numbers of educated personnel who are unemployed or ‘between jobs’, and providing tutoring as a temporary measure. In Burkina Faso,

for example, 49% of the tutors of primary school children in Ouagadougou surveyed by Ouattara (2016, p.205) were “[university] students or unemployed graduates”. Similarly in Benin, Napporn and Baba-Moussa (2013, p.85) cited a study of identities of tutors in which 40.0% were teachers but 49.9% were university students, 6.7% were secondary school students, and 4.4% were unemployed or other informal workers. Echoing concerns about university students in Benin who provided tutoring, Houessou (2014, p.194) noted that most lacked pedagogic skills and many provided tutoring in subjects outside their own specialisations.

The Impact of Shadow Education

An obvious question is whether shadow education ‘works’ in the sense of improving the academic achievements of its recipients. This question is difficult to answer conclusively because scientific analysis would have to compare the performance of precisely similar groups of students having and not having precisely similar types and amounts of tutoring. For ethical and practical reasons, it is not possible to conduct social experiments of this sort. Nevertheless, researchers can still seek statistical correlations between variables, and can ask whether students and their families at least perceive that they secure academic benefit.

In Kenya, Kilonzo (2014) looked not only at the proportions of Grade 8 students receiving various types of tutoring in 29 schools but also at their performance in the district-wide test taken by all students. He showed clear correlations between receipt of tutoring and test scores, adding that students who had received home-based tutoring scored even higher than those who had only received school-based tutoring, and that students receiving one-to-one tutoring scored the best of all. Correlations must always be treated with caution, since they may to some extent reflect self-selection by students who would achieve at higher levels anyway. Nevertheless, the differences were sufficiently large to be persuasive that tutoring did indeed make a difference for the students who received it. In Ghana, Ansong et al. (2023) reported similar findings based on national survey data, particularly for rural areas and boys.

Then, turning to perceptions, it might seem obvious that students and their families would only pay for tutoring if they perceived it to be beneficial. However, other factors come into play, including power relationships with teachers who demand tutoring, peer pressures when everybody else seems to be receiving tutoring, and decisions to secure tutoring as an ‘insurance policy’ in case it really does prove useful and is better to have than to risk doing without. Some researchers have specifically asked students about perceptions of benefits. For example:

- ❑ In *Angola*, 97.1% of students in the three regions studied by Chionga (2018, p.109) indicated that private tutoring had improved their study habits, and 97.2% felt that it had contributed to overcoming academic difficulties.
- ❑ In *Benin*, tutors commonly assemble students across different levels and work with them in groups. Houessou (2014) surveyed 200 students receiving private tutoring in four primary and lower secondary schools. For 40.0% of these students, the tutoring was in groups from a range of grades which, the students felt, did not permit adequate attention from the tutors. Nevertheless, 60.0% of the total sample felt that their grades had improved.
- ❑ In *Ghana*, a 2018 survey found that most students considered private tutoring (known as extra classes) to be an important element in the preparation towards their final examination. Some 67% felt it a good use of time, and 63% strongly agreed to recommend it to others wanting to boost their grades (Business Ghana, 2018).
- ❑ *Kenyan* data from the 2007 SACMEQ survey with a national sample indicated that 81.5% of respondents stated that they learned new things, in addition to practising examination questions and repeating or revising school work (Paviot, 2015, p.112).

However, much depends of course on both the skills and motivations of the tutors and the readiness and motivations of the students. In *The Gambia*, King (2012, p.40) remarked that tutoring was not well structured: “Tutors are not properly monitored and can teach irrelevant stuff. Many are motivated by the extra bucks and not a strong desire to help.” Similar remarks have been made in *Benin* by Houessou (2014, p.194). Further, private tutoring can be subtractory as well as supplementary. First, students who are receiving tutoring may be tired from excessive academic work; and second, they may respect their tutors more than their teachers because they have chosen these particular tutors and are paying for their services.

These remarks have implications for the (in)efficiency with which education systems operate. From one angle, shadow education might be viewed as beneficial because it potentially increases learning and can help slow learners to keep up with their peers. However, slow learners may be unmotivated and/or from low-income families unable to afford tutoring, and since in practice shadow education is more commonly accessed by students who are already higher achievers, it is much more likely to in-

crease gaps than reduce them. These disparities raise challenges at the classroom and school levels as well as at the system level.

The matter may also be linked to stresses on children. In Mauritius the point was made sharply during a National Assembly debate (Obeegadoo, 2011, p.97):

Private supplementary tuition places an unhealthy burden on children, to the extent of being described by some as a new form of child labour. In Mauritius, it is not uncommon for young children aged nine, ten or eleven, to be subjected to supplementary tuition every day of the week and for several hours. To which must be added the double homework effect: homework from school, homework from tuition. The psychological toil, if not the physical toil, is all too obvious.

To this point was added the observation (p.99) that at the level of senior secondary schooling, “large numbers of students, particularly in the final years of secondary, are absent from school during the term time, ostensibly to revise from home, but in reality to attend private supplementary tuition – with the blessing of parents and teachers alike”. Further, the teachers in the regular classes at that season “do very little effective teaching”, instead concentrating their time and energy on students that they were themselves tutoring.

Regulating Shadow Education

Given the concerns about impact on education systems and the broader society, governments are increasingly concerned with regulation of shadow education. Schooling has long been regulated, albeit with shortcomings in enactment of regulations, and shadow education is beginning to catch up.

The questions then are (i) who and what should be regulated, and (ii) how. Commonly, regulations are devised separately for commercial enterprises and for practising teachers. As noted above, much tutoring is also provided informally by university students, retirees and others; and increasing amounts of tutoring are provided via the Internet, in some cases across national boundaries. However, informal provision and internet tutoring are especially difficult to regulate, and authorities may instead decide to focus on educating the consumers to enable them to make their own decisions.

Regulating tutorial companies

All countries have general regulations for companies, requiring safe buildings, proper contracts, accurate tax returns, honest advertising, etc.. Around the world some governments have specific provision for tutoring companies (see e.g. Bray &

Kwo 2014; Zhang 2023), but in Sub-Saharan Africa such specific provision is less common.

Nevertheless, one example is from the Addis Ababa Education Bureau in Ethiopia. Its regulations, devised in 2004, have five main components (Melese, 2020):

- ❑ *Facilities*: Tutorial centres must have appropriate classrooms, electricity, water, toilets, telephone access, road access, and premises with minimum areas of 600 square metres.
- ❑ *Location*: The institutions should be located away from noise.
- ❑ *Tutors' qualifications and pedagogical experience*: As in public schools, tutors should have a minimum of teaching diploma qualification for tutoring primary students and first degree for tutoring secondary students, and should hold pedagogical training certificates.
- ❑ *Curriculum*: The curriculum should be similar to that of regular school classes.
- ❑ *Times and durations*: Tutoring should be provided for a maximum of five days per week per pupil, and for not more than 45 minutes per day.
- ❑ *Class size*: Classes should have no more than 10 students.

These regulations seem to require tutorial centres indeed to shadow regular schooling in teachers' qualifications, facilities and curriculum, and are even more demanding than requirements for schooling in terms of class size and restricted duration. However, the regulations are vague in some respects. For example, they state that any person or body not implementing will be punished, but do not state the nature of the punishment. In any case, the regulations have not always been strictly applied (Lemma, 2015).

Even more difficult to regulate are companies operating through the internet either as matching services or through provision of courses. Thus Mak-Addis, for example, was described by the Caerus Capital report (2017, p.201) as "operating as an online aggregator outside of any government regulations". The company website did include a code of conduct for tutors, stressing responsibility, integrity, and care in interpersonal relationships including awareness of power dynamics.¹⁶ However, a wide gap might exist between enforcement of such a code and merely placing it on a website. Similar remarks may apply to the management of online courses, some of which may be provided across national boundaries and thus beyond the regulatory reach of authorities in the recipient countries.

¹⁶ <https://makaddistutors.wordpress.com/tutors-register/>, accessed 16 December 2023.

Regulating provision of tutoring by teachers

Turning to regulations on private tutoring provided by practising teachers, the main questions are (i) whether teachers should be permitted to provide private supplementary tutoring, (ii) if so, for whom, and perhaps when and where, and (iii) if not, how this regulation can be enforced. The majority of African countries have no regulations on this matter, and leave it to a *laissez faire* environment. In Angola, for example, Chionga (2018, p.86) remarked that although private tutoring had proliferated, “the education authorities remain silent” on the phenomenon. Nevertheless, some countries do have regulations, particularly to restrict the tutoring activities of teachers in public schools (Table 4).

Table 4: Regulations on Private Tutoring by Serving Teachers

Eritrea	In 2012 the Ministry of Education banned the operation of tutorial centres, instead permitting teachers to operate fee-charging classes in schools on Saturdays (Eritrea, 2012). Then in 2019 these Saturday classes were also prohibited (Sium Mengesha, 2020).
The Gambia	All private tutoring by serving teachers was banned in 2010 (King, 2012, p.3).
Kenya	A 1988 Ministry of Education circular directed teachers to offer support to students as part of their regular duties without cost to parents (Kenya, 1988). The Ministry followed up in 1995 with a general ban on fee-charging private tutoring, reiterated in 1999 (Mogaka, 2014). Another circular in 2008 repeated the prohibition of all types of fee-charging private tutoring by serving teachers, and in 2013 the prohibition of holiday coaching was reinforced by an amendment to the Education Act (Kenya, 2013, section 37).
Mauritius	Teachers are prohibited from privately tutoring students in Grades 1-4 (Mauritius, 2011), but are permitted to tutor students in higher grades.
Mozambique	A 2014 Ministry of Education circular addressed tutoring in homes (Mozambique, 2014, Article 41). It indicated a requirement for tutors to secure approval from the district

education authorities, providing evidence of qualifications and intended types and levels of tutoring. Teachers in both public and private schools were forbidden to offer paid private tutoring to their existing students.

Tanzania [Mainland] A 1991 Ministry of Education circular (Tanzania, 1991) permitted forms of vacation tutoring, provided that school managements were aware of the process. However, a subsequent circular (Tanzania, 1998) banned all private tutoring in school settings.

Zambia The Minister of Education announced in 2013 that all private tutoring was prohibited in schools at weekends and during holidays (Mukanga, 2013). Government officials affirmed the policy on various subsequent occasions. In 2019, the Ministry clarified that it applied only to public schools and not to private ones (*Lusaka Times*, 2019).

Zimbabwe In 2014, the government prohibited holiday coaching and what in Zimbabwe are called extra [private] lessons (Zimbabwe, 2014). In 2020, teachers were required to sign a document recognising that they were forbidden to provide extra lessons (Mangwiro, 2020).

The fact that several governments listed in Table 4 prohibited serving teachers from providing tutoring is noteworthy. However, the practice continued in all these countries. In Kenya, for example, after promulgation of the regulations some schools used alternative labels for holiday tutoring such as ‘mentorship’ (*Daily Nation*, 2013). Some Kenyan parents described the holiday tutoring as mandatory and even bringing a financial penalty if their children failed to attend (*Daily Nation*, 2018); and tutoring also continued during the ordinary weeks of term time (Nyongesa, 2019).

Among the governments with *laissez faire* approaches, the remarks by an officer of the Rwanda Education Board (REB) provide some insight. He was quoted by Nayebare (2013) as stating “private tuition does not need any regulations from REB”. He preferred to leave matters to the school level, and added:

We are also parents; we understand the need for extra studies for children. We understand that each child has a special way of studying.

Yet again in contrast to governments that ban private tutoring is the policy in Zanzibar where the authorities in 1998 approved private tutoring on the premises of both primary and secondary schools. A government document (Zanzibar, 1998, p.18) explained that schools were permitted “to charge a small fee for extra tuition provided by teachers after the official working hours in situations where parents are willing to do so”.

Also in contrast to prohibition of tutoring by teachers in many countries is a Ghanaian initiative that seemed actively to encourage it. In 2017, Ghana’s President announced a Free Senior High School (SHS) scheme (Akufa-Addo, 2017), which led to a surge of enrolments and design of a Double-Track system. In this system, schools moved from a three-term to a two-semester arrangement with alternating attendance by Green and Gold Tracks that utilised school buildings all the year round. Anxious that the Free SHS scheme should indeed be free, in 2018 the Minister of Education announced that the government would provide 50 cedis to every student “as an academic intervention where the teachers, if they have to organize extra lessons in Maths and English, will not charge the students but the government will give them money” (Ofosua, 2018). Confirming arrangements in 2019, the Deputy Minister explained that the overall objective was “to ensure that learning outcomes improved overall through the development of an effective academic remedial programme for all students” (Kale-Dery, 2019); and in 2020, the government disbursed funds to schools not only for teachers providing supplementary lessons but also to management/support staff (Ghana Education Service, 2020). From a wider perspective, however, the scheme seemed to legitimise the provision of supplementary tutoring; and if in due course funding constraints might lead to withdrawal of the scheme, the culture of such tutoring would already have been reinforced.

Conclusions

This chapter commenced with the distinction presented by Ball and Youdell (2008, p.14) of privatisation *in* education and privatisation *of* education. Those authors were mainly concerned with government-led actions to form partnerships with, or hand over functions to, the private sector. The focus of this chapter, however, has been on private education activities that occur by default and may even be opposed by governments. Shadow education has become a major activity around the world, and while its extent and impact may not (yet) be as great as in Asia, for example (Bray, 2023a), it is clearly ‘catching up’.

From the perspective of families, the basic forces underlying demand for shadow education resemble those in many other parts of the world. The fundamental force is social competition, in which families seek to improve the lifetime prospects for their children or, in the case of middle- and upper class families, at least to maintain their social ranking. Other drivers include perceptions of declining quality in public education and therefore that supplementation is needed to compensate. Much of the perceived qualitative decline arises from expansion of schooling, but ironically this expansion also fuels demand for shadow education because families have more opportunities for educational advance than their earlier counterparts had. Also among factors driving demand is supply. Tutorial companies engage in explicit advertising, and teachers who provide tutoring engage in hidden advertising. University students and other informal providers may be in an intermediate category with a combination of formal and word-of-mouth advertising.

The issues then arising include ones related to private schooling and other services. Questions include the quality of provision, which, as with high-cost and low-cost private schooling, may range widely yet cannot be simply correlated with the scale of fees (because high-cost providers are not necessarily qualitatively superior, and low-cost ones are not necessarily qualitatively inferior). Shadow education also exacerbates educational inequalities, since it is much more likely to be accessed by higher achievers seeking greater heights than by lower achievers seeking to catch up; and in turn it exacerbates social inequalities because higher-income families have stronger ambitions and greater resources to access both greater quantities and better qualities of shadow education (Bray, 2023b; Zhang, 2023).

The chapter has also highlighted issues arising when teachers in regular schools also provide tutoring outside school hours. This can become a form of privatisation *in* education, but of a different type from that considered by Ball and Youdell (2008). Ethical issues arise when such teachers neglect their main duties in order to devote more time to their private work; and even more problematic are instances in which teachers deliberately cut parts of their regular lessons in order to promote demand for their supplementary tutoring. With such matters in mind, some governments have devised regulations to address the issues. However, other authorities are *laissez faire*; and even where regulations do exist, they are rarely enacted with effectiveness.

Further issues concern implications of marketization of education, and of contradictions when governments espouse fee-free education as a human right but peer pressures and entrepreneurialism push parents to pay for these supplements. In this connection the Mauritian patterns deserve recall. With Grade 6 enrolment rates

in shadow education reaching 81% (Table 1), clearly private tutoring was not just a preserve of rich families. Elsewhere in Sub-Saharan Africa enrolment rates were more modest; but the phenomenon is expanding throughout the region, and in practice is probably under-reported.

This last point emphasises the need to focus more attention on the matter. The SACMEQ and PASEC data are shaky insofar as private tutoring was just a side component in surveys that were more concerned with schooling, and suffered from both methodological and implementation constraints. Many of the other studies cited in this chapter also had limitations in sampling and methodological rigour. With such matters in mind, the chapter encourages more researchers to take the theme out of the shadows with stronger data and more rigorous analysis, considering shadow education alongside and in conjunction with not only regular schooling but also other forms of private provision.

Note: Much of this chapter draws on Bray (2021), and is reproduced with permission.

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