

Privatization of Public Education in Cambodia: Equity Implications of Private Tutoring

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Privatisation
in Education
RESEARCH INITIATIVE

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A SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE



Presentation Outline

- Hypothesis
- Theoretical perspective
- Contextualizing private tutoring in Cambodian public education: History and culture
- Methods and limitations
- Findings and discussion on a public-private system of education
- Conclusions

Hypothesis

- The seamless combination of public schooling and private tutoring since the 1990s has created a public-private educational arrangement that stratifies Cambodian youth along socioeconomic lines.

Theoretical Perspective

- Using Pierre Bourdieu's (1986) work, we focus on socioeconomic inequalities stemming from private tutoring, arguing that students benefit unevenly from the social and cultural capital they have accrued through supplementary tutoring.

What is private tutoring in the Cambodian context?

- For high stakes examinations?
- For remedial lessons?
- For elective subjects?
- For supplementing teachers' salaries?
- For providing more time to complete the national curriculum?
- For providing students with more "knowledge"?

Where is private tutoring taking place? And who teaches it?

- In tutoring centers?
- In public schools?
- In public teachers' homes?
- In students' homes?
- In other teachers' homes?
- By star tutors?
- By public school teachers?
- By private teachers?
- By un-certified teachers?
- By peers or older siblings?

Is private tutoring shadow education?

- Private tutoring acts AS a shadow of the national curriculum.
- Private tutoring is IN the shadow of government regulation.
- But as private tutoring is used to complete the national curriculum and supplement teachers salaries, a public-private educational arrangement emerges.
- Private tutoring has become the hidden privatization of public education.

Historical Context

- Rebuilding Cambodia post-Democratic Kampuchea: Cambodia as a pawn on a superpower chess board and punishing the poor (1979- 1993).
- UN administers Cambodia (1992-1993).
- 1990s Education for All initiative and Cambodia's recurring push for access.
- Liberalizing the economy under Hun Sen (1985-present).
- Cambodia's economic commitment to education post-UNTAC (1993- present).
- The effects on training teachers, building schools, and financing education.

Cultural Context

- Hierarchy and power: God-Kings past and present
- *Neak mean* and *Neak kro*: dividing society
- Patronage/Clientship: Examples throughout history
- Education as a “sorting machine” under French colonialism: finding the “right” people to become civil servants.

Methods and Instruments

Methods for JERO

- Observations: 26
- Focus Groups: 6 with 37 participants
- Interviews: 10
- Grade Tracking: 36 6th grade students

Full OSI Research Study

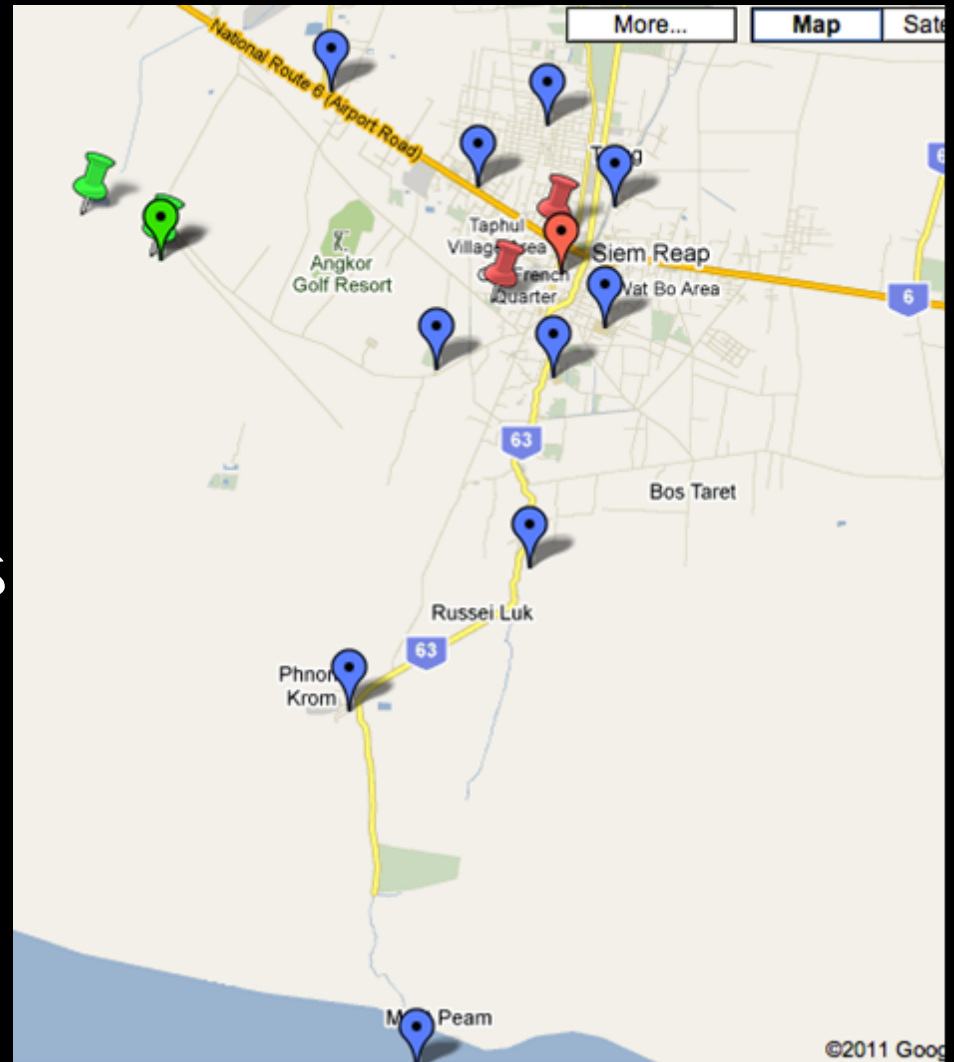
- Observations: 28
- Focus Groups: 20 with over 100 participants
- Interviews: 20
- Grade Tracking 444 9th graders and 200 6th graders

Sample

- Focus: private tutoring on the national curriculum by public school teachers during the school year.
- Six schools in one district.
- Three semi-urban and three semi-rural
- Within each area two primary schools (6th grade) and one lower secondary school (9th grade)

Sample Selection

- Identified LSS in semi-urban and semi-rural location and then “worked backwards”
- Students, parents and teachers who use/teach and don't use/teach private tutoring



Limitations

- Small sample size
- Recruiting participants in focus groups
- Political difficulties
- Narrow geographic location

Findings

- The national curriculum is continued in private tutoring.
- Parents, students, and teachers perceive private tutoring as necessary for a “full” and “high quality” education.
- Achievement differences between students who go and do not go to private tutoring help legitimize social differences between students

Perceived to be a continuation

- “you learn 50 percent in a government school and 50 percent in private tutoring.”
- “private tutoring helps the children a lot, because government school is not enough.”
- “there are many subjects in government school and teachers do not have time to teach them all.”

Activity	Government School N= 14 % of classes observed (number of classes observed)	Private Tutoring N=12 % of classes observed (number of classes observed)
High ability students work with low ability students	28.6 (4)	16.7 (2)
High ability students help teach whole class	71.4 (10)	50 (6)
Call of weak students to answer questions	50 (7)	50 (6)
Students answer multiple choice questions	14.3 (2)	16.7 (2)
Students answer questions at board	100 (14)	75 (9)
Assigns homework	64.3 (9)	41.7 (5)
Teacher presents new material	78.6 (11)	41.7 (5)
Provides whole class instruction	100 (14)	91.7 (11)
Students answer in chorus	71.4 (10)	66.7 (8)
Teacher gives example to whole class	78.6 (11)	83.3 (10)

All about Practice?

- “Government class is mostly about giving introductions, theories, and a little bit of practice, while private tutoring has a lot of problem solving and practice... However, having private tutoring alone is difficult too...because practice alone is not enough. Learning theoretical introductions during school hours and practicing applications during private tutoring lessons is better.”

Activity Observed	Private Tutoring N=7 % of class time (minutes)	Government School N=6 % of class time (minutes)
Teacher gives lesson	30.26 (115)	29.40 (102)
Students speak individually or as a whole class	6.84 (26)	10.38 (36)
Classroom management (attendance, assign HW, collects money, etc.)	14.74 (56)	8.93 (31)
Non-practice sub-total	51.84 (197)	48.71 (169)
Student/teacher solves example problem at board	28.69 (109)	26.80 (93)
Students solve example problem individually	17.63 (67)	7.20 (25)
Students solve example problems in groups (3+ students)	0.00 (0)	17.29 (60)
Students work in pairs	1.84 (7)	0.00 (0)
Practice sub-total	48.16 (183)	51.29 (178)
TOTAL	100 (380)	100 (347)

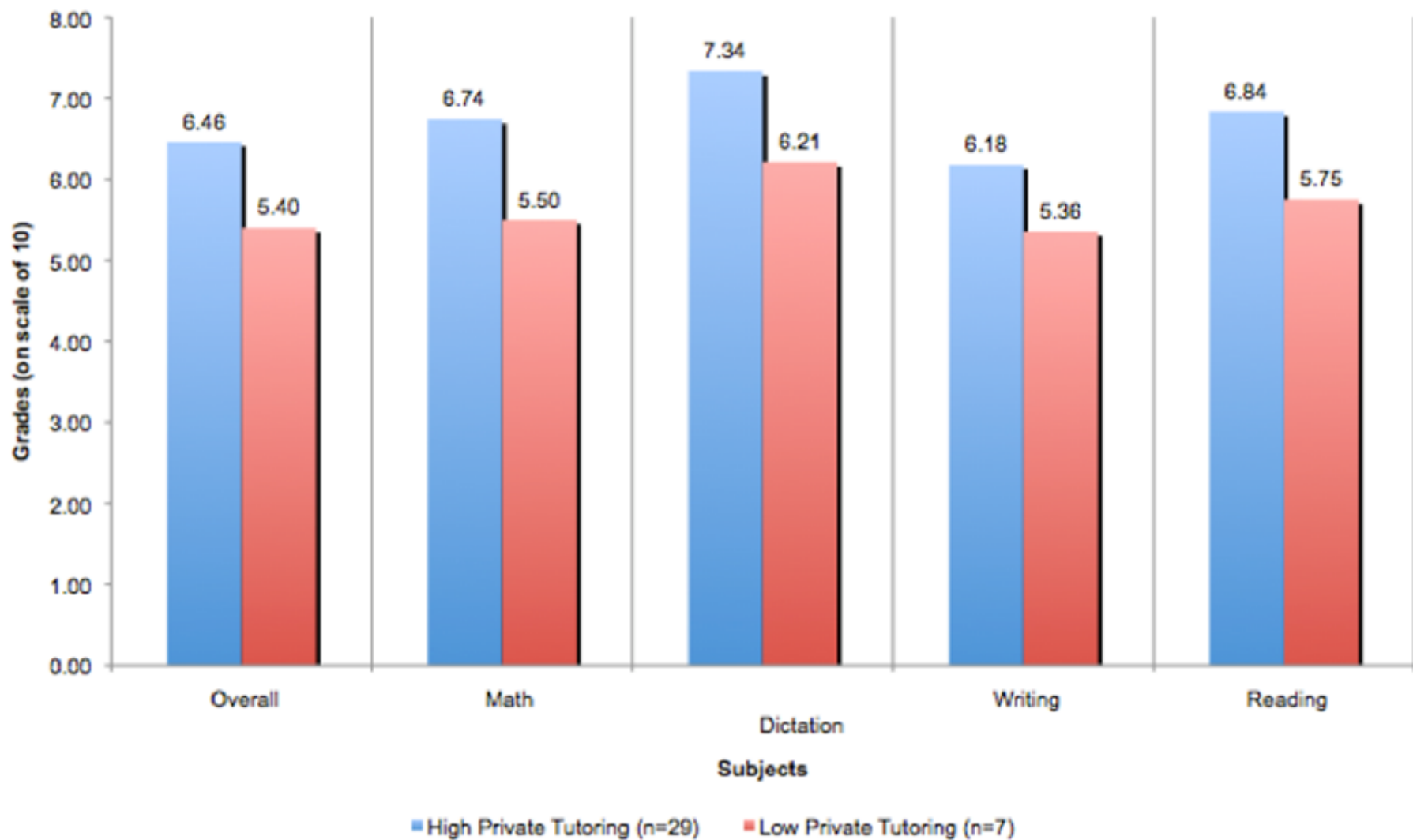
Private tutoring is good, necessary

- “My teachers want students to get more knowledge.” (student)
- “Teachers want their students to have a better understanding of the lessons taught in government school.” (students)
- “My parents want me to get good education by attending more private tutoring lessons.” (students)
- “Attending private tutoring makes me brave and able to ask questions and learn better.” (student)
- “Private tutoring classes are smaller and it is easier to ask questions.” (student)
- “With so many students in government school classes, I sometimes feel shy to ask questions. This is not the case in private tutoring lessons.” (student)

Private tutoring and grades?

- “If you don’t come to private tutoring, you will fail.”
- “I have to attend private tutoring. If I don’t, then I get a low score.”

Score Differences Between High and Low Private Tutoring Attendance (n=36)



Socio-economic status differences

“Students who go to private tutoring are the students from fairly rich families.”

“I feel sorry for [students who don't go to private tutoring] because they can't afford private tutoring.”

“The students who go to private tutoring are the children from the families which do not have many members, are able to earn enough money to spend on food and education for their children.”

Personal and Intellectual Differences

"I want to attend private tutoring because it can make me become a smart student."

"If I attend private tutoring, I'll be clever and it makes my family happy."

"I want to attend private tutoring because I don't want other students to look down on me as I am not smart."

"I am very jealous of those who attend private tutoring."

Family differences

- Parents who send children to private tutoring “care” more.
- “The students who go to private tutoring are from families who give enough time for their children to study and only have to help a little with housework.”
- Adding, these families have “a concrete house with tile roof...large land...and sell something in the village.”

Conclusions (1)

- The development of the contemporary education system since the 1990s has resulted in the emergence of an educational arrangement that obscures the boundaries between public schooling and private tutoring.
- Public schooling and private tutoring are seamlessly merged into one system.
- Private tutoring provides a continuation of public schooling in terms of curriculum content, while also assuming the same classroom characteristics and pedagogy as the public education system.

Conclusions (2)

- Private tutoring becomes a mechanism by which the stratification of society along socioeconomic lines occurs inside a public space.
- Private tutoring acts as a “sorting machine” by separating those who have (*neak mean*) from those who do not (*neak kro*).
- The blurred public-private education system perhaps provides a higher quality education, but at the expense of access.