ANDRÉ E. MAZAWI, RONALD G. SULTANA & MARK BRAY

13. BEYOND SHADOWS

Equity, Diversity, and Private Tutoring

Private tutoring – a fee-based supplementary out-of-school individual or group instruction – is a pervasive phenomenon. As shown by various authors (e.g. Bray, 2009; Bray & Lykins, 2012; Dawson, 2010; Silova, 2010), and the chapters in this collection, private tutoring plays out across, alongside, and in some instances even as part of formal school systems, whether formally or informally. Bray (2010) observes that, 'tutoring has moved beyond being just a shadow of the regular system to become a system in its own right which offers additional learning opportunities' (p. 10). Moreover, it transcends national and social class boundaries. The expansion of web-based technologies and offshoring practices have further weakened (though not entirely eliminated) 'geographical constraints both for the service providers and to their clients' (Ventura & Jang, 2010, p. 66). Private tutoring is found in states upholding different political ideologies. Continually morphing, it assumes multifaceted forms, occupies diverse institutional spaces, and is provided through different modes of delivery.

Policy initiatives that ban, regulate, control, or bring various forms of private tutoring under scrutiny are periodically launched in different national contexts, triggering vehement opposition on behalf of private tutors and private tutoring companies. Some of these initiatives end up introducing elaborate administrative mechanisms that consolidate 'hidden forms' of privatisation of educational provision. A notable example is the mandating of privately designed and publicly funded 'supplemental education services' (SES) to economically disadvantaged students by the *No Child Left Behind* Act in the United States (Burch, 2009, p. 55). Hursh (2005) notes that as part of this legislation, schools labelled as 'failing' are 'required to use funds to pay for student tutoring by outside for-profit or faith-based organizations' (p. 7). He further observes that 'while the federal [US] government aims to hold public schools accountable, there is no effort to develop regulations and to hold accountable the private tutoring companies' (p. 13).

Private tutoring does not stand on its own. It metaphorically 'shadows' the operation of formal school systems. Its landscape and contours depend on policies and practices that shape public school systems, opportunities they offer, and the trust different groups place in the public school's capacity to provide venues for social and economic mobility. Notwithstanding, approaching private tutoring as the exclusive mimetic other of public school systems – largely dependent on supply

and demand (Dang & Rogers, 2008, pp. 164-165) – reifies the complexity of this phenomenon and its deeply rooted historical, cultural, political, social class, and market dynamics. For example, the chapters on Turkey, Greece and Italy indicate that private tutoring predates the emergence of national schooling systems, or has been part of intense state-building processes. In other cases, such as in the Balkans and the adjoining eastern European region (Croatia, Bosnia & Herzegovina, and Slovenia), private tutoring expanded more forcefully as part of the restructuring of national economies and their shifting into entrepreneurial capitalist markets, following the political and territorial disintegration of Socialist states from the early 1990s onward.

The chapters in the present collection bear witness to the complexities that underpin these multifaceted articulations of private tutoring. They also bear witness to the imbrication of private tutoring with larger debates over affiliation and citizenship, national identity, the (re)distributive role of the state and, more broadly, the extent of equity and social justice promoted by educational policies. These complexities require a critical reading of private tutoring, as a phenomenon both *embedded* within situated contexts of practice, and as a phenomenon that reflects *embodied* forms of struggles. Private tutoring is embedded within contexts of practice in the sense that it is part of larger tensions and contradictions that underpin the meanings of education in society, indicative of the debates over what constitutes an 'educated person'. Private tutoring reflects embodied forms of struggle in the sense that it is grounded in power politics, hegemonic and counter-hegemonic positions, and in social struggles more broadly. By positioning private tutoring over this wider backdrop we start to fully appreciate not only its economic aspects, but also its social and political meanings, the range of its policy impacts, and its effects on the quality and equity of educational provision.

A CONTESTED POLITICAL TERRAIN

Private tutoring is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon, part of larger debates over the meanings and aims of education and schooling. The political dimension of this phenomenon is well highlighted by Campani's chapter on Italy. Campani shows that while the general understanding of private tuition as contributing to the social reproduction of privilege holds true, it is also true that, under particular political conditions, it can serve as a bulwark of resistance to oppressive forms of power. Analysing the case of Fascist Italy, her chapter shows how private tutoring can operate as an enclave of counter-hegemonic action in a totalitarian state, offering modest economic redress to members of an excluded intellectual class, and a space for subtle political engagement outside the bounds of a totalitarian state and its institutional apparatuses. Quite differently, Tansel's and Altinyelken's chapters on Turkey help reflect on the political dimensions of private tutoring. They describe tutoring centres not only as free market entrepreneurial initiatives, interested in maximising capital gain, but also as organised (and ideologically identifiable) power groups, having stakes in domestic welfare and fiscal policies with which the government needs to reckon. Their agenda is as much cultural as it

is economic. These multifaceted aspects of private tutoring are also partly captured by Buhagiar and Chetcuti, in their chapter on Malta. Private tutoring is a political terrain in which the state, parties and social movements vie for recognition, and through which they can both assert their patronage over different constituencies ('disadvantaged groups'), and constitute particular social groups as publics by navigating through kin and family networks, partisan politics, and professional groups.

These chapters show that private tutoring operates as much in relation to the political and cultural spheres, as it does in relation to the economic. It is embedded in the tensions, struggles and aspirations associated with conflicts over the role of the state and its interfaces with civil society.

MARKETS AND THE 'RESPONSIBILISING OF THE SELF'

The rise of private tutoring markets across the Mediterranean can be seen as an extension of the logic that Ball (2008), among others, refers to as 'responsibilisation', and which Lash (2003) portrays as 'insourcing'. These terms signal a reallocation of functions, activities and responsibilities to the individual that were previously regarded as primarily the responsibility of institutions and collectives. This 'socially constructed autonomy' (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002), which often accompanies discourses on private tutoring (Heyneman, 2011), helps highlight the 'paradoxes' reported in virtually all chapters, and which point to the manner in which, despite frequent condemnations of the business of private tutoring, the state seems unable (or unwilling) to stem the tide. Seen from this perspective, where the traditionally provident state adopts a minimalist stance, the recourse to private tutoring is yet another manifestation of the very reflex that informs life more generally, and a case of 'positional competition' (Brown, 2000) that parents undertake on behalf of their children. It also positions parents to act as entrepreneurial, competitive, self-reliant and responsible individuals in order to garner the best possible outcomes for themselves and their own. Private tutoring thus becomes another 'positional good' (Adnett & Davies, 2002; Bray & Lykins, 2012), an additional string to one's bow in the effort to succeed. It ushers in privatized forms of education, as service. It also introduces a culture of 'quick-fix maintenance over sustained renewal' (Hargreaves, 2003, p. 77), and a 'redistribution of insecurity and risk from government institutions to private individuals' (p. 77) in the field of education and in the economy as a whole.

A recurrent theme across the chapters of this collection is that private tutoring reflects deep insecurities, anxieties, and fears about the future of one's children in a world that is increasingly experienced as hostile. With an endless succession of reforms and counter-reforms (see the chapters on Italy and Turkey), 'Tutoring businesses have benefitted from parental uncertainties, confusion and unease' (Aurini & Davies, 2004, p. 434). This political economy of fear and competition, Aurini & Davies (2004) more specifically argue, generates 'a need to secure and multiply customer bases' through the establishment of private tutoring franchises. The latter make 'tutoring a grander enterprise, requiring far more financial and

intellectual resources than can be possessed by a lone shadow educator' (p. 433). At the same time, Hartmann's chapter on Egypt, Kassotakis and Verdis' chapter on Greece, and Tansel's and Altinyelken's chapters on Turkey show that many teachers are themselves implicated in a tutoring market which deepens their dependency on precarious and highly competitive employment outlets while offering a select number lucrative income. These processes neither enhance teachers' sense of professional agency, nor contribute to articulate coherent visions of schooling – and visions of the curriculum – that are meaningful, inclusive, and solidary.

The state, deliberately or otherwise, actively or by default, might be considered to be a key promoter of the private tutoring market, through economic and labour market policies. States can act through a neo-liberal political commitment to privatisation, thus leading to an ideological and legal environment that encourages private provision and entrepreneurship. Oller and Glasman's chapter on France provides an example by focusing on how the state's fiscal policies and tax returns to parents introduce a voucher subsidy of sorts that ultimately benefits the expansion of corporate tutoring companies. Similarly, in Egypt, Sobhy (2012) notes that, 'The growth of private tutoring was part of a deliberate policy of the deposed Mubarak regime of promoting privatization and reducing public spending on education' (p. 47). She observes that by not providing adequate salaries to teachers, adequate resources in schools, and adequate learning support services to under-achieving students, the state effectively leaves parents, students, and communities at the mercy of coercive private tutors and tutoring companies (Sobhy, 2012). Thus, states can roll back their commitment to public services, so that quality education is no longer regarded as a 'public good' to which all citizens are entitled, but rather as a service that can be individually bought and sold on the market, and for which value consumers are exclusively responsible, as one Croatian interviewee notes in Chapter 2.

In many Mediterranean countries, perhaps paralleling or even more than in other parts of the world, this political economy of fear is particularly consequential. The link between investment in education, expected returns from employment, and access to better salaries and secure livelihood has broken down (Mazawi, 2010, 2011), locking youth into what Brown (2003) refers to as the 'opportunity trap'. This is at least one partial explanation that may account for much of the popular disillusionment that underpins the 'Arab spring'. While there is evidence of the 'broken promises' of education, this is particularly severe in the Arab region, given demographic structures and youth unemployment. According to Kabbani and Kothari (2005, p. 50) youth unemployment is estimated at a regional average of 25% for the 15-24 age-group, among the highest in the world. While some social groups might give up on education, others try to maintain or increase their advantage through a range of strategies, among them private tutoring, thus further exacerbating the mismatch between private investments in education and increasingly scarce and inequitable market opportunities.

Notwithstanding, chapters in this collection also report that the pressures on parents to send their children to private tutoring may open up new opportunities

and spaces for new actors active in the field of education, with important sociological ramifications. Voluntary and charitable associations occupy some of the space in order to provide specific publics with accessible alternatives to commoditised provision in the market. Traditional organisations, such as political party centres in Malta (Buhagiar & Chetcuti's chapter), community or neighbourhood-based associations in France (Oller & Glassman's chapter), religious organisations and movements in Egypt (Hartmann's chapter), and also Koranic centres in the Maghreb (Akkari, 2004), adopt new roles, in an effort to engage perceived community needs, and also consolidate and broaden their membership base. In the process, the interface between state and civil society is dynamically reconfigured as part of a constant over-hauling, construction and reconstruction of frameworks of social solidarity. Here, Oller and Glassman's chapter on France suggests that, alongside the corporatisation of educational provision, and the retrenchment of the neo-liberal state, the motivation to assist children in their studies can be turned by local groups 'from a distortion of the public good to a general benefit' (Heyneman, 2011, p. 187) which reclaims a sense of community in an increasingly corporatized reality. The field of private tutoring reflects therefore a myriad of contemporaneous practices that vie for recognition. Researchers across the Mediterranean and beyond must unpack these multifaceted dynamics and the ways they usher in not only new economies of scale, new market commodities, and new meanings regarding civic responsibility; but also how private tutoring mediates new politics of community and experiments in social solidarity, as vulnerable and local as these may be.

SOCIAL REPRODUCTION AND CLASS STRUGGLES

In his work, Bourdieu (1989) highlighted the 'mechanics' of social class reproduction through the institutional and organisational workings of formal schools and higher education systems. The present collection points to additional confluents that amplify the effects of power and status differentials and their transmission across generations through private tutoring. Without exception, all contributors to the present collection identify private tutoring as a site powerfully associated with and implicated in social class reproduction. The chapters offer valuable insights regarding how private tutoring in various societies translates power differentials into academic achievement, transmitting them from one generation to the next.

In terms of access to private tutoring, the most significant line of demarcation is not necessarily between social classes who can afford private tutoring services and those who cannot. The different chapters rather observe that the private tutoring market exhibits a myriad of customised practices and modes of delivery that accommodate groups of radically unequal economic capacities. From Egypt to Slovenia, from Portugal to Turkey, the flexibility of the private tutoring market, from its lone teacher version to its corporate formalised one, bears witness to the entrenched power of private tutoring as a 'necessary' logic of practice regarding parental investment in education, cutting across social classes. Rather, what

emerges is that private tutoring operates in relation to the larger field of private education, of which it can be deemed a specific case in point. In other words, economically more established social classes have greater recourse to private education (Bray, 2009, pp. 32-38; Safarzyńska, 2013, p. 150); less established social classes tend to engage cheaper and more affordable versions of private education, for instance in the form of differentially packaged and dynamically negotiated and customised private tutoring services. This is reflected in the chapters by Jokić, Soldo, and Ristić Dedić on Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, by Faganel and Trnavčevič on Slovenia, and by Hartmann on Egypt. Negotiations over affordability and mode of delivery between tutors and prospective clients give rise to elaborate networks of information sharing among clients too, the pooling of sorts of social capital regarding the most cost-effective service and, in some cases, the forging of virtual constituencies of service providers and customers.

Two conclusions can be drawn from the above. First, the rise and expansion of private tutoring signals the institutional consolidation of private-sector educational services as a new *hegemonic* space in which social class competition and struggle over social resources and mobility opportunities occur. Second, the stratified and stratifying power of private tutoring displaces the school as the primary educational setting involved in social reproduction. Modes of private tutoring exhibit new markers of status and distinction in the guise of differentially packaged tutoring services that are traded in the educational marketplace.

INSTITUTIONAL INTERSECTIONS AND EDUCATIONAL TRANSITIONS

As a social practice, private tutoring reflects the general intensification and acceleration of working lives, where the very notion of life, leisure, and conviviality – and perforce of childhood – has been/is being radically altered. Furthermore, it should not be forgotten that the whole notion of exporting schoolwork to after school – whether through 'homework' or 'private tuition' – has historically been conceptualised in different ways. The former has been seen as 'school imperialism' (Gill & Schlossman, 2003) over family time, and in some cases opposed by parents because it diminished the opportunities for children to make an economic contribution to the family. While the issue of private tuition is somewhat different, there are important links. Exporting formal learning tasks to the home makes time and knowledge demands on parents to which they might find difficult to respond positively. The resort to private tutoring as a strategy to cope with school demands – for instance, as discussed in Oller & Glassman's chapter on France – entails additional costs, not only in terms of paying for tutoring, but also in employing labour (such as house help) which would in some cases have otherwise been done by the children themselves.

This said, the cultural dimensions of private tutoring should not be forgotten, not least because they have a bearing on learning. Private tutoring provides opportunities for young people to leave the home, to have something to do, to meet friends in a safe environment after school hours, and to engage in mixed gender settings (which in many Mediterranean societies, is not possible during formal

school time). Hence, as some aspects of Hartmann's chapter on Egypt and Oller and Glassman's chapter on France suggest, private tutoring is not only about deprivation from play and leisure. Rather, for some, being out of home, or out of formal institutional settings, opens up opportunities for socializing. This has a strong gender dimension, particularly in societies where girls and young women are not allowed in the public space on their own. Contexts for social interactions that are qualitatively different from those experienced at school could facilitate learning, if one agrees with Vygotsky's notion of learning as a social accomplishment (see, e.g., Fernyhough, 2008).

If private tutoring opens-up some spaces for social engagement, it also 'closes' others. Paralleling Altinyelken's and Tansel's analyses of the reforms in Turkish public schooling, Sobhy (2012) points out with regard to Egypt, that the 'general school has been almost completely eliminated as a site of learning, as it becomes displaced by tutoring centres and home tutoring' (p. 63). In this regard, the effects of educational transitions on students' resort to private tutoring are overwhelming. The notion of 'transition' refers to students' mobility through the various stages of a school system – primary, secondary, and tertiary – and the achievement and examination requirements students need to fulfil in order to move to the next stage. Undoubtedly, transition into secondary school and into higher education emerge as the most significant feeders of private tutoring, particularly when these transitions are accompanied by high stakes screening examinations or are subject to quotas. Transitions are particularly onerous for students who need to re-negotiate their learning environments, their social relations, and make sense of school and academic requirements (Jindal-Snape, 2010). These challenges are exacerbated, as the chapter by Neto-Mendes, Costa, Ventura, Azevedo, and Gouveia shows with regard to Portugal, when 12th graders are required to pass both a high school matriculation examination, and compete for the few seats available in some prestigious university faculties. The Portuguese case resonates with Tansel's discussion of the Turkish school and higher education system, and their multi-layered systems of examinations. At this juncture, recourse to private tutoring, in the years leading to these examinations is particularly 'pivotal' and consequential for students and their families. Moreover, the state's inability to align curriculum policies with teaching and assessment practices, leading to insecurities on the part of teachers, learners and parents, exacerbates the effects of transitions on the demand side of private tutoring. These insecurities 'code key' school subjects – such as mathematics and the sciences, depending on the context – as areas of the highest curricular priority, while marginalising other subjects in the curriculum. As the chapters clearly show, the fragmenting effect this has on the coherence of school curricula is significant, emphasising learning for the test, and test performance.

EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND THE PUBLIC GOOD

The relationship between private tutoring and equity is complex and context-dependent. It touches not only on the reproduction of social inequalities, but also

on the ends of education and what it means to be an 'educated person'. The chapters in this collection show that extensive privatisation in education, and the reconfiguring of the lines of demarcation between what stands for a public good and what stands for a private good, have radically altered the meanings and status of 'education' and 'knowledge' in society. As noted in several chapters, private tutoring has radically transformed the structure and experience of public schools and of schooling more generally, given the wider fragmentation of curricula and their differential social coding as 'more', 'less', or 'not' relevant for learning, employment, and social mobility. This process has also transformed the conditions under which teachers work, the work they perform, and how, as well as the conditions under which their work is regulated and assessed. It has witnessed the rise and expansion of corporate entities that supply instruction as a packaged service and employ teachers on a wide scale. Private tutoring is situated within a larger public problematic related to the transformation and restructuring of central social institutions. The debates over private tutoring therefore raise foundational questions over the political philosophy and the political economy that frame the distribution of educational resources, as public goods, and the organisation of society more broadly.

Over this backdrop, private tutoring raises a host of correlative questions with regard to power, social and political participation in the public sphere, and the equity and fairness underpinning the distribution of social and economic opportunities. These questions are related to the redistributive role of the state and to its commitments to equality of opportunities. As suggested in some chapters, they are also related to the role of civil society associations and movements within societies marked by diversity and conflict. How the burden of private tutoring is distributed, what are its economic and social costs (both hidden and manifest), and who benefits from its provision, cannot be limited to questions of supply, demand, and the right of parents to choose (and pay for) a service. These questions require that researchers consider the distribution of *means* associated with these choices, and the extent to which parents from diverse social and economic backgrounds can effectively pursue their choices without being marginalised or excluded (as Buhagiar & Chetcuti note in their chapter).

Questions of equity are particularly central in many parts of the Mediterranean region. States and their distributive mechanisms are often 'territorialised' by dominant groups. The latter often shape institutions in their image while disregarding the social, ethnic, and cultural diversity prevalent in the wider society. Thus, questions of equity and fairness are intricately linked to questions of inclusive diversity and to the political viability of the state in deeply divided societies. Moreover, how private tutoring plays out within contexts of civic strife, regional wars, and historically-entrenched political conflicts remains largely unexplored across the Mediterranean. One thinks here of the ways in which private tutoring may be implicated in mediating, reproducing or otherwise exacerbating larger dynamics of social, economic, territorial, and political fragmentation – such as in Cyprus, Turkey, Egypt, Lebanon, Israel, Palestine, or in the Maghreb and Balkan regions. For many Mediterranean societies, answering these questions

means that educational researchers must reflexively and critically engage issues of equity, social justice, and social inclusion when researching private tutoring. This engagement would open-up new analytical and policy horizons of imagination that ensure the articulation of viable notions of education in society – ones that contribute to the fulfilment of long inhibited or suppressed aspirations. This engagement will also allow a consideration of private tutoring, not only in terms of an equitable *distribution*, which does not disadvantage those who do not have access to it, but also in terms of its *impacts* on various social groups, and their visibility in the larger political community. For instance, how do tax credits (returns) for private tutoring (as reported by Oller & Glassman for France) impact economic and access differentials of various socioeconomic groups to educational and social opportunities, more generally? In a different context, Wilson (2002) points out that, in the state of Arizona (US), tax credits policies for private education are inequitable if they are not dependent on income. They were also found to increase access to private educational services among those who are already enrolled in private schools. Such matters deserve further exploration.

Equity questions also impact school, classroom, and student-teacher relations. As noted in several chapters, private tutoring emerges as a daily practice that reflects wider power dynamics. Evidence provided in this collection, and elsewhere (e.g. Herrera, 2010; Sobhy, 2012) suggests that when school and classrooms become sites of coerced contractual relations with regard to private tutoring, both teachers and students are trapped within institutional and organisational dynamics which exacerbate the marginalisation of the weak, and the oppression of the different other. The impacts of these dynamics on the school's culture are devastating, rendering private tutoring an embodiment of domination, oppression, marginalisation, and exclusion, fuelling wider social conflicts.

More broadly, however, equity considerations regarding private tutoring are culturally embedded, for instance in relation to gender and cultural difference (Bray, 2009, pp. 32-38). Some of the chapters (e.g. France) indicate different gender-based patterns in the use made of different types of private tutoring. Similar issues arise in terms of ethnic groups in Cyprus and Turkey. The chapters in the present collection have not addressed these aspects consistently, however. Given the financial burden of private tutoring on family budgets, one wonders how parents opt to invest scarce resources in the education of boys and girls. How do parents of different background 'choose' the instructor that will teach their children, and to what extent do such choices endorse wider ethnic and cultural stereotypes prevalent in the society at large, exacerbating unemployment among particular groups in deeply divided societies? Obviously, the same question could be raised with regard to the choice of students by private tutors.

FUTURE STUDIES

The present volume has captured the perspectives of a range of actors involved in private tutoring, including parents, teachers and administrators in formal schooling, teachers' unions, policy makers, and occasionally students and private tutors

themselves. Future research should pay more attention to the diversity of perspectives and voices informing the private tutoring experience. The contributions by Faganel and Trnavčevič on Slovenia, and by Hartmann on Egypt, provide some insights into what students themselves think about the private tutoring experience. In the Slovenian study this is limited to student evaluations of their private tutors, and would be a useful domain to explore further.

The political dynamics underpinning private tutoring have not been consistently and evenly engaged across all chapters. Despite the fact that the chapters in this collection examined private tutoring in nationally and/or culturally diverse and deeply divided societies, few insights were offered to clarify the contribution of private tutoring to wider political conflicts, for instance between the Greek and Turkish communities in Cyprus. This context requires sustained and historically situated research. Relevant questions could also be raised with regard to Turkey and Eastern Europe. Some sources do provide a few insights which may incite deeper reflection. For instance, Labaree and Lesser (2003) argue that in 2002 the Turkish government 'passed legislation legalising broadcasting and private tutoring in Kurdish', but not the teaching of the Kurdish language in public schools, in order to promote its open accession negotiations into the European Union (pp. 59-60; see also Faucompret & Konings, 2008, pp. 42ff). Here, the positioning of private tutoring in relation to the field of politics is indicative of the dynamics underpinning the construction of national and political identities and geopolitical alliances. Over this backdrop, it is crucial that researchers across the Mediterranean remain open to the fluid versatilities and context-dependent political features that underpin private tutoring. This is necessary if they are keen to unpack how private tutoring is effectively implicated in the mediation of political dissent, cultural/ethnic struggles, and state power, not just economic processes and social stratification. Greater attention needs therefore to be granted to how access to private tutoring re-allocates and re-positions various social, ethnic, and cultural groups in relation to the field of identity politics and in relation to domestic and regional-geopolitical interests of the state.

Undertaking rigorous critical ethnographic accounts of the lived experiences of tutors, students, policy makers, and families would add depth and breadth to our understanding of the private tuition phenomenon in its manifold dimensions. They would also provide fresh perspectives that might very well challenge some assumptions, providing a stronger basis for a sound conceptualisation (largely still lacking) and an informed policy-making in this area. Particular attention must be granted to the relationship of private tutoring and learning, as well as to the use of internet-based platforms for private tutoring, increasingly by corporations and franchises (Ventura & Jang, 2010). The emergence of the internet as a venue for private tutoring signals deeper changes in pedagogy, raising the question as to whether the informality of internet-based exchanges between tutor and student produces different learning effects.

The methodological challenges faced in the study of private tutoring are many, reflecting the complexity of the phenomenon. One challenge is to secure the relevant data, given that international databases do not offer reliable, valid, and

culture and context-sensitive information that allows meaningful comparisons of private tutoring practices and services across and within societies and institutional settings (Bray, 2010, pp. 5-6). It is also difficult to carve appropriate research designs because the 'literature on shadow education focuses on many units, including individuals, classrooms, schools, provinces, whole education systems, and world regions' (p. 9). Dynamics associated with private tutoring play out at differently nested 'levels' of action. In other words, 'the actions of individual pupils may be influenced by the cultures of their classrooms, which in turn are influenced by the cultures of their schools, which in turn are influenced by the cultures of their communities, districts, countries, and world regions' (p. 9).

Many additional aspects of private tutoring have not been captured in this collection and in this chapter, more particularly. Notwithstanding, we hope that the collection facilitates the consolidation of interest and the focusing of research efforts on the part of educational researchers, in view of engaging one of the more neglected – yet consequential – aspects of schooling in contemporary Mediterranean societies, and well beyond. The wide diversity characterising the Mediterranean region, and the diverse (yet powerfully imbricated) political and cultural histories and economic trajectories experienced by its societies, have been noted by many writers. In *Mediterranean Crossings*, Iain Chambers (2008) points out that 'The Mediterranean proposes a multiplicity that simultaneously interrupts and interrogates the facile evaluations of a simple mapping disciplined by the landlocked desires of a narrow-minded progress and a homogeneous modernity' (p. 25). We suggest that the study of private tutoring across the Mediterranean is one such horizon of possibility. It holds a promise of interrupting the facile evaluations and simple mappings of education and progress, as homogeneous and technicised conceptions of the nexus between modernity and education, opening them up to the vibrant, contested, and multifaceted articulations that social life offers in its infinite political, cultural, and economic complexity.

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