

Adverse effects of private supplementary tutoring
Dimensions, implications and government responses



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International Institute for Educational Planning

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Presentation of the series

Several studies conducted during the last decade have clearly emphasized the negative impact of corruption on the economic, social and political development of countries, due to the fact that they increase transaction costs, reduce the efficiency of public services, distort the decision-making process, and undermine social values. They have also showed a strong correlation between corruption and poverty: statistical regressions suggest that an increase of the per capita income of a country by US\$4,400 will improve its ranking on the index of corruption (international scale) by two points. Moreover, it has been observed that corruption tends to contribute to the reinforcement of inequities, by placing a disproportionate economic burden on the poor, and limiting their access to public services.

As a consequence, fighting corruption has become a major concern for policy-makers and actors involved in development. In view of the decrease in international flows of aid and the more stringent conditions for the provision of aid – due to growing tensions on public resources within donor countries and the pressure exerted by tax payers on governments to increase transparency and accountability in resource management – it is regarded today as a major priority in the agenda of countries and of international agencies of development co-operation. The Drafting Committee of the World Education Forum has expressed concern in the following terms: ‘Corruption is a major drain on the effective use of resources for education and should be drastically curbed.’¹

1. UNESCO, 2000. *Dakar framework for action. education for all: meeting our collective commitments*. Adopted by the World Education Forum, Dakar, Senegal, 26-28 April 2000. Extended commentary on the Dakar Action Plan (§ 46).

A rapid review of the literature shows that a number of attempts have already been made to tackle the issue of corruption both globally and sectorally. In the social sector, for example, several studies have been conducted on corruption in the provision of health-care services. However, it appears that the education sector has not been given proper attention by national education authorities and donors, despite the many grounds for attaching a particular priority to the challenge of combating corruption in education:

- No public sector reform aiming at improving governance and limiting corruption phenomena can obtain significant results as long as the case of education has not been properly addressed – given the importance of the education sector, which in most countries, is the first or second largest public sector both in human and financial terms.
- Any attempts to improve the functioning of the education sector in order to increase access to quality education for all, cannot prove successful if problems of corruption – which have severe implications for both efficiency in the use of resources and for quality of education and school performance – are not being properly dealt with.
- Lack of integrity and unethical behaviour within the education sector is inconsistent with one of the main purposes of education; that is, to produce ‘good citizens’, respectful of the law, of human rights and fairness (it is also incompatible with any strategy that considers education as one of the principle means of fighting corruption).

In this context, IIEP launched a new research project within the framework of its Medium-Term Plan for 2002–2007 that deals with ethics and corruption in education. Corruption is defined as ‘the systematic use of public office for private benefit that results in a reduction in the quality or availability of public goods and services’. The main objective of this project is to improve decision-making and the management of educational systems by integrating governance and corruption concerns in methodologies of planning and administration of education. More specifically, it seeks to develop

methodological approaches for studying and addressing the issue of corruption in education, and collect and share information on the best approaches for promoting transparency, accountability and integrity in the management of educational systems, both in developing and industrialized countries.

The project includes works on topics of relevance (such as teacher behaviour, school financing, textbook production and distribution, or academic fraud). It also includes monographs on success stories in improving management and governance, as well as case studies that facilitate the development of methodologies for analysing transparency and integrity in education management.²

Within this framework, IIEP asked Mark Bray to write a study that examines the adverse effects of private supplementary tutoring on mainstream education – as well as on the general use of resources (either public or private) allocated to education. He has successfully analysed the various approaches developed by a few Asian countries to address these effects. On this basis, he has drawn a number of conclusions for decision-makers, educational planners and administrators, which are relevant to different contexts.

IIEP is very grateful to Mark Bray for his valuable insight and contribution, and would like to thank him accordingly.

Jacques Hallak and Muriel Poisson

2. An information platform, called ETICO, has also been created within the framework of the project. It is available on IIEP's web site, at the following address: <http://www.unesco.org/iiep/eng/focus/etico/etico1.html>

This study was prepared by Mark Bray, Dean of the Faculty of Education and a member of the Comparative Education Research Centre at the University of Hong Kong under the supervision of Muriel Poisson, Programme Specialist at the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) and Jacques Hallak, international consultant.

Executive summary

Private supplementary tutoring is defined here as tutoring in academic subjects (such as languages and mathematics), and is provided by the tutors for financial gain, and is additional to the provision by mainstream schooling. It does not include extra-curricular subjects such as soccer and ballet, and it does not include extra lessons given by teachers or family members on a voluntary basis.

Private supplementary tutoring has long been a major phenomenon in some parts of East Asia, particularly Japan, Republic of Korea and Taiwan. In recent decades it has grown significantly in both industrialized and less developed societies. In countries as diverse as Egypt, India, Malta and Romania, over one-third of pupils regularly receive private supplementary tutoring; and in some societies the proportion is considerably higher. Indeed in a few countries tutoring has become an almost universally pervasive phenomenon.

While private supplementary tutoring may have positive consequences, e.g. in improving students' learning, providing constructive activities for pupils during out-of-school hours, and providing incomes and employment for tutors, it can also have negative consequences. The problematic side includes distortion of the mainstream curricula, pressure on young pupils, exacerbation of social inequalities, and manipulation of clients by tutors. Manipulation is especially common, and especially problematic, in situations where mainstream teachers provide paid supplementary tutoring for their own mainstream pupils after school hours. In the worst cases, a form of blackmail arises in which the teachers teach only half the curriculum during the school day and then require their pupils to pay for the other half during private lessons.

This monograph begins by considering the nature, scale and causes of private supplementary tutoring. It notes that private tutoring may be undertaken on a one-to-one basis in the homes of the tutors or the tutees. Alternatively, tutoring may be in groups, large classes or even huge lecture theatres. Tutoring may also be provided by mail, telephone or over the Internet. The scale of tutoring varies in different grades, and demand in some subjects is greater than in others.

The monograph then turns to the impact of private tutoring. Separate sections focus on the impact of tutoring on mainstream lessons, on societies, and on economies. This section again notes that tutoring can have beneficial outcomes, but observes many problematic features.

The study then analyzes government responses. It does this partly through broad references to the literature from all parts of the world, and partly through case studies of Mauritius, Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan and the Republic of Korea. Each of the societies on which the case studies focus is different, and the nature of government responses has varied. The Government of the Republic of Korea at one time tried to prohibit tutoring, but then found that this measure was ineffective and unworkable. The Taiwan Government has been more *laissez-faire*, but does have regulations and also expects the tutorial establishments to regulate themselves. The Hong Kong Government has played an increasingly interventionist role, but the level of intervention may not be sustainable in the long run. In all of these societies, and also in Singapore, mainstream teachers are prohibited from receiving payment for tutoring their own pupils. In Mauritius, however, that practice is long established and difficult to eradicate. Government intervention in Mauritius has therefore to take a different approach.

The next section of the monograph elaborates on these comparisons and presents additional materials from different parts of the world. In each culture, the monograph stresses, government responses must be different in order to fit the different circumstances.

Nevertheless, various common themes can be identified from the comparative analysis. At the basic level, the four main policy responses for governments are to:

- *Ignore the phenomenon* (perhaps because the governments feel unwilling or unable to do anything about it).
- *Prohibit private tutoring* (though the prospects of doing this successfully on a sustained basis are not strong)
- *Recognize and regulate tutoring* (in which case the question is how).
- *Actively encourage tutoring* (though this response is relatively uncommon).

The monograph comments on the implications of each of these strategies and, for policy-makers who decide to recognize and regulate tutoring, elaborates on ways in which this can be achieved.

The final section recognizes that control of tutoring itself has costs, and that these costs must be set against the benefits anticipated from the regulatory efforts. Governments of some societies may decide that the costs of regulation exceed the benefits; but others are increasingly recognizing that private supplementary tutoring deserves much closer attention than it has hitherto received.

Introduction

This monograph has been prepared as a contribution to the IIEP project on ethics and corruption in education. The initiators of this project noted that the structures and contents of education systems in several parts of the world were being distorted by tensions between the motives of the various participants (Hallak and Poisson, 2002). The project presents examples of responses by education authorities that have endeavoured to tackle what they perceive to be corrupting influences.

This starting-point raises some questions about values. Ethical judgements are to some extent personal decisions based on personal perspectives. What one individual may describe as the corruption of an education system, another may consider it to be an entirely appropriate pattern. Changes in education systems create winners as well as losers, and perspectives are usually shaped by the ways in which those changes affect the persons and groups making the judgements. The title of this monograph refers to adverse effects of supplementary private tutoring. What one person describes as adverse, another person might consider quite acceptable.

Nevertheless, wide agreement exists that some effects of supplementary private tutoring are adverse. These effects will be examined in this monograph. In some countries, supplementary private tutoring has become a major industry that consumes considerable amounts of parents' money and pupils' time; and although in other countries tutoring is modest in scale, it appears to be growing. Tutoring has a backwash effect on mainstream schooling, and can contribute to social tensions. At least from some perspectives, therefore, supplementary private tutoring may be described in negative terms.

This monograph commences by sketching the nature, scale and causes of supplementary private tutoring in different parts of the world. It then

highlights aspects of the impact of such tutoring, addressing in turn the educational, social and economic dimensions. With this background, the monograph considers possible responses by governments. Some governments choose to ignore the phenomenon, arguing that it is beyond their sphere of responsibility and perhaps also beyond their sphere of control. Other governments respond more actively with regulations and follow-up measures. The monograph presents examples from a range of settings, giving particular attention to regulations in Mauritius, Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan and the Republic of Korea. It comments on the goals and impact of these responses, and identifies the major lessons to be learned.

Chapter 1

The nature, scale and causes of supplementary private tutoring

Nature

At the outset, some definitions are needed. Private supplementary tutoring, as defined here, covers tutoring in academic subjects; this is provided by tutors for financial gain, and is additional to the provision of mainstream schooling. This definition may be elaborated as follows:

- *Academic subjects.* This monograph is only concerned with academic subjects (e.g. languages and mathematics) taught in mainstream schools. The focus does not include extra-curricular subjects (e.g. soccer and ballet). It also excludes religious studies (e.g. Sunday School) where they are not part of school mainstream curricula. These additional forms of learning are certainly important, but deserve to be focused separately from the coverage of this monograph.
- *Financial gain.* This monograph is only concerned with tutoring provided by tutors (and companies that employ tutors) for financial gain. It is not concerned with extra lessons that are given by mainstream teachers to needy pupils, on a voluntary basis, outside school hours. Nor is it concerned with the voluntary help given by family members to other family members. Again, such forms of voluntary tutoring are certainly important, but they raise other issues different from those covered by this monograph.
- *As an addition to the provision of mainstream schooling.* The tutoring covered in this monograph is provided outside school hours, mostly in the evenings, at week-ends, and during vacations. Most of the tutoring

is also provided in separate premises, outside the school compounds. However, some schools permit their classrooms to be used for private tutoring. This arrangement is included here if the tutoring is received on a fee-paying basis, and is considered additional to the mainstream work of the schools.

Also to be noted at the outset are some variations in terminology. In some English-speaking societies, people refer more commonly to private tuition than to private tutoring. Entrepreneurs who create formal establishments for tutoring commonly call them centres, academies or institutes, and sometimes describe their work as coaching. In Japan, tutoring centres that supplement the school system are known as *juku*. These are distinguished from *yobiko*, which mainly serve pupils who have left school but who want extra time to study for examinations, in order to gain higher grades for entrance to university. A parallel phenomenon exists in the United Kingdom, where such institutions are called ‘crammers’. *Yobiko* and ‘crammers’ are mainly outside the scope of this study since they primarily serve pupils who have left school.

The monograph is mainly concerned with subjects learned in primary and secondary school. Supplementary tutoring certainly exists at pre-primary and post-secondary levels. However, it is less vigorous at these levels, and the mechanics and issues that arise are quite different.

Supplementary private tutoring may be received through many channels. Some tutoring is provided on a one-to-one basis in the home of either the tutor or the tutee. Other tutoring is in small groups, in large classes, or even in huge lecture theatres with overflow rooms in which students watch on a screen what is happening in the main theatre. Tutoring can also be received by telephone, by mail and over the Internet. In some countries, supplementary tutoring is provided by the same teachers that are responsible for the students in the mainstream classes. In other countries this practice is prohibited on the grounds that it can breed a form of corruption, with mainstream teachers deliberately failing students in order to increase the demand for private classes.

Focusing on tutorial institutes that operate independently from mainstream schools, Zeng (1999) compared patterns in Japan, the Republic of Korea and Taiwan. He observed (p.153) that some of these institutes combined features of education with features of industry, being governed by assorted principles relating to cognitive processes, assessment, competition, cost-benefit, and cost-efficiency. Some tutorial schools are small, and some are old-fashioned; but others are large, and some are ultramodern. He highlighted one large *juku* company with many branches, the shares of which are quoted on the stock exchange. The Republic of Korea has tutoring companies that are comparable to those in Japan. These companies, known as *hakwon*, commonly have their own multi-storey educational buildings. Large advertising posters are displayed in the subways, trains and buses, and give potential customers convenient sketch maps of their branch campuses (Zeng, 1999: 158). In Taiwan, by contrast, large operators are less prominent. In 1995, 11.9 per cent of tutorial centres had twenty-five pupils or less, and 59.2 per cent had enrolments of 200 or less (Taiwan, 1996: 27). The features in Taiwan may partly reflect government regulations, but also reflect broader patterns of economic structure and production that emphasize small enterprises rather than multi-branch chains.

Box 1. A shadow education system

Supplementary private tutoring may be described as a shadow education system (see Bray, 1999a). This metaphor fits in several respects. First, private supplementary tutoring only exists because the mainstream education system exists. Second, as the shape and size of the mainstream system change, so do the size and shape of supplementary tutoring. Third, in almost all societies much more public attention focuses on the mainstream than on its shadow.

Shadows can of course be useful. Just as the shadow cast by a sun-dial can tell the observer about the passage of time, so the shadow of an education system can tell the observer about changes in societies. However, in some countries, parents, educators and politicians are highly critical of the ways in which private tutoring affects mainstream schooling. Unlike most shadows, private tutoring is not just a passive entity but may negatively affect even the body that it imitates.

Not all pupils, even within particular locations, receive tutoring for the same duration each day or week. Malaysian research reported by Chew and Leong (1995: 14) indicated that 69.5 per cent of students sampled who were receiving tutoring did so throughout the year, while the others only received tutoring prior to important examinations. This was a sample of 4,340 primary and secondary school students. Over half the students received tutoring in only one or two subjects, but nearly 20 per cent received tutoring in five or more subjects.

The intensity of private tutoring may also vary because of other factors. As one might expect, children in higher socio-economic groups generally receive more supplementary tutoring than do children in lower socio-economic groups (Stevenson and Baker, 1992; Foondun, 2002; Montgomery et al., 2000; Yi, 2002).

Scale

Partly because most supplementary tutoring is unofficial and unwelcoming of attention, data on the topic are scarce. However, a picture can be drawn from scattered studies in a range of settings. They include the following:

- *Cambodia*: Respondents in 31.2 per cent of 77 primary schools surveyed in 1997/98 indicated that pupils received tutoring; this consumed 6.6 per cent of the total cost of primary education (Bray, 1999b: 57, 127).
- *Egypt*: A 1994 survey of 4,729 households found that 64 per cent of urban and 52 per cent of rural primary children received supplementary tutoring (Fergany, 1994: 75). A 1997 study estimated that household expenditures on supplementary tutoring in preparatory, primary and secondary levels accounted for 1.6 per cent of Gross Domestic Product (World Bank, 2002, fig. 15).

- *Hong Kong:* A 1996 survey of 507 students found that 44.7 per cent of primary, 25.6 per cent of lower secondary, 34.4 per cent of middle secondary, and 40.5 per cent of upper secondary students were receiving tutoring (Lee, 1996: 14). A 1998/99 follow-up survey of six secondary schools, stratified by ability bands, found 35.1 per cent of secondary Grade 1-3 pupils receiving tutoring. Respective proportions for secondary 4-5 and 6-7 were 46.6 and 70.3 per cent (Bray and Kwok, 2003).
- *India:* A 1997 survey of 7,879 primary school pupils in Delhi found that 39.2 per cent were receiving tutoring (Aggarwal, 1998: 65). Other reports have suggested that 70 per cent of urban children receive private tutoring in one or more subjects (Yasmeen, 1999: 22).
- *Japan:* A 1993 survey found that 23.6 per cent of elementary pupils and 59.5 per cent of junior high school pupils attended tutorial schools (Japan, 1995: 6). A 1997 survey of pupils receiving other forms of tutoring found that among primary Grade 5 children, 33 per cent attended tutorial schools, 5.7 per cent received help from tutors on a one-to-one basis, 24.5 per cent studied on correspondence courses, and 17.9 per cent received home-delivery study materials (Japan, 1999: 68). In urban areas, over 90 per cent of children were receiving some sort of tutoring.
- *Kenya:* A 1997 national sample of 3,233 Standard 6 pupils found that 68.6 per cent received tutoring, ranging from 39 per cent in North Eastern Province to 74.4 per cent in Nyanza Province (Nzomo et al., 2001: 28).
- *Malta:* A 1997/98 survey of 1,482 pupils in upper primary and lower secondary schools found that 50.5 per cent had received private tutoring at some time (Fenech and Spiteri, 1999: 26). Some had first received tutoring at the age of 4, though the largest number had commenced at the age of 10.
- *Republic of Korea:* A 1997 study indicated that 72.9 per cent of primary students were receiving private tutoring (I. Kim, 2000: 2). Among middle-school students the proportion was 56 per cent; among high school students it was 32 per cent.

- *Romania:* A 1994 study of Grade 12 pupils in a national sample found that 32 per cent in rural and 58 per cent in urban areas received supplementary private tutoring (UNESCO, 2000: section 4.3).
- *Taiwan:* Government statistics indicate that in 1998 1,891,096 students were enrolled in 5,536 tutoring centres (Taiwan, 1999: 136). Other centres were unregistered, therefore total numbers were even larger. A 1998 survey of 359 students in eight Kaohsiung secondary schools found that 81.2 per cent were receiving tutoring (Tseng, 1998: 86).

These examples give prominence to Asian societies, as the phenomenon has been particularly strong there for a long time. However, tutoring is growing in other parts of the world, including Africa, North America and Europe. Russell (2002), writing about the United Kingdom, titled her article ‘The secret lessons’, and remarked (p.10) that ‘almost unnoticed, a revolution has taken place in state education’. She added: ‘In London and other big cities, private tutoring is booming. It has become one of the most important, yet also unacknowledged, factors in a child’s performance.’

Mischo and Haag (2002: 264) highlighted expansion of tutoring in Germany, and Wolf (2002: 335) presented data from national samples in a number of countries on the percentages of pupils in Grade 7 who reported receiving tutoring in science. The proportions exceeded 50 per cent in the Czech Republic, Latvia and Slovakia. In mathematics, the proportion of Grade 7 pupils receiving tutoring exceeded 50 per cent in the Czech Republic, Hong Kong, Japan, Latvia, the Russian Federation, Slovakia and Slovenia (Wolf, 2002: 235; Baker et al., 2001: 7).

Causes

Private supplementary tutoring is a complex phenomenon with many causes. Among these causes, cultural factors are particularly important. Other causes include economic and educational forces.

Among the cultural factors is the perceived role of effort in educational success. Many Asian cultures, particularly those influenced by Confucian traditions, place strong emphasis on effort (Rohlen and LeTendre, 1996: 374; Salili, 1999: 92). In contrast, European and North American cultures are more likely to emphasize ability. Supplementary tutoring is especially likely to be widespread in cultures that stress effort.

Related to this is the extent to which individual schools (and, more broadly, society) are competitive. The 1990s brought a sharp change in the United Kingdom, for example. The publication of league tables showing school performance in public examinations was both a symptom and a cause of a greater competition; this in turn can be associated with the growth of private tutoring. Similar trends have become evident in Australia.

Competition between schools and between sectors of society is partly shaped by economic structures that, in turn, influence the economic rewards from private tutoring. With reference to Singapore, Kwan-Terry (1991: 71) highlighted research that showed that the average earnings of males with no schooling were S\$583 per month, rising to S\$665 for males with primary education, S\$861 for ones with secondary education, S\$1,260 for those with post-secondary education, and reaching S\$3,000 for males with tertiary education. Since the gateway to each level was guarded by examinations, the rewards for success and the penalties for failure in those examinations were substantial. Psacharopoulos and Patrinos (2002) have summarized other studies of rates of return that in general show that individuals would be well advised to stay in education systems as long as they can. If supplementary

tutoring helps people to stay in education systems longer, then for those people it may be a very good investment. However, in some societies the differentials in living standards between individuals with different amounts of education are greater than in others. Differentials have long been particularly great in such societies as Singapore and Hong Kong, but less marked in such countries as the United Kingdom and Australia. This implies that rewards from extra levels of schooling, and from supplementary tutoring, are greater in these Asian societies than in the Western European or Australasian ones.

The nature of education systems is also important. Private tutoring seems to be more evident in systems in which success in examinations can easily be promoted by investment in private supplementary tutoring; and private supplementary tutoring becomes more necessary in systems that are teacher-centred rather than child-centred, and/or are intolerant of slow learners.

In Georgia, a further variant arises from the gate-keeping functions of university examinations (MacWilliams, 2002). Teachers in the most prestigious universities are able to command high prices for tutoring because they know, or are presumed to know, at least the rough content of the entrance examinations set by their own institutions. Education systems in other countries are less dependent on the examinations set by individual institutions, and thus are less dependent on tutoring by individuals who specialize in particular examinations for particular institutions.

Private tutoring is more common in urban than in rural areas. The Cambodian study mentioned above referred to private supplementary tutoring given in pupils' regular public primary schools. Among the urban schools in the sample, 60.6 per cent reported that their children received private supplementary tutoring, whereas the proportion among rural schools was just 9.1 per cent (Bray, 1999b: 57). Urban bias has also been reported elsewhere. With regard to Malaysia, research reported by Chew and Leong (1995) recorded 59 per cent of students in urban schools receiving tutoring compared

with 28.5 per cent in rural schools. Chew and Leong (1995: 21) observed that:

“The higher demand for tuition on the part of students in urban areas may be due to a number of reasons. For one, there is normally a higher level of competitiveness among urban students that is related to the very competitive nature of urban life. Secondly, parents in urban society usually possess higher educational attainment than their rural counterparts and, by logical extension, have higher achievement expectation regarding their children’s education ... Also, urban parents are better off in socio-economic terms to afford tuition for their children, given that the fees incurred are fairly substantial”.

Finally, the economic circumstances of mainstream teachers may be an important factor. In some countries, teachers are paid so poorly that they and their families would be unable to subsist if they had to depend on official salaries. Teachers, therefore, have to secure additional incomes, with tutoring becoming a major form of income. This is a major factor behind the rise of tutoring in Bangladesh and Kenya, for example. Some teachers abuse their positions by teaching only half the syllabus during official hours and then declaring that if the students want to receive teaching in the second half, then they must come to the after-school tutoring classes (Foondun, 2002; Shafiq, 2002). These teachers are able to exert pressure not only because the students face external competition, but also because the teachers control which pupils are or are not promoted to higher grades at the end of each academic year. Parents know that if they do not pay for the tutoring, they may end up paying more in other ways because their children would probably have to repeat each academic year.

Box 2. Monopoly + Discretion – Accountability

Focusing on the nature and causes of corruption, Klitgaard (1988: 75) reduced the core elements to a formula:

$$\text{Corruption} = \text{Monopoly} + \text{Discretion} - \text{Accountability}$$

He suggested that illicit behaviour flourishes when agents have monopoly power over clients, when agents can exercise their discretion, and when the accountability of agents is weak.

Biswal (1999a: 223) has shown how this concept exposes the parallels between private tutoring and other forms of corruption, particularly where mainstream teachers provide private tutoring for their own pupils. These teachers, Biswal points out, “are the monopoly suppliers of their services to the students, they have the full discretion in what they supply, and they are hardly held accountable for their actions. This gives rise to a situation where the teachers try to extract students’ consumer surplus by shirking at school and supplying tutoring outside for a fee”.

Chapter 2

The impact of supplementary private tutoring

Supplementary private tutoring may have far-reaching implications. This section of the monograph comments in turn on its educational, social and economic impact.

Impact on mainstream schooling

Supplementary tutoring may significantly affect the dynamics of teaching and learning in mainstream classes. For example, where all students receive tutoring provided by outside agencies, mainstream teachers may not need to work so hard. Where some students receive supplementary tutoring but others do not, mainstream teachers may face greater disparities within their classrooms than would otherwise be the case. Some teachers may respond to these disparities by assisting the slower learners; but others may take the students who receive tutoring as the norm, and permit the gap between students' learning to increase. In the latter case, all parents are placed under pressure to invest in private tutoring for their children.

When supplementary tutoring helps students to understand and enjoy their mainstream lessons, it may be considered beneficial. De Silva (1994: 5) has observed that supplementary tutoring can enable remedial teaching to be undertaken according to individual needs:

“Sometimes large gaps in students' learning are created due to a number of factors such as student and teacher absence, frequent closure of school, ineffective teaching and negligence on the part of the teacher. It is not every school that can boast a full complement of specialist teachers in crucial areas like mathematics, science and English. Immature,

inexperienced or unqualified teachers handling these subjects may not be able to lead the students to a proper understanding of the sections taught. Effective private tuition may help overcome these gaps or deficiencies in students' learning and build their confidence enabling them to compete with others and experience a happy and pleasant life.”

Supplementary tutoring may also help relatively strong students to get more out of their mainstream classes. Yiu (1996: 78) reported that Hong Kong teachers in his study of upper secondary classes were positive about supplementary tutoring. Among the comments were:

- Since the school used English as the medium of instruction, students benefited from hearing the content again in Chinese in the tutoring institute.
- School teachers could cover the main ground, while tutors would help consolidate.
- Tutors provided extra questions for students because the schoolteachers were too busy.
- Yiu added (1996: 66) that some teachers gained ideas from the tutors. One teacher explicitly requested his students to bring materials from the tutorial institute to school, so that the teacher could use them to improve his own teaching.

Sometimes, however, tutoring is reported to have a negative effect on mainstream classes. Writing about India, Yasmeeen (1999: 23) has highlighted the ‘culture of dependency’:

“Most students tend to rely on private tutors for everything including homework and exam tips. As a result classroom attention tends to dwindle creating discipline problems for schoolteachers. Supplementary or top-up teaching is becoming more important than the synergistic classroom experience.”

These remarks echoed those of Hussein (1987: 92), who wrote about Kuwait and stated that:

“Tutoring has caused a great lack of interest on the part of students. They have reached the point of thinking that as long as they can pay someone who will show them how to pass their examinations, they do not need to attend school classes except when they are required to do so by school regulations.”

Hussein (1987: 92) reported that in some schools the number of absentees had risen:

“In particular two months before the school year finally ends [the students] stay at their homes in the morning and attend tutorial institutes in the afternoons. This cripples the school system. A second group of pupils comes to school just to avoid being questioned by the school administration but shows no interest when there. These two groups affect the third group, which is small, of those students who attend intending to learn. This group cannot find a suitable atmosphere to learn because of the behavior of the class as a whole and also the fact that the teacher is disturbed by the abnormality of the situation.”

The Japanese data provided by Sawada and Kobayashi (1986: 9) are also instructive. Many teachers, especially in the lower secondary schools, reported that pupils who attended *juku* were good at computational skills. However, they said that the pupils worked mechanically and without understanding underlying meanings. Of the secondary Form 1 teachers, 45 per cent added that the pupils attending *juku* did not take the mainstream mathematics classes seriously; between 27 per cent (secondary Form 1) and 50 per cent (primary Grade 5) of teachers indicated that pupils who attended *juku* refused to participate in after-school activities.

For many participants, supplementary tutoring also leads to fatigue. Most obviously affected are the pupils who go straight from mainstream school to supplementary class; but also affected are the tutors, especially when they are also mainstream teachers. With reference to Sri Lanka, de Silva (1994: 5) has lamented the ‘continuous teaching-learning process going on from morning until evening on weekdays and during week-ends and school holidays [which] denies both teachers and students sufficient rest and recreation’. Not only does this produce fatigue in both teachers and pupils, he states, it makes them ‘relax’ when at school, thereby reducing the productivity of that part of each day. Similar remarks have been made in Malta by Fenech and Spiteri (1999: 5), and would be echoed in many other contexts.

The vested interests of private tutors may also be a factor obstructing reform of education systems. Popa (2003) reports that in Romania, efforts to make the education system less dependent on examinations were resisted by the private tutors, including the full-time teachers who undertook supplementary tutoring. The tutors perceived the examinations as an essential ingredient to the demand for their services, and were therefore very resistant to change. Similar remarks have been made about Egypt (Fawzey, 1994; Hargreaves, 1997). Along the same lines, Kwok (2001: 174) indicated with reference to Hong Kong that the marketing styles and pedagogic characteristics of private tutors reinforced examination pressures and encouraged students to value open examinations in their life careers. Similar patterns have been evident in the Russian Federation, Taiwan and other countries.

Finally, the curriculum emphasized by tutorial institutions, especially those of the cramming type, may be contrasted with that in mainstream schools. In public education systems in particular, schools are expected to achieve a wide range of goals. The goals may include the development of sporting and musical, as well as academic interests, and include the promotion of courtesy, civic awareness and national pride. Mainstream schools may also be required to keep all students of one grade together, in order to reduce labelling of low

achievers. Examination-oriented tutorial institutes, by contrast, cut what they perceive to be irrelevant content in order to focus on passing examinations, and may have much less hesitation about grouping students by ability. Many analysts view this phenomenon negatively, arguing that the tutorial institutes distort the overall curriculum that has been designed with careful balance by specialists in that task. Pupils who are faced simultaneously by the two very different approaches may be confused by the experience. In Taiwan, for example, government efforts to introduce constructive approaches that enhance the understanding of mathematics have been undermined by the fact that many tutors teach students how to secure correct answers through mechanical implementation of formulae.

Impact on societies

It is obvious that children who attend both mainstream and supplementary classes are placed under considerable pressure. In Mauritius, one Minister of Education (quoted by Foondun, 1992: 26) has queried the appropriateness of social forces which lead children to spend an average of nine hours a day in private tutoring and regular schooling when adults in that country have achieved a seven-hour standard day. In effect, he pointed out, children are made to work for longer hours than their parents.

More positively, it may be argued, pressure may also bring out the best in students and stretch them to maximize their potential. For example, East Asian societies influenced by Confucian traditions tend to place great value on discipline and dedication, and some families see the pressure applied by supplementary tutoring as generally beneficial. To some extent, therefore, the degree of pressure that is considered appropriate is determined by social and cultural norms. Some educators would add that where supplementary tutoring helps pupils to keep up with their peers, it may protect their self-esteem. These commentators would therefore assert that although pressure may come from one side, it may alleviate pressure on a different side.

Much may also depend on the level and type of tutoring. Ukai Russell's (1996) analysis of the Kumon approach to teaching mathematics in Japan (which goes from pre-school to college levels but is most popular in the lower primary grades), found that most children considered it unthreatening. Ukai Russell (1996: 259) quoted research that indicated that nearly 40 per cent of the families who enrolled their children in Kumon classes did so because the children liked the experience. However, many analysts concerned with other contexts, including higher levels of education and other forms of tutoring, consider that the negative aspects outweigh the positive.

Also of considerable importance is the impact of supplementary tutoring on social inequalities. Like other forms of private education, supplementary tutoring is more easily available to the rich than to the poor. As such, private supplementary tutoring seems to be a mechanism that maintains and perhaps increases social inequalities. In 1998, expenditure on private tutoring by the richest 10 per cent in a sample of urban households in the Republic of Korea was twelve times the amount spent by the poorest 10 per cent of households (Yi, 2002: 14). Where patterns become extreme, they could pose a threat to overall social stability.

However, the picture is not completely straightforward. Rich families also have other ways to maintain social superiority, and may use these ways as well as, or instead of, supplementary tutoring, particularly if decision-makers in these families perceive supplementary tutoring to involve excessive mechanical drilling. Moreover, middle-income and even poor families may choose to invest in supplementary tutoring in order to gain social mobility through the examination system. Kwan-Terry (1991: 88) indicated that, in Singapore, the highest demand for tutoring in English was from families that did not speak English at home and where the father had an education below university level but had middle-income earnings.

Much also depends on the type of tutoring. While mass tutoring in Japan and Hong Kong may be relatively inexpensive, it may also be limited in the

extent to which it achieves gains in learning. Richer families can more easily afford one-to-one and small-group tutoring which is more closely tailored to individual needs, and which may take place in the children's homes, while poorer families must tolerate mass-produced forms of tutoring for which the children may have to travel substantial distances.

Box 3. Drawn like moth to flame

In Sri Lanka, supplementary private tutoring has long been a pervasive part of many students' everyday experiences. Wijetunge (1994: 15-17) has observed that:

Extra-school instruction or 'private tuition' has become an inescapable part of childhood in Sri Lanka. Children of all ages, toddler through adolescent, are caught up in a vice and drawn to private tuition like moth to flame ... The expertise and specializations offered by the second system are unmatched; some [advanced level] students feel compelled to seek out the 'experts' for various sections or topics within a single subject, to the extent that four or more tutors per subject no longer raises eyebrows ...

Parental obsession with the scholarship examination, the inordinately high levels of achievement required to make the grade, and in particular to secure a place in the coveted school, invariably results in the young child being initiated to tuition at a very young age. Immediately after school the child is rushed to tuition class after a hasty snack. At tuition, his skills and abilities are relentlessly pitted against those of his age mates, for competition is the name of the game and the prowess of the tutor rests on the results he produces. The age appropriate developmental tasks such as building wholesome attitudes towards oneself, learning to get along with peers, developing conscience, morality and a scale of values stand a very poor chance in this climate of cruel competition ...

The denial of childhood and the mutilation visible everywhere – mutilation of spontaneity, of joy in learning or pleasure in creating or sense of self – certainly cannot be blamed on private tuition alone ... [Nevertheless, the] malaise is systematic and pervasive. The remedies have to be sought at the level of root causes, for as long as the root causes remain, their appendages like the private tuition system will continue to flourish.

Impact on economies

In general, individuals with higher levels of formal education attract higher lifetime earnings than individuals with lower levels of education. Advocates of human capital theory (e.g. OECD, 1999; Tilak, 2001) explain this by stating that the higher earnings reflect and appropriately reward the skills and attitudes acquired by the individuals during the educational process. An alternative view (Groot and Hartog, 1995) is that education acts as a screening mechanism through which only the individuals with inherent talents and appropriate attitudes are able to move beyond the various barriers.

To those who accept either of these hypotheses, supplementary tutoring may be considered in the same light as mainstream schooling. Advocates of human capital theory might consider supplementary tutoring to be even more tightly related to economic enhancement because it is closely tied to the demands of the market place and because enhanced economic return is one of the chief reasons why pupils and their parents invest in it. Advocates of the screening hypothesis would approach the issue from a different standpoint but reach a similar conclusion about the ways in which pupils who have received greater amounts of tutoring are allocated to more highly remunerated economic positions.

However, an alternative approach is less positive about supplementary tutoring. Critics argue that most parts of the sector are parasitic, that they waste financial and human resources that could be better allocated to other uses, and that in systems which are dominated by traditional examinations, tutoring and associated cramming contribute to a stifling of creativity which can damage the bases of economic production.

These views cannot easily be reconciled. They reflect wider debates on the nature and impact of mainstream education that rest as much on ideological principles as on empirical research. The broad literature on the links between

education and development contains many unanswered questions and ambiguous findings (Adams, 2002; Bray, 2002). No clear formulae can link certain types and amounts of education to certain types and amounts of economic development – an observation that applies as much to supplementary tutoring as to mainstream schooling.

In these circumstances, planners and policy-makers would be unwise to adopt a rigid stance. Nevertheless, few people would argue that private supplementary tutoring produces such a strong and unambiguous economic impact that the phenomenon should be encouraged in all its manifestations.

Chapter 3

Government responses: five case studies

The responses by governments to the patterns described above may be diverse. Much depends on economic, social and cultural contexts, as well as on political factors. This section presents case studies on Mauritius, Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan and the Republic of Korea. In a subsequent section, patterns in these societies will be compared not only with each other but also with patterns in other societies.

Mauritius

The scale and effects of supplementary private tutoring have been considered a problem in Mauritius for over a century. Foondun (2002: 488) cited a 1901 statement by the head of what was then the only state school for boys, who identified negative dimensions of tutoring but ‘felt helpless’ to prevent it. Similar remarks were made in 1911 (see *Box 4*); and three decades later, the author of a 1941 Report on Education argued that teachers could not be efficient in their work if they were doing two extra hours of teaching every night from Monday to Friday. The report (quoted in Mauritius, 1994: 2) added:

“If the ... working day is not long enough, it can be lengthened. Private coaching for the mass of the class is unnecessary; and such coaching for the few backward boys as is necessary should be by the class teacher as part of the duty for which he is paid a salary.”

Growing concern in the 1980s caused the government to commission a study of the phenomenon. A team of researchers from the University of Mauritius found that in 1986 the proportion of primary school children receiving private tutoring rose from 11.2 per cent in primary Standard I to

72.7 per cent in Standard VI. The proportion dropped to 37.3 per cent in secondary Form I, but then rose to 87.2 per cent in Form VI (Joynathsing *et al.*, 1988: 31, 43). The rise towards the end of primary reflected the importance of the Certificate of Primary Education (CPE) examination, which was a gateway to the secondary school system. Once that gateway had been passed, the proportion of pupils receiving private tutoring dropped until the School Certificate and Higher School Certificate examinations approached. Mauritius' secondary school system was highly stratified, and the intensity of private tutoring at the primary school level was fuelled by what Foondun (1992) called "the mad race for a place in a 'five star' secondary school."

Box 4. A long-standing problem

As far back as 1911, the Head of Mauritius' Royal College at Curepipe complained that pupils were taking private classes instead of attending regular class work. In a letter to the Director of Education, the Head wrote:

I forward herewith ... the returns of private lessons by various members of the staff of the Royal College and its two schools. These returns show that twelve gentlemen are giving from 13-33 hours private tuition per week and it seems to me in many cases, the practice is carried to excess ...

"To interdict the practice altogether is impossible unless adequate compensation is granted, nor do I think such a measure desirable. Gentlemen have a right to utilise their leisure out of the college hours as they think fit and I do not see who can stop them. It seems to me equally impossible to impose a limitation. How could it be enforced? Members may say with much force that their actions cannot be controlled after office hours. I quite admit the evil, but I am unable to suggest a satisfactory solution."

Subsequent generations have endeavoured to address the issue, which greatly increased in significance as the century progressed. Government policies have had some success, but have also faced major constraints. *Source*: Mauritius, 1994: 12.

The University of Mauritius study did not make any clear proposals, but it did raise several policy issues (Joynathsing *et al.*, 1988: 64-66). These included the following observations:

- The prevalence of private tutoring was part of a self-reinforcing system. It was widely believed that classroom teaching was insufficient for doing well in examinations, with the result that pupils sought private tutoring. But many teachers who assumed that their pupils received tutoring made less effort in class to ensure that every pupil was adequately prepared for the examinations. Thus, the need for private tutoring became a self-fulfilling prophecy.
- Once private tutoring was embedded in the system, powerful vested interests desired to maintain it. Parents saw tutoring as a road to their children's social and economic advancement, teachers saw tutoring as a source of untaxed income, and the general public saw tutoring as a way to improve educational performance at no cost to the taxpayer. For all these reasons, proposals to reduce the extent of tutoring were unlikely to be effective unless they were accompanied by radical measures to improve teaching in the schools.
- It might be possible to reduce the demand for private tutoring by changing the parameters within which the education system worked, e.g. by making examinations tests of ability rather than of acquired knowledge, or by encouraging employers to rely more on tests of aptitude and less on academic qualifications when hiring. However, reform could only succeed if it was based on social and economic reality. Reform had to be consistent with the desires of parents and pupils, and with the realities of the job market. Any imposed solution that ignored these factors would be doomed to failure.

Following receipt of the University of Mauritius study, the government organized a National Workshop on Private Tuition. Since Mauritius was a compact country with a population of only 1 million, the workshop was able

to have a high degree of representation and strong visibility in society. The government developed various policies; these included the following (Mauritius, 1994: 6-7):

- In order to reduce pressure on very young children, private tutoring was prohibited in Standards I to III.
- To improve the conditions in which tutoring was given, teachers were permitted to use school premises for private classes on condition that: (a) tutoring did not exceed 10 hours per week; (b) no tutoring group had more than forty students; (c) children had a half-hour break between the end of regular classes and the beginning of private tutoring; and (d) private tutoring was not provided at the expense of the teachers' regular lessons.
- Teachers providing tutoring were asked to admit children free of charge if the children's parents could not afford to pay.

These measures thus used a combination of regulation, facilitation and request. The prohibition of tutoring in Standards I to III and the limitation on the number of weekly hours and class size were part of regulation. The facilitation lay in the approval of school premises being used for private tutoring. This measure sought to ensure that children did not suffer from taking classes in educationally unsuitable environments, and provided venues in which the authorities would be able to see if the regulations were being followed. The request contained in the policy was an appeal to teachers not to discriminate against students from low-income families.

However, all such strategies encounter difficulties. The regulations were chiefly targeted at teachers who provided supplementary tutoring for the pupils for which they already had responsibility in mainstream classes. Prohibition of such practices is easier than preventing any form of tutoring, and ambitious parents of children in Standards I to III continued to employ independent tutors. Also, the prohibition in Standards I to III exacerbated the stratification within schools because, in the words of a Mauritian newspaper (*L'Express*,

20 June 1993, quoted by Foondun, 2002: 506), teachers of the lower grades were ‘denied a share of the juicy cake of private tuition’. The result was intensification of lobbying within schools on which teachers could take the higher classes.

Being well aware of such difficulties, policy-makers in Mauritius undertook some longer-term structural reforms. Among the most important were efforts to reduce stratification in the education system, and particularly the extent to which some institutions were considered ‘five-star’ schools while others were only seen as second or third best. A parallel measure endeavoured to reduce the disparities in primary schools, so that pupils could be assured of more equal chances at the CPE examination; and a third measure focused on public awareness, ‘to impress upon parents and the community the negative impact of private tuition on our children’ (Mauritius, 1997: 28). In devising these strategies, however, policy-makers were aware that no quick and simple solutions could be found for a phenomenon which had a history for over a century and which had become firmly rooted in the society and its education system.

Hong Kong

Whereas in Mauritius a great deal of tutoring is provided by teachers for the mainstream pupils for which those teachers already have formal responsibility, in Hong Kong this practice is practically unheard of. The absence of the phenomenon in Hong Kong reflects a combination of traditions of government control of schooling and social sanctions. Teachers in Hong Kong have long been prohibited from tutoring their own mainstream pupils; and if any teachers tried overtly to undertake such tutoring, they would be sharply sanctioned by the authorities, their peers, the parents, and society at large. A further supporting factor is that teachers in Hong Kong are relatively

well paid, and thus cannot argue that they have to take on tutoring simply to make ends meet.

In some other respects, however, the situation in Hong Kong resembles that in Mauritius. Large numbers of children receive tutoring, and proportions increase as key examinations loom. While teachers are prohibited from private tutoring of their own mainstream pupils, they are not prohibited from private tutoring of pupils from other schools. Moreover, such teachers may neglect their mainstream duties in favour of the tutorial work. This problem may be illustrated by the view of a science teacher who also provided tutoring services. The teacher (quoted by Tseng, 1998: 59-60) declared that 'I care about my performance in the tuition centre because I regard students as customers, not like in the formal school'.

For most of the twentieth century, the Hong Kong Government adopted a *laissez-faire* approach towards the operation of tutorial centres. The government's Education Department was primarily concerned with schools and kindergartens, and considered tutoring to be outside its remit. During the 1990s, however, the Hong Kong Government found itself under pressure to pay more attention to tutorial institutions (Kwok, 2001: 14-15). This partly reflected increased activity in the tutoring sector, which in turn raised public awareness of the economic, social and educational issues. The government also faced an increasing volume of complaints about the fees and quality of specific institutions. In 1996 the media focused on the negative impact of one particular tutorial school that had claimed to have inside knowledge of the questions on the Advanced Level examination. In the event, the tutorial school evidently got the question wrong, but 584 students got very low marks for that question because they appeared to have copied a model essay provided by the tutorial school (Tseng, 1998: 56).

The following year, public attention escalated for a slightly different reason. The government's Education Department found that four of the five

premises of the prominent 'A1' tutorial school were not registered. The Education Department prosecuted the operator, leading to considerable publicity. The government's prosecution was facilitated by simplification of procedures. Previously, government officers were required to pay two fact-finding visits and one confirmatory visit, and to issue two warning letters, before they could consider taking legal action against a school; but under new rules they only had to visit the school once and issue one warning letter. Unregistered schools faced the possibility of a fine up to HK\$25,000 (US\$3,200); and teachers in unregistered schools were liable to fines of HK\$5,000 (US\$640) and two years in jail.

The government's prosecution was based on the Education Ordinance, which had evolved over many decades but which in its 1996 version (Hong Kong, 1996: section 3) indicated that all schools had to be registered. It defined a school as:

“... an institution, organization or establishment which provides for 20 or more persons during any one day, or 8 or more persons at any one time, any nursery, kindergarten, primary, secondary or post-secondary education or any other educational course by any other means, including correspondence delivered by hand or through the postal services.”

Following this prosecution, the government's ombudsman decided to investigate the matter. The ombudsman found that in 1998, about 390 tutorial schools had registered with the Education Department but that 408 suspected unregistered tutorial schools existed. The number of suspected unregistered schools had increased from 81 five years previously (Hong Kong, 1999: 2). Public complaints were the chief source of information on the existence of suspected unregistered schools. The majority of complaints focused on potential fire hazards, high fees, over-enrolment in classes, and poor performance of tutors. The ombudsman observed that the registration system did offer some protection to clients of tutorial schools against unsafe premises and/or

unscrupulous operators. However, some operators were reluctant to invest large sums of money to meet the safety and sanitation requirements. Since only a few unregistered tutorial schools had been prosecuted in the mid-1990s, some operators chose to take chances rather than going through the trouble of registration.

The ombudsman also noted that many students were unaware that their interests might be adversely affected if the tutorial schools that they patronized were not registered. The Education Department was urged to take a more active role, rather than merely responding to complaints, and to co-ordinate an interdepartmental working group comprised of representatives from the Education Department, the Fire Services Department, the Building Department and other concerned bodies; they were to meet at regular intervals in order to streamline registration procedures. The ombudsman urged the Education Department to ensure that registration certificates were displayed, in accordance with the requirements of the Education Ordinance, and urged the Education Department to consider arranging regular patrols in all districts to identify unregistered tutorial schools. The Education Department asserted that its main responsibility was for formal schools, and highlighted resource constraints, but did accept the ombudsman's recommendations.

Partly as a result of this, the Education Department moved to a much more active role. On the one hand it insisted that tutorial schools should register, and that the institutions should comply with the registration requirements for safety, space, etc.; and on the other hand it embarked on a campaign to educate parents. The department printed a pamphlet entitled *How to choose tutorial schools*, and also placed the pamphlet on its web site.¹

The web site also presented: (a) a list of registered tutorial schools – which by 2002 contained approximately 3,500 establishments (counting branches of institutions as separate establishments); (b) specific details on

1. www.ed.gov

each of these establishments, including addresses, registration numbers, maximum permitted class sizes in the registered premises, and fees; and (c) records of contraventions of the Education Ordinance and convictions in respect of unregistered schools, and offences by registered institutions.

The records of contraventions named fourteen institutions of which the owners/managers had been convicted in 2001 of operating unregistered schools. In nine of these cases, the owners/managers had also been convicted of employing persons to teach who were not registered or permitted teachers. A separate document listed fifteen institutions that had been registered but in which the operators or connected persons had been convicted of offences during 2000/2001. The offences included permitting more than the maximum number of pupils to occupy classrooms, charging or accepting payments other than those that had been approved, and operating in premises other than those that had been specified in the registration documentation. The purposes of this publicity were first to warn operators of the penalties, and second to encourage clients to be more aware both of possible irregularities and of their rights. Parents and students were urged to check the fees approved by the Education Department as printed on the Fees Certificate, which should be exhibited in prominent positions in the schools. Parents and students were also advised not to pay the annual school fees in one lump sum. Taking these matters one step further, legislation was prepared in 2001 to allow the authorities to prosecute tutorial schools that published false or misleading advertisements.

However, the Education Department defined some activities as beyond its scope. One part of this definition focused on what would and would not be considered 'educational' in terms of the focus of the ordinance on educational courses. On this matter, the authorities recognized (Hong Kong, 1995: 1) that:

“From an academic point of view, an activity in the sense of imparting knowledge or assisting and guiding the development of the mind is considered as educational in nature.”

However, the document continued:

“While it is clear from the Ordinance that educational courses are not limited only to courses within the school curriculum, it is certainly not the intention of the Education Department to include courses such as Beauty Therapy, Plumbing, Hair-cutting, Dancing, Ballet, Shadow-boxing, Acupuncture and Chinese Herbal Medicine under its jurisdiction. If it goes as far as to define anything that ‘imparts knowledge or assists and guides the development of the mind’ as ‘educational’ within the context of the Education Ordinance, then a salesman demonstrating a vacuum cleaner to a group of 20 or more persons, a class organized by a vendor of micro-wave ovens to teach customers to use the products or a course in meditation would be required to be registered.”

Recognizing these examples to be beyond the Education Department’s remit, the document then indicated that boundaries of concern would be guided by the purpose and content of courses, and by the nature of operations. Thus, a music course that taught singing (e.g. karaoke), or the techniques of playing a guitar, would be considered outside the remit of the Education Department, but a similar course of which a majority part required the learning of the history, theories and concepts in music, in addition to learning to play the instrument, would be considered within the remit.

The boundaries of focus were also reflected in the fact that these discussions referred only to classes and institutions that could be registered as tutorial schools. Individual tutors who travelled to their pupils’ homes, or who taught small groups in their own homes, were not covered. Thus a considerable domain of tutorial activity remained beyond the scope of the Education Department’s attention. Also, the income that tutors received from these activities remained largely beyond the reach of the taxation system.

Box 5. Huge classes and customer loyalty

What will here be called the S. K. Yeung Memorial Secondary School serves a predominantly working class population in the northern part of Hong Kong. One of the teachers, Ms Wong, decided to survey her 126 students in Forms 6 and 7 to see how many had received private tutoring. She found that 76.2 per cent had attended tutorial schools since the start of Form 5. Two-thirds of her students were currently receiving tutoring; and among the students not currently receiving it, one-third indicated that they planned to do so before the Advanced Level examinations.

Ms Wong also asked the students about the size of their tutorial classes. Only four students had ever been to private tutors on a one-to-one basis, and none of them did so at the time of the survey. Among the students currently receiving tutoring, nearly half attended classes with over 50 students. Indeed, 21.9 per cent attended classes with between 151 and 250 students, and 8.3 per cent attended classes with over 250 students.

The survey also revealed strong loyalty to particular tutorial centres. Over 90 per cent of the students currently receiving tutoring had only ever attended one tutorial centre, and two of these centres accounted for nearly all the students. 'This seems to me a rather unhealthy and incestuous situation,' remarked Ms Wong. 'The potential for private gain and undue influence is obvious.'

Source: Wong, 1998.

Singapore

In Singapore, a school is defined by law (Singapore, 1985) as: (a) an organization for the provision of education for ten or more persons; or (b) a place where ten or more persons are being or are habitually taught (whether in one or more classes), or in the case of a correspondence school, the place or places where instruction is prepared or where answers are examined or corrected.

As in Hong Kong, tutorial schools are required to register under this definition. In 1994 only sixty-two tutorial schools were registered with the government, but by 2002 the number had reached 178 (Singapore, 2002a: 20).

Also as in Hong Kong, in 2002 the names and addresses of the registered tutorial schools were listed on the Ministry of Education web site.² However, the web site did not provide guidelines to parents on how to select tutorial schools, and did not contain information on prosecutions of operators who had not complied with the regulations. In addition, no regulations governed the work of individual tutors who did not work for formal agencies.

A major thrust of Singapore's regulations, as in Hong Kong, concerned urban planning and physical safety. Thus, the Ministry of Education would only register tutorial schools if they had obtained prior clearance from the Urban Redevelopment Authority concerning their location, and from the Fire Safety Bureau and Housing and Development Board concerning construction standards. An additional regulation, not found in Hong Kong, concerned the names of the institutions. As explained in the briefing notes (Singapore, 1999: 3):

“‘High-sounding’ terms in school names, such as Academy, College, Institute, etc are not normally permitted. Names ought to reflect the curriculum and type of courses to be offered by the proposed school (e.g. tuition centre named as XYZ Tuition Centre; language school named as ABC Language School).”

The official guidelines did not indicate any regulations on teachers' qualifications in tutorial centres, and they were also silent on matters of fees.

The Singapore Government sees some merit in supplementary private tutoring, particularly for students who are in need of help to keep up with

2. www1.moe.edu.sg/privatesch/directory/tutorial.htm

their peers. In 1993, the government launched an Education Endowment Scheme that is popularly known as Edusave. It provides annual grants on the one hand to each school on a per-pupil basis (Singapore, 2002*b*). These funds can be used for educational programmes, and many schools now engage private individuals and/or agencies to conduct courses for groups of students. Some tutors come to the schools for supplementary lessons, but others come during school hours. Some parents, however, query why these outside tutors are being brought into the schools, especially when they take over the classes of the full-time teachers.

In addition, the Singapore Government has provided specific assistance to some organizations that were involved in tutoring. One of these was the Council for the Development of the Singapore Muslim Community, better known by its abbreviated Malay name, Mendaki. The main rationale for the creation of this body in 1981 was to help the Malay community catch up with the Chinese and Indians in educational performance. This, it was argued, would promote Malay participation in the economy, and avoid the racial disharmony caused by social imbalances. The government gave Mendaki financial support, and permitted the organization to use public schools for after-school tutoring. The government also trained tutors who worked voluntarily or for low fees. Following the Mendaki lead, other ethnic groups established associations during the 1990s. The Singapore Indian Development Association was founded in 1991, and the Chinese Development Assistance Council in 1992. Also in 1992, the Eurasian Association, which had been established in the 1980s, launched an endowment fund to finance education and welfare programmes for the Eurasian community. While most supplementary tutoring in Singapore was offered on commercial terms, these community bodies provide significant help to pupils from low-income groups (Tan, 1995; Gopinathan, 2001).

Nevertheless, a considerable shadow sector operated in parallel to these initiatives and entirely outside the regulations for tutorial schools laid down

by the Ministry of Education. At least two organizations in Singapore linked tutors and clients through the Internet. Filmo Communications Pte³ was a commercial operation; while Tutorcity⁴ began as a commercial operation but was later run as a community service. NextLevel Tutor⁵ was a third body operating from Malaysia that included Singapore in its catchment area. Both aspiring tutors and aspiring clients could register through the sites, and the systems provided information on tutors' gender, qualifications, charges, preferred location for operation, etc. Filmo earned income by charging each successfully placed tutor 50 per cent of the first month's tutoring fees. Tutorcity initially operated a similar system, but in 2000 abolished charges.

Both Filmo and Tutorcity emphasized the importance of clients checking the qualifications of tutors. Filmo placed particular stress on checking identity cards, observing that it is a serious offence to employ non-Singaporeans or non-permanent residents as private tutors. However, a separate branch of Filmo specialized in recruitment of domestic helpers from the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Indonesia, and the tutoring section of the Filmo web site invited readers to 'Click here to employ a Filipino maid with college degree who may be able to help with your elementary homework'. The Tutorcity web site did not have a comparable link to domestic helpers. It had a somewhat minimalist view of tutors' qualifications, declaring that 'anybody who has a genuine desire to teach, a sense of responsibility and O-level or higher qualification is welcome to register as a tutor with Tutorcity.com'. However, the web site did propose a code of practice for tutors, and students were encouraged to complete survey forms to rate the tutors. Both Filmo and Tutorcity left prices to the negotiation between tutors and clients, though they did suggest some guidelines.

This account of patterns in Singapore shows considerable variation. On the one hand there are formally registered tutoring centres that are required to

3. www.filmo.com
4. www.tutorcity.com
5. www.nextlevel.com

comply with ministry regulations, and on the other hand there is a market place operated through the Internet and with almost no regulation. The Singapore Government seemed content to tolerate this diversity.

Taiwan

The tutorial schools of Taiwan, known as *buxiban*, have become an ubiquitous feature of contemporary life. According to Zeng (1999: 156), they first came to the fore in the 1960s. In those days, competition was modest, and the operators could live in peace with each other. The two ‘grandfathers’ in the business, Jianguo and Zhicheng *buxiban*, attracted students to their campuses without even the help of information brochures; and during the 1970s the government, in a move to encourage private enterprise in education, provided low-rent facilities (Tong, 2001: 100).

Box 6. Doing more harm than good?

‘Today, Saturday, 50,000 students will meet their private tutors.’ Thus began a special-focus section of Singapore’s *Straits Times* newspaper (George, 1992). ‘Private tuition touches more than a quarter of Singapore’s households,’ the article continued, ‘One-third of all students, from kindergarten to university level, have tuition.’

Does the tuition help the students? Mr Lee Lam Hua, principal of San Shan Primary School, could see a positive side. ‘If parents are careful in choosing a good tutor,’ he said, ‘then tuition can be helpful.’ But, like other principals in Singapore, Mr Lee was concerned that unqualified tutors and the extra workload might do students more harm than good.

Associate Professor Sim Wong Kooi from the National Institute of Education agreed that there were possible negative dimensions. ‘Tuition may undermine the school’s mission,’ he said, ‘While school teachers try to give students a firm grounding in their subjects, private tutors are employed mainly to boost examination performance.’ Tutors commonly take short cuts and simply

drill their students in examination skills. This may well have the immediate effect of producing ‘exam-smart’ students, but the good scores would be deceptive if the students lack foundations in the basics. ‘The negative effects will show up later on,’ observed Associate Professor Sim.

A further problem was that some teachers, knowing that many of their students received tutoring, were tempted to leave focused coaching to the tutors. Worse, some teachers preferred to concentrate not on conducting remedial classes for the students under their charge, but on earning extra incomes through private tuition. Assoc. Prof. Sim added that the pupils’ attitudes might also be affected. “They may become less attentive in class because they feel that they can use tuition to catch up. And because they do not appreciate the broader mission of their teachers, their tutors’ exam-orientation may seem more useful.”

Despite such observations, tutoring has grown rather than diminished in Singapore’s competitive and stratified society. Many educators view the phenomenon with deep misgivings, but they do not see any simple remedies.

However, this benign-looking picture changed markedly. Zeng (1999: 156) explained that the success of the two ‘grandfathers’ stimulated the sector, and that in due course both management and pedagogy became more professional. At the same time:

“... a number of middle school teachers joined together and formed the ‘*Xue-er*’ *buxiban*. Students were trained here like soldiers. Their heads were shaved, and they were subjected to caning, if necessary, as disciplinary punishment. The Spartan and tough cramming style, however, did work miracles in the university acceptance ratios.”

As time went on, corporal punishment became less acceptable in Taiwan, and small tutoring classes were considered outmoded. In the next stage, Zeng (p.156) continues:

“Entrepreneurs vied to upgrade the classrooms and offices in an effort to make them look grand, amenable and superficially luxurious. The

new-generation entrepreneurs in the cram business started to expand classes for younger students ... In an extreme example, a *buxiban* rented all the classrooms of an elementary school during the summer and transported the kids of the first-year middle school there for tutoring classes. The demand was so high that they had to ‘erect chalkboards in the hallways to give lectures’ as there were not enough classrooms.”

This frenzy led the authorities in 1985 to tighten regulations. Academic *buxiban* were forbidden to enrol primary school students, and secondary school students were not allowed to have tutoring classes from Monday morning to Saturday noon (Tseng, 1998: 46). However, these regulations were rarely observed. One problem was that although tutorial schools were required to register with the government, the regulations did not give a precise definition of a tutorial school. Another problem was that the authorities lacked the resources and the political will to police the system.

In 1992 the government, aiming to reduce the dominance of the examination system, introduced a new procedure for allocating junior secondary school students to senior secondary schools. In the new procedure, the emphasis given to the examination was decreased to 30 per cent with the remaining 70 per cent dependent on teachers’ assessments (Tseng 1998: 46). The *buxiban* complained that this arrangement cut sharply into their business; but it created another problem because increasing numbers of teachers embarked on their own private tutoring classes for their mainstream pupils. Although the intention of the policy had been to reduce the burden on the junior secondary students, it seemed to have the effect of making students dependent on the private classes provided by their own teachers.

In parallel with these trends, the 1990s brought ‘enterprization’ in business management throughout Taiwan. *Buxiban* strengthened their marketing operations with web sites, glossy brochures and commercial advertising, which penetrated inside the schools. This stimulus to market demand caused the

cram population to reach a record high. According to figures reported by Zeng (1999: 152), in 1992 the income of Taiwan's academic *buxiban* was equivalent to US\$212 million, with a net profit (annual income less annual expenditure) of over US\$13 million. In some cases, the schools directly collaborated with the *buxiban*. Tseng (1998: 54) reported an instance in which a senior high school that wished to improve its reputation in the university entrance examination engaged in direct collaboration with a *buxiban*, arranging to transport all Year 3 students to the *buxiban* every day after school for another two to three hours of cramming.

While some observers had major misgivings about *buxiban*, however, in some respects government regulations had a positive side. Thus parts of the regulations published in 1996 were phrased more like instructions and guidance to *buxiban* than controlling mechanisms. One clause, moreover, indicated that *buxiban* with good results [presumably meaning academic results, though that was not specified] could be given certificates of appreciation or medals by city or county governments (Taiwan, 1996: 53).

In 1999, the system of government regulation of tutorial schools was restructured. Prior to the restructuring, all establishments were required to register with the Ministry of Education in Taipei. After the restructuring, they were required to register with the twenty-one county/city bureaux of education. At least in the short run, however, decentralization did not significantly change the nature of relations between the authorities and the tutoring sector.

As in Hong Kong and Singapore, a major element in the registration procedure in Taiwan concerned building safety. Applicants were also required to provide information on facilities, management, teacher qualifications, curriculum, teaching materials, fees and systems for assessing student performance. In June 1999, prior to decentralization reform, 6,741 tutorial schools were registered with the Ministry of Education, of which 1,144 were in Taipei. However, these registrations mostly resulted from initiatives taken

by the owners of the tutorial schools rather than pressure from the authorities, and no prosecutions for non-compliance had been undertaken during the previous five years.

One major difference between Taiwan and Mauritius, Hong Kong and Singapore is the existence of tutoring school associations, most of which serve particular geographic regions. Thus, in 1999 Taipei had 1,150 registered tutorial schools, about half of which were members of the Taipei City Association for Providers of Tutorial Education. This association was established in 1981, and served as a self-regulating body within the industry. The association fields complaints from the public against member tutorial schools, and negotiates on behalf of the member tutorial schools with the government. It publishes a regular newsletter containing information of interest to members, and acted as an instrument for quality assurance. In 1999, fourteen such associations operated in different parts of Taiwan.

Box 7. Denunciation of rivals

The *buxiban* in Taiwan take competition very seriously. They work hard to improve their own image, and they work equally hard to debase their rivals.

This phenomenon may be illustrated by a paragraph from the hard-covered, glossy brochure of one *buxiban* in Taipei's Cram Street, an area near the railway station in which large numbers of *buxiban* are clustered:

“Some *buxiban* fail to improve their students' score achievement, but they refuse to learn from the good teaching methods of our Cram Street. Their administration is sluggish, but they are not willing to adopt our rules, either. Their campus is surrounded by small motels, game galleries, dark public houses, and they conceal their places from the parents' eyes. What right do they have to criticize our Cram Street? It only serves their ulterior interest of enrolling more students ...”

A slim publication from a different *buxiban* has an essay criticizing categorically its neighbour's 'ugly' activities; these included (a) pretending to be a student and writing impostor letters to criticize other *buxiban*; (b) pretending

to be the administrator of a *buxiban* and calling parents for immediate payment for the tuition; (c) inducing students of one *buxiban* to transfer to theirs; (d) spreading rumours about the other *buxiban*'s viability in order to smirch their image and scare students away; and (e) trying to attract more students into their schools by the attractive appearance of boys and girls already enrolled in the *buxiban*. Many pamphlets in Cram Street contain such denunciations. They show both the rhetoric and the reality of this competitive world.

Source: Zeng, 1999: 163.

Republic of Korea

As in Taiwan, private tutoring in the Republic of Korea first gained significant prominence during the 1960s and 1970s. However, the response by the Republic of Korea authorities was different from that of their counterparts in Taiwan. In particular, in 1980 the Republic of Korea Government issued a formal prohibition of supplementary private tutoring. The ban was ineffective and ultimately had to be abandoned; but the changing patterns of attempted control are instructive.

In 1980, the scale of private tutoring in the Republic of Korea was arguably moderate compared with contemporary patterns both in the Republic of Korea and elsewhere. According to one survey (quoted in Yoon *et al.*, 1997: 11), in 1980 tutoring was received by 12.9 per cent of elementary school pupils, 15.3 per cent of middle school pupils, and 26.2 per cent of high school pupils. Nevertheless, the government perceived private tutoring to have corrupting elements, and aimed to remove it. The prohibition was aimed both at teachers who received additional money from giving supplementary tutoring to their own mainstream pupils and at tutorial institutes which served pupils from a range of schools. The authorities also wished to discourage one-to-one and small-group tutoring in the homes of tutors and/or their clients.

While it was relatively easy to announce such a prohibition, it proved very difficult to enforce – especially in the face of parental striving to achieve what parents saw as best for their children in the harshly competitive environment. Recognizing this fact, the government relaxed the ban by stages (Yang, 2001). The sequence of events between 1980 and 1996 was as follows:

- 1980: All tutoring banned.
- 1981: Coaching permitted in musical, artistic and sporting skills; and lessons permitted in speech, flower arranging, and other leisure activities.
- 1984: Senior high school students were allowed to attend private foreign-language institutes during winter vacations. Students with the lowest learning achievement (the bottom 20 per cent) were allowed to have extra lessons in school from teachers.
- 1988: Extra lessons for every student was permitted in schools, with mainstream teachers providing such extra lessons to their own pupils on a fee-paying basis.
- 1989: University undergraduate students were allowed to tutor students in primary and secondary schools. Study-aid tapes were allowed to be produced, purchased, and rented in the market. Primary and secondary school students were allowed to attend private institutes for academic lessons during vacations.
- 1991: Primary and secondary students were allowed to go to private institutes for academic lessons, even during semesters.
- 1996: University graduate students allowed to tutor students in primary and secondary schools.

Reflecting this easing of restrictions, the scale of activity expanded rapidly in the mid-1990s. In 1993, nation-wide expenditure on private tutoring was estimated at 3,410 billion *won* (US\$4.3 billion). This figure is said to have grown to 4,696 billion *won* in 1994, and 9,320 billion *won* in 1995 (Yoon *et al.*, 1997: 1). By 1997, the average annual tutoring fees for elementary, middle and high school students were estimated to comprise 12 to 16 per cent of Gross National Product per capita; this was three to four times the

level in Japan for example (Kwak, 1999). *Table 1* presents estimates of the scale of supplementary tutoring in that year. These figures show tutoring to have been strongest at the elementary level. It was especially dominant in the cities, but also significant in rural areas.

Partly because of such escalation, in 1997 the issue of prohibition again came on to the political agenda. President Kim Dae-Jung went as far as to announce in his 1998 inauguration address that his government would ‘free young people from extracurricular activities and relieve parents from the heavy monetary burden of private tutoring’ (quoted in Yi, 2002: 2). The government announced in 1998 that extra academic tutoring for secondary students would be banned by stages: in 1999 for lower secondary school students and freshmen in high schools, and in 2001 for every secondary school student.

Table 1. Proportion of students receiving supplementary private tutoring, Republic of Korea, 1997 (%)

Level	Seoul	6 metropolitan cities	Other cities	Rural areas
Elementary	81.5	82.3	74.6	54.1
Middle	65.5	64.2	47.0	45.6
High	59.1	29.3	18.8	12.2

Source: Yim, 1997; quoted by Paik, 1998: 2.

However, this move was greeted with considerable scepticism. Many critics argued that tutoring could only be tackled effectively by making it unnecessary, i.e. by reducing the competitive advantages to be gained through tutoring, and by improving the quality of mainstream schooling. The editorial in one widely circulated publication (*Asiaweek*, 1997: 20) expressed the view that:

“For Korean authorities to address their own shortcomings in primary and secondary education by banning tutors is a bit like trying to eliminate

robbery by ensuring that the entire population is poor. In an increasingly competitive Asia, it makes no sense at all to legislate in favor of the lowest common denominator.”

In the event, this renewed attempt at prohibition got no further than its predecessors. In 2000, the courts declared the prohibition unconstitutional as an infringement of human rights.

Faced with this history, the Korean authorities have decided to take a broader approach. At one level are efforts to improve the quality of the school system – to make it less rigid and to widen the types of learning that it promotes. Since the mid-1990s, schools have been required to offer additional services in order to make it less necessary for parents to seek these services externally. As the government explained (Republic of Korea, 1996: 30):

“Such a measure is aimed at deterring the inequity which results when students from wealthier families seek private tutoring to ensure that they are able to pass the various entrance examinations and do well in school. With the measure proposed, quality tutoring will be available to any student in need [through the school itself] thus lessening the financial burden now imposed on families.”

In addition, the authorities have expanded their educational broadcasting services, aiming to provide enrichment lessons to families free of charge, rather than through the tutorial institutes.

At another level, the authorities have made efforts to reform the college entrance system to make it less monolithic (Republic of Korea, 2001:158-159). Under this reform, the College Scholastic Ability Test was administered only to provide indicators on students’ minimum academic development. Individual universities and colleges were then encouraged to develop diverse methods to select students. The government hopes that this will have a backwash effect on the school system, promoting creativity and diminishing the forms of rigidity on which private tutoring has flourished.

Box 8. Pressures on both parents and children

In the account below, Kim, Y.B. (2000) comments from a personal perspective on the forces which underlie the Republic of Korea's passion for private tutoring.

“When I was young, there were very few private educational institutions. But now they have sprung up across the country like so many mushrooms after the rain. Some institutions educate not only school children, but also preschool children whose parents want to take advantage of early education.

One of my neighbors sometimes complains that the cost of educating her two sons, aged 5 and 11, is excessive. Her husband's income has been reduced substantially because of the financial crisis. So it goes without saying that the large amount of money she spends on private education creates a heavy financial burden on her household. Sometimes she takes a part-time job in order to help foot the bill for her children's education. She feels that she must send her two sons to private educational institutions because all the other children in her neighbourhood are also going to such institutions.

Even though sending both children to private institutions places a heavy burden on her household, she worries that they would otherwise be lonely since there are no neighborhood children they can play with. In the past, children had time to play such games as hide-and-seek or blind-man's-bluff. But today's children have a dreary schedule of all work and no play.

My wife also sends my children to private educational institutions like other mothers. If my children were spending their time at home after school, she would feel uneasy. I think many mothers are unhappy with public education and send their children to the private institutions for a better education. Many students tend to neglect their studies at public school because they have already learned the material covered there at the private institution.”

Chapter 4

Lessons from comparative policy analysis

The five case studies presented above do not represent the full range of possible policy responses to the phenomenon of supplementary private tutoring. In all these cases, the governments confronted the phenomenon with active policy responses. Other governments have been much more passive. Yet even among the active responses there has been considerable variation. This permits identification of instructive similarities and contrasts.

At a basic level, four main policy responses to supplementary private tutoring may be identified. They are:

- *Ignore the phenomenon.* Some governments have felt unable or unwilling to do anything about private tutoring, and have therefore chosen to ignore it.
- *Prohibit private tutoring.* As indicated above, this has been tried in the Republic of Korea. It has also been tried in some other countries.
- *Recognize and regulate.* Governments in this category have been willing to play some interventionist role, and have sought to regulate the market in order to limit the negative dimensions of private tutoring. Mauritius and Hong Kong are in this category.
- *Actively encourage.* A few governments perceive private tutoring to be on balance a desirable phenomenon and have actively encouraged it. The Singapore and Taiwan governments, which recognize problematic dimensions of tutoring but also see positive sides, are in this category.

Enlarging on these observations, the governments that ignore the phenomenon may again be divided into two groups. In one group are governments that are weak and simply do not have the capacity to police tutorial operations. Many African governments are in this category, including

those of Nigeria and Kenya. This monograph has distinguished between (a) situations in which mainstream teachers tutor the students for which they already have responsibility in their mainstream classes, and (b) situations in which tutors (who may or may not also teach in mainstream schools) provide tutoring for pupils for whom they do not otherwise have responsibility. The former category is arguably especially pernicious because it can lead to a form of blackmail. Yet some governments are too weak even to regulate this practice.

In the other group in this category are governments that do have capacity to monitor and regulate tutoring, but which define it as outside their sphere of responsibility. They do this either because the sector is small and considered insignificant, or because they prefer to leave matters to market forces. The Canadian authorities, for example, neither monitor tutorial operations nor seek to control them. As explained by one government official in the Province of Ontario (Hunter, 1999):

“The definition of a school [in Ontario] is ‘the body of pupils that is organized as a unit for educational purposes under the jurisdiction of the appropriate board, or in an educational institution operated by the government’. There is no term ‘tutorial school’ in common usage and no definition. More common names are ‘tutorial services’ and ‘learning centres’; but to the best of my knowledge there is no registration system in any province [in Canada]. None of these services is authorized to grant government certificates or diplomas, and hence there is no need to have a registration system. If the parent gets what he/she wants to buy, all is OK. If not, one stops buying it. There is no structure to complain. Any remedy for claimed fraud, etc. would be via the courts, not the government.”

This approach has been possible because for cultural and other reasons tutoring has not in the past been a major phenomenon in Canada. Instructively, however, a similar approach has been taken in Japan, which has a long history

of *juku*, and where the role of supplementary tutoring has been very controversial. Despite this, the Japanese Government has been able to maintain a ‘hands-off’ stance by insisting that it is only responsible for the mainstream education system. The Japanese authorities do require *juku* to be registered, but only with the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry rather than with the Ministry of Education, Science, Sports and Culture. *Juku* have thus been required to file tax returns, to meet certain standards of safety in building construction, and to provide adequate fire escapes, toilets and other facilities. Yet in this system if clients have complaints over fees or the quality of services, they take them to the Consumer Council rather than to the Ministry of Education, Science, Sports and Culture.

Nevertheless, in Canada some observers predicted change as a result of expansion of the tutoring sector. In 2000, Canada’s Council of Ministers of Education published a study of science learning that contained some striking findings. The study was based on a careful sampling of 31,000 students in 2,000 schools throughout Canada. Among the reported findings was that 10.9 per cent of 13-year-old students and 13.3 per cent of 16-year-old students received one hour or more of extra school lessons or tutoring during a normal week (Canada, 2000: 53). Among 16 year olds, in no province was the proportion below 8 per cent, and in one province it reached 20 per cent. These figures seemed to reflect a significant growth in the sector, and suggested that perhaps supplementary tutoring would be given more attention at the official level.

Concerning the second category of possible government responses, prohibition, a strong case can be made for banning mainstream teachers from tutoring their own pupils. Yet even this is not straightforward. In poor countries, teachers may be paid so inadequately that they need supplementary earnings to achieve even subsistence incomes. In Zanzibar (United Republic of Tanzania), teachers have been given official permission to provide supplementary tutoring in their own schools. As explained by a Ministry of Education document (Zanzibar, 1998: 18):

“The Government has officially allowed government schools 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. Though controversial, the measure offers a rare opportunity for parents to voluntarily contribute to teachers’ remuneration ... therefore increasing the motivation of teachers and decreasing their propensity to look for another job. This measure has a positive impact on access as the number of teachers to be recruited to cope with the ever-increasing enrolment becomes fairly stable.”

Such issues are not unique to Zanzibar. From one perspective, in resource-constrained settings the practice of teachers providing additional tutoring for their pupils may be a solution rather than a problem (Biswal, 1999b). Yet Mauritius has a much stronger economy than Zanzibar, and the question arises why the practice has not been phased out there. The answer lies partly in traditions built up during the era of greater financial stringency. Once traditions become entrenched, it is very difficult to change them.

Governments that do wish to regulate supplementary private tutoring have various tools to help them to achieve the task. The usual starting-point is the legal framework; this must define supplementary private tutoring and tutorial schools with sufficient clarity. Governments must then decide what resources they are prepared to put into monitoring and policing their regulations. Such work does not have to be done entirely by government agents: the general public can be encouraged to play a role. The Taiwanese model of self-regulating associations of tutorial schools, which has parallels in Turkey (Tansel, 2003), might hold some useful lessons for other societies.

However, certain types of private tutoring are perhaps impossible to control. Arrangements between individuals for one-to-one tutoring in private homes would seem to be in that category. Also in that category is Internet

tutoring, since it is not even confined to national boundaries. Thus in 2002 the web site of one such enterprise⁶ boasted that:

“Whether you are in New York, California or around the world, you will have the ability to receive tutoring from an expert in whatever course of math you need, from your home in an Internet-based, two-way virtual classroom.”

Companies such as this charge for their services on either an hourly or a monthly basis, and collect their payments world-wide by credit card. Several such companies offer a 24-hour service. These enterprises seem to be beyond the control of national governments, especially those outside the countries in which the web sites are operated.

6. www.interactivemathtutor.com

Chapter 5

Conclusion

The introductory paragraph to this monograph indicated that it had been prepared as a contribution to the IIEP project on ethics and corruption in education. Although the monograph commenced with a definition of supplementary private tutoring, it did not define corruption. *Box 1* referred to the work of Klitgaard (1988), who has written a widely appreciated book on corruption. In that book Klitgaard highlighted the difficulty of defining corruption and, citing Max Weber (1958: 47-48), presented a case for avoiding the temptation to begin a study with an attempted definition. Rather, Klitgaard (p. 23), suggested that the definition could usefully come at the end so that it could be informed by specific examples of the matter under discussion. This approach has merits for the present study as well as for others.

The *Longman dictionary of contemporary English* (Procter, 1980: 248) defines the verb ‘to corrupt’ as:

1. to make morally bad; cause to change from good to bad;
2. to influence (a person, especially a public official) improperly;
3. to change the original form of a language, set of teachings, etc. in a bad way.

The noun ‘corruption’ is then defined as:

1. the act of corrupting;
2. dishonesty; immoral behaviour; the state of being corrupt;
3. decay; impurity;
4. a movement away from the pure original form of a language, set of teachings, etc.

In so far as the present study is concerned with corruption, it is only tangentially focused on the influence of public officials. It is more concerned with movement away from what at least some people would consider to be a (relatively) pure form of education to a corrupted one.

The definitions cited above also contain reference to morals, and thus to ethics. As noted at the beginning of this monograph, one difficulty is that ethical judgements are, to some extent, personal decisions based on personal perspectives. These perspectives are commonly influenced by the standpoints of the observers, and by the question as to whether those observers benefit or lose from situations. The monograph cannot reach a definitive statement that would be agreed by all people in all situations on the desirability, or otherwise, of different forms of supplementary private tutoring. However, the monograph has pointed out that a significant number of people do consider supplementary private tutoring to be corrupting. These people convey moral judgements when making such statements.

To many analysts, the most important element of the corruption is in the way that private tutoring negatively shapes what those analysts feel should be an appropriate form of education. As observed in *Box 2*, the shadow system of private tutoring is different from many other shadows in that it may affect the body that it imitates. Thus to repeat the judgements of some commentators already presented in the main text of this monograph:

“Most students tend to rely on private tutors for everything including homework and exam tips. As a result classroom attention tends to dwindle creating discipline problems for school teachers.” (Yasmeen, 1999: 23.)

“Tutoring has caused a great lack of interest on the part of students. They have reached the point of thinking that as long as they can pay someone who will show them how to pass examinations, they do not

need to attend school classes except when they are required to do so by school regulations.” (Hussein, 1987: 92.)

“Extra-school Instruction or ‘private tuition’ has become an inescapable part of childhood in Sri Lanka ... The age appropriate developmental tasks such as building wholesome attitudes towards oneself, learning to get along with peers, developing conscience, morality and a scale of values stand a very poor chance in this climate of cruel competition.” (Wijetunge, 1994: 15-16)

“Tuition may undermine the school’s mission. While school teachers try to give students a firm grounding in their subjects, private tutors are employed mainly to boost examination performance ... [Pupils] may become less attentive in class because they feel that they can use tuition to catch up. And because they do not appreciate the broader mission of their teachers, their tutors’ exam-orientation may seem more useful.” (Sim, quoted by George, 1992: 28)

These remarks focus on the impact of tutoring on mainstream education systems. Other commentators have focused on the wider impact on societies. When mainstream teachers receive money for tutoring their own mainstream pupils, a form of blackmail may arise that has a corrosive impact on home-school relations and on society at large. Tutoring also maintains and exacerbates social inequalities. With such factors in mind, Sen (2002a: 7) has spoken eloquently about the ‘evil of private tuition’ in India, which must be ‘uncompromisingly overcome’. His remarks sparked some controversy (see, for example, Aiyer, 2002a, 2002b; Sen 2002b); but many commentators agreed with him that supplementary private tutoring may have major corrupting effects.

The questions then are what governments (a) can, and (b) should do about it. This monograph has presented information on a range of responses

by governments in different countries. Some governments have taken direct action, and have sometimes (though not always) had some success in this. Other governments have felt constrained and helpless, and yet other governments have decided not to take interventionist stances but instead to leave matters to market forces.

While at first sight the direct action of some governments might seem to deserve applause, especially when policies have delivered results, this form of response is not necessarily to be recommended in all situations. Klitgaard (1988: 24) stressed that '*the optimal form of corruption is not zero*' (original italics). This idea, he recognized, could be shocking to some; and he emphasized that he did not mean that an ideal world would contain corruption, or that if we could remake a society completely we would want any corruption. Nevertheless the world is not ideal, he observed, and practically everything has costs. He explained (pp. 24-25):

“Suppose a certain kind of corruption causes harm to society; it creates ‘social costs’. Suppose, too, that efforts to fight this corruption are costly. To minimize the combined costs to society, we must balance the two. We should certainly consider the reduction in social costs that we obtain by reducing corrupt acts, but we must also take into account the increase in social costs entailed by our very efforts to fight corruption. And this leads to the conclusion that, in most cases, the minimum cost solution will not have corruption equal to zero or anticorruption efforts equal to the maximum amount.”

In the present context, this implies that before governments make any response to the nature and scale of private tutoring, or to anticipated manifestations, they should begin by calculating the costs of any measures that they might take to control it. In some settings, the costs of control might outweigh the benefits.

Moreover, this particular theme is complicated by the fact that under some circumstances and from some perspectives supplementary private tutoring, far from being seen as a corrupting influence, might be seen positively. Through such tutoring, pupils presumably gain more knowledge; this in turn can contribute to social and national development. Tutoring can also help lower achievers to keep up with their peers; this in turn can enhance self-esteem; and out-of-school classes can help shape attitudes towards academic study, diligence and social order. In addition, tutoring gives income to the tutors, and thus promotes employment. Further, while some commentators are critical of the ways that tutoring increases the diversity of students' educational experiences, other commentators applaud such diversity. A powerful movement at the end of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first century has advocated decentralization of control over education and diversification of educational provision to meet the needs of different groups. Private tutoring is perhaps the most responsive of all forms of education to the demands of the market place. It is self-evidently providing what consumers wish to purchase, not only in syllabus but also in style, class size and location. Some commentators would argue that supplementary private tutoring is a necessary complement to mainstream education systems, and that the diversity and free-market dimensions are to be welcomed rather than controlled.

All these points expose the complexity of the phenomenon and the challenges that confront policy-makers as they decide how to respond. In most parts of the world, supplementary private tutoring appears to be expanding. Because of this, tutoring is likely to be more difficult to ignore, and governments that do not currently have specific policies on the matter will find themselves under increasing pressure to devise responses. In this process, comparative analysis of experiences in different parts of the world should be of major assistance. This monograph has endeavoured to make a contribution to the task of devising appropriate policies.

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