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9. PRIVATE TUTORING IN PORTUGAL

Patterns and Impact at Different Levels of Education

ABSTRACT

Project 'Xplika', undertaken at the University of Aveiro, studies the private tutoring market, school effectiveness and students' performance in Portugal. This chapter summarises and integrates the findings of the main project, and a number of further related studies. Conducted in four secondary schools, the project examined the impact of private tutoring on students' academic results and on the use of after-school time. Other studies focused on other schools, both in the same region and beyond. In addition, one study obtained data on private tutoring in higher education through questionnaires distributed in two universities. The range of findings confirms the significant impact of private tutoring on academic achievement (with its expected improvement) and personal life (with the extra workload for students). Tutoring is a burden for family budgets. Students who receive tutoring benefit in their competition with fellow students.

INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the nature and impact of private tutoring on the academic achievement of students in Portugal. Private tutoring, widely known as 'shadow education' (Bray, 1999), is less frequently studied than formal education. Yet private tutoring has been slowly emerging from the 'ghetto' of overlooked educational practices.

The Xplika Project, on which this chapter is based, took its name from the common abbreviation of *explicações* (private tutoring) used by students in Portugal.[1] The researchers desired to understand a phenomenon that was unfamiliar in the research literature but familiar in the sense that almost everyone either had private tutoring lessons, or had worked as a private tutor, or knew someone who had been in one of these situations. The researchers also wanted to understand the complex and sometimes blurred process of construction of student achievement in school, including the dimensions of the internal work of schools and the external work of private tutoring.

The notion that private tutoring serves mainly students with low academic achievement is not confirmed by the present studies. Rather, it shows that the 'new heirs' are the ones who try to gain more advantage with this additional support

M. Bray et al. (eds), Private Tutoring Across the Mediterranean, 151–165.

(Costa, Ventura & Neto-Mendes, 2008, p. 157). In order to understand the factors that underpin the development of the private tutoring market, Afonso (2008, p. 27) pointed to three factors: [a] the extended crisis of the public school, and the academic and social issues related to it; [b] the reinforcement of the strategies of preservation of (old) status and class privilege; and [c] the strategies aimed at increasing the probability of fulfilling social mobility expectations.

Ball (2004) observed that private market values legitimise and trigger certain actions and compromises, such as the entrepreneurial spirit, competition and excellence. At the same time, it inhibits and delegitimizes others, such as social justice, equity and tolerance. The impact of neoliberal influences has also been felt on a global scale in education (Whitty & Power, 2002). The 'public school crisis', and financial pressures to make the educational sector leaner and more competitive, contributed to 'encourage the market' (Barroso, 2005, p. 741) as an alternative to public policies that promote 'education as a public monopoly' (Ball, 2005, p. 196). Belfield and Levin (2002) identified, amongst several different forms of privatisation, three common patterns in the privatisation policies of education. These included increase in the private offer (through, for instance, the increase of the number of private schools), increase in private funding (paid directly by the consumers), and growth of private regulation, management and monitoring (control and choice by the parents). Nevertheless, privatisation is strongly influenced by the contexts of each country.

As noted by Belfield and Levin (2002), the pressures for privatisation can also be generated by both demand and supply. On the demand side are parents' wishes to provide their children with an education that differs from that provided by state schools. This is a form of diversified demand. On the supply side, the pressures are linked with perceptions of a decline in the quality of public schooling and the availability of alternatives.

PRIVATE TUTORING: A GLOBALISED PHENOMENON OF INCREASING COMPLEXITY

Costa, Ventura, and Neto-Mendes (2003) presented private tutoring as an educational practice that corresponds to a private and paid service, generally offered by teachers outside the school. The main aim of private tutoring is the improvement of students' academic success. This definition has certain limitations, though it conveys the essential: private tutoring depends on a relationship between the offer and the demand of a specific educational service, through a formal or informal contract from which apparent advantages result for all parties. Private tutors gain incomes, and students gain competitive advantages in the struggle for marks. Marks are perceived as providing access to the higher grades in school, and to better degrees and universities. Beside these advantages, the literature on private tutoring identifies a problematic side: the maintenance and increase of social inequalities; negative influence on the values and behaviours of teachers; and increased differences in the classroom (Bray, 2009, 2011).

In previous research (Ventura, Neto-Mendes, Costa, & Azevedo, 2006) we showed how private tutoring is a global dimension, in spite of very different realities (geographic, developmental and of the insertion in the global economy). Reviewing the importance of private tutoring in France, the United Kingdom, Greece, Turkey, Canada, Japan, Egypt, Kenya and Portugal – to which later we added Brazil, South Korea, Hong Kong and the United States (Costa, Neto-Mendes, & Ventura, 2008b) – we identified some common features and also some specificities. Broadly, there is an increase in the sophistication and complexity of this activity. In a country such as Portugal, conditions for the practice of private tutoring are associated with the growth of the business offers (under the most common labels of 'private tutoring centre' or 'study centre') against the more traditional offer of the domestic private tutor. Another factor is the diversification of business forms with the arrival of franchising businesses, either national (such as *Academia do Estudante*, *Morangos* and *Teen Academy*), or international (such as the French *Acadomia* and the American *Mathnasium* and *Tutor Time*). Not least, the use of the Internet has also introduced great changes in the relationship between the service provider and the consumer (Ventura & Jang, 2010).

THE XPLIKA PROJECT

Research on private tutoring in Portugal began in the early 2000s at the University of Aveiro, and was conducted by Jorge Adelino Costa, António Neto-Mendes and Alexandre Ventura. The project, entitled 'The Private Tutoring Market, School Effectiveness and Students' Performance' was carried out between 2005 and 2008. Its main objectives were: [a] to describe the private tutoring phenomenon in a specific geographic context; [b] to identify the factors which underpinned the development of this business; [c] to identify the reasons why students attended private tutoring; [d] to examine the relationship between the position of schools in the evaluation 'rankings' (12th Grade) and the percentage of students attending private tutoring; [e] to discuss the issue of private tutoring as an element hindering equity in access to educational and social success; and [f] to contribute to school improvement by providing the participating schools with data regarding their respective situation.

The project used a questionnaire for students in the 12th Grade – the final year of Portuguese high school – in four public schools of a medium-sized town in the centre of the country. The town's name, '*Cidade Aquarela*', is fictitious, to preserve the anonymity of the city, and of the schools and their students. Another crucial point was the warranty of scientific treatment of the data, to ensure the fulfilment of ethical principles of research in education (Burgess, 1997, p. 203).

The questionnaire had five thematic areas:

- personal characteristics (curricular area/stream attended by the student, gender, age, zone of residence);
- family characteristics (parents' education and occupations);
- relationship with the school (school enrolments, school choice, school and classroom integration);

– teaching and learning process (students' performance, subjects in which the student attended private tutoring, number of hours of tutoring, costs and impact); and
– perspectives on higher education (courses and institutions that the students wished to attend).

The researchers visited each of the four schools, and spoke with the directors and the teachers who handed out and collected the questionnaires in each of the 12th Grade classrooms. All the students who agreed to participate completed the questionnaires. The authors were aware of the ethical dangers associated with distributing questionnaires to 'captive audiences' and ensured that students' participation was truly voluntary. International ethical protocols – such as those promoted by the British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2011) – were carefully followed.

The teachers distributed the questionnaires in classes teaching compulsory subjects in order to ensure a large sample. This questionnaire was distributed consecutively for several years in the four high schools. However, the present chapter only provides data obtained in 2004/05, 2005/06 and 2006/07, with a total of 1505 responses (Table 1).

Table 1. Student respondents, parents' education, perceived impact and desire for further study (%)

Years	*Students (n)*	*Parents with Higher Education*		*Students with Private Tutoring*	*Perceived Positive Impact in Mathematics*	*Desire for Further Studies*
		Father	*Mother*			
2004/05	509	22.2	25.3	56.2	73.9	92.0
2005/06	547	21.2	26.3	58.0	78.1	92.1
2006/07	449	25.8	30.3	54.1	78.1	88.5

In Table 1, the column 'Parents with Higher Education' shows the percentage of students that stated that their parents had degrees (including three year degrees, four/five year degrees, Masters degrees and doctorates). Only these results are included, but the options for this question also included: 'illiterate', 'knows how to read but has no diploma', '1st cycle of basic education' (grammar school or the first four years of schooling), '2nd cycle of basic education' (six years of schooling), '3rd cycle of basic education' (nine years of schooling), and 'secondary education'. The column 'Perceived Positive Impact in Mathematics'[2] presents the percentage of students (among the students that answered that they had received private tutoring in this subject) that answered 'Yes' to the question 'Did private tutoring help you obtain better results during this academic year?'. The last column presents the percentage of students (also among the students that answered that they had

received private tutoring) that stated the intention to pursue higher education studies.

In order to examine changes over three years, Chi-square tests for independence were undertaken. Neither the percentage of fathers nor that of mothers with higher education studies differed by academic year: for fathers, $X^2(2, n = 1406) = 1.21$, $p = .55$; for mothers, $X^2(2, n = 1430) = 1.40$, $p = .50$. Among students, there was no statistically significant relationship between receiving private tutoring and the academic year in which they were studying, $X^2(2, n = 1459) = 1.28$, $p = .53$. Further, the relationship between the declared impact of private tutoring in Mathematics and the academic year was not significant, $X^2(2, n = 628) = 1.81$, $p = .40$. Notwithstanding, the Chi-square test did show a relationship between academic year and the desire of students with private tutoring to pursue higher education studies, $X^2(2, n = 818) = 7{,}08$, $p = .03$. The last year for which data is available, 2006/07, showed a lower percentage than the other academic years in students who stated their intent to pursue higher education studies. Over half of the 12th Grade students had attended private tutoring in at least one subject during that Grade.

Table 2. Subjects in which students received private tutoring (%)

Years	*Nº of students taking PT*	*Mathematics*	*Biology*	*Philosophy*	*History*	*Geometry*	*Portuguese*	*Physics*	*Chemistry*	*French*	*English*
2004/5	287	75.3	5.9	0.3	2.1	10.1	14.3	16.4	33.1	3.5	1.7
2005/6	325	73.2	2.8	0.6	2.2	17.8	10.8	12.6	25.2	1.8	3.1
2006/7	243	80.7	3.7	0.8	2.5	6.2	13.2	11.1	8.2	1.2	1.6

Note: Students may receive tutoring in more than one subject, so may be counted more than once.

The students were asked to state in which subject(s) they had received private tutoring. Table 2 shows that Mathematics was clearly the subject most in demand, followed by Chemistry, Physics, Portuguese, and Geometry. Foreign languages (French, English) and Philosophy came last. This disparity between subjects favouring the exact sciences over the humanities cannot be explained only by the unequal 'degree of difficulty' in these subjects. Other important factors include the nature of national examinations for access to higher education in certain fields of study, such as health and fine arts.

Table 3. Weekly time devoted to private tutoring (%)

		Weekly time (hours)				
	Students (n)	*1-3*	*4-6*	*Over 7*	*N/A*	
2004/05	287	51.0	38.5	9.8	0.7	100.0
2005/06	325	56.5	31.2	11.4	0.9	100.0
2006/07	243	52.7	40.7	05.8	0.8	100.0

Table 4. Monthly expenditure on private tutoring *(%)*

		Monthly expenditure (Euro)				
	<€70	*€71-140*	*€141-210*	*Over €210*	*N/A*	
2004/05	26.6	46.9	16.1	7.0	3.5	100.0
2005/06	32.5	42.9	15.5	5.7	3.5	100.0
2006/07	26.7	56.0	11.5	2.9	2.9	100.0

Students were also asked how many hours they spent per week on private tutoring (Table 3),[3] and how much they spent per month (Table 4). The Chi square test did not show a relationship between the hours stated by the students and the academic year in which the questionnaire was distributed, $X^2(4, n = 858) = 7.18$, $p = .13$. However, for expenditures a relationship was found between the responses and the academic year, $X^2(6, n = 836) = 13.98$, $p = 0.03$. The last year observed, 2006/07, presented different levels of expenditure, and more students stated having spent between €71 and €140 (Table 4). The findings showed that most students spent one to three hours weekly in private tutoring, but a significant percentage spent four to six hours. As for the monthly expenditure of households to support this type of activity, the amount between €71 and €140 was stated by almost half of the students. In Portugal the minimum monthly wage in 2011 was €485 and the median wage was €777 (official data from the Portuguese Statistics Institute). This provides a benchmark against which to assess the burden of expenditures.

Since Mathematics stood out as the most demanded subject, we chose to explore this domain more thoroughly. Table 5 shows that among the five possible reasons identified in the questionnaire for seeking tutoring in Mathematics, students selected as most important the following three: 'earlier failure in the subject'; the need to 'get a mark that will allow access to the degree of choice in higher education' and 'fear of not being able to succeed without help'. The proportions highlighting access to higher education reaffirm its centrality.

A Chi Square test was undertaken to verify if there was a relationship between academic years and the reasons given by the students for private tutoring in Mathematics. The results, $X^2(8, n = 562) = 26.40$, $p = 0.01$, showed that there was a statistically significant relationship. As can be seen in Table 5, the answers given in 2005/06 to some extent differed from those of the other two years. Nevertheless,

the findings also showed a possible connection between the use of private tutoring and the desire to access higher education, the positive opinion that students have of the impact of private tutoring, and the amount of time (Table 3) and expense (Table 4) devoted to tutoring.

Table 5. Reasons for private tutoring in mathematics (%)

Reasons	*Academic year*		
	2004/05	*2005/06*	*2006/07*
Earlier failure in the subject	31.2	28.3	24.5
Get a mark that will allow access to the degree of choice in higher education	30.3	21.5	32.1
Fear of not being able to succeed without help	17.4	28.8	13.3
Lack of competence of the current teacher	08.7	07.3	05.1
The high number of students in the class prevents the teacher from giving the necessary support	00.9	00.4	01.0
Other reasons	00.5	03.0	04.6
No answer	11.0	10.7	19.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

SOME RELATED STUDIES

Ventura, Costa, Neto-Mendes and Azevedo (2008, p. 133) mentioned a questionnaire distributed by the Portuguese Ministry of Education to students who were candidates in the first phase of the national procedure access for higher education[4] in 2004/05. The authors had access to a brief report of the responses to this questionnaire, entitled 'Survey of the conditions and use of private tutoring (final results)'. Among 30,886 respondents, 17,775 (57.9%) indicated that they had received private tutoring at some point in time during their academic life. Most respondents (73.5%) answered that they took private tutoring lessons at the tutor's home, 20.9% at a private tutoring centre, 4.8% in some other location, and 3.2% in their own home. Mathematics was by far the most popular subject, sought by 72.0% of respondents. It was followed by Chemistry (33.0%), Physics and Portuguese (11.3% each), Biology (9.6%), and Geometry (7.5%). Just over half the respondents (57.5%) stated having spent two to four hours per week in private tutoring, and 30.1% spent less than two hours. At the other end of the scale, 9.9% of students with private tutoring spent five to eight hours per week on the activity. The average hourly expenditure on tutoring stood at €14.80. Nonetheless, the significant standard deviation shows that many students paid considerably less and others a lot more. The mode was €10. The fact that most sessions were held in the

tutors' homes suggested that the informal type of tutoring was dominant. Tutoring in centres and in students' homes was less common. This said, private tutoring centres appear to have multiplied in recent years. Thus, some educational policy initiatives that are being taken in public schools, which are under direct supervision of the Ministry of Education, can be better understood, particularly those on the regulation of teachers' private activity and on the measures of educational support to the students.

Turning to a different study, Bento (2009, p. 6) undertook what he described as the first exploratory study of private tutoring in the Portuguese Madeira Autonomous Region. He focused on 45 students from the 12th Grade who were attending a secondary school in 2007/08. Sixteen students indicated that they had received private tutoring in the 10th Grade, 24 in the 11th Grade, and 24 in the 12th Grade. The students in the 11th and 12th Grades received more private tutoring than their counterparts in the 10th Grade. Mathematics was the subject most in demand, followed by Chemistry, Physics and Biology. The children of parents with liberal professions and with higher academic qualifications received more private tutoring; students spent an average of four to six hours per week in tutoring sessions; the cost of private tutoring was around €70 to €140 per month; and the students and, by inference, their families, recognised levels of effectiveness in private tutoring.

Two additional studies were undertaken by Sá and Antunes (2007) and Antunes and Sá (2010). The authors considered the phenomenon of private tutoring as a 'fabrication of excellence through private investment' (Antunes & Sá, 2010, p. 169) with effects at the level of the regulation of the pedagogy and of the competition for enrolment in higher education. The researchers distributed a questionnaire to a sample of parents from three schools. The parents were asked about the attendance of private tutoring by their children in the school year in which the questionnaire was distributed or in previous years. Among the 806 parents who answered this question, 488 (60.5%) stated that their children had received private tutoring and 318 (39.5%) answered that they had not (p. 169). Among the parents whose children attended the 10th Grade, 136 (49.3%) stated that their children had never had private tutoring. At 11th Grade, 124 (39.2%) of the parents stated that their children had never received private tutoring; and at 12th Grade, 56 (26.1%) of the parents stated that their children had never received private tutoring (ibid., p. 170).

EXTENSIONS OF THE XPLIKA PROJECT

Five studies were conducted in Portugal as an extension of the Xplika Project. Four were published as M.A. dissertations (Amaral, 2009; Madaleno, 2009; Neto, 2006; Silveirinha, 2007), and one as a Ph.D. thesis (Azevedo, 2011). All these works were supervised by Xplika Project researchers. They deepened our knowledge of private tutoring.

Neto (2006) distributed a questionnaire to students from the 5th to the 12th Grade[5] and to their parents, in a school cluster located in a small peripheric seaside town.[6] The findings indicated that 16.9% of the students of the 2nd cycle (10 to 12

years old), 20.6% of the students in the 3rd cycle (12 to 15 years old), and 23.8% of the students in secondary school (15 to 18 years old) stated that they had received private tutoring during the academic year (Neto, 2006, pp. 131-132). Concerning the secondary school more particularly, the proportion of students receiving private tutoring was around 20% in the 10th and 11th Grades, and 30% in the 12th Grade (ibid., p. 133). Students from every school level from the 1st cycle to the 12th Grade were receiving private tutoring. The higher demand for private tutoring in the 12th Grade confirmed the tendency detected by the Xplika Project and stressed the effect that the 12th Grade national examinations had on the demand for tutoring.

Conducting her study in the same town as the Xplika Project, Silveirinha (2007) interviewed 15 private tutors, allocating them to two groups: [1] 'household' private tutors that she defined as professionals whose main activity was teaching but who in their free time worked as private tutors in their homes; and [2] 'public' private tutors employed by tutoring centres. These, she said (ibid., pp. 144-145) 'are professionals who (outside the domestic space and clearly present in the public domain) … may or may not be teachers in public or private schools and for whom, besides undertaking the activity legally, in most cases private tutoring constitutes their main and sometimes only professional activity'.

Most of the household tutors interviewed were secondary school teachers, with the exception of a teacher who taught in the 2nd cycle. The public tutors had more diverse training in areas such as Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Engineering and Management (Silveirinha, 2007, p. 162). The research revealed the larger context of the private tutoring in *Cidade Aquarela*: 15 private tutoring centres, five language schools, and 132 household private tutors.

The third study, conducted by Amaral (2009), examined the impact of private tutoring in the classroom. She conducted a case study in a secondary school with 3rd cycle and night classes. The school was located in a small city with an important industrial activity. Using a questionnaire for classes of the 11th and 12th Grades, Amaral asked the students about the use of private tutoring by subject. She analysed the data by curricular area (or stream). Based on 361 completed questionnaires (ibid., pp. 68-70), findings indicated that 53% of the sampled students in the Sciences and Technologies stream received tutoring. In other streams, 26% from Languages and Humanities received tutoring, while this was the case for 8% of the students in the technological stream in Computer Technology and Management. No student in the technological stream in Sociocultural Animation reported receiving private tutoring (ibid. pp. 72-73). Amaral analysed the impact of private tutoring in the classroom, and reported a mix of positive and negative aspects. Regarding the attitude of students[7] in the classroom during/after the attendance of private tutoring sessions, she reported as follows:

- Science and Technologies stream: 34% of students claimed a greater interest in the subjects and were more motivated; 16% claimed that they participated more in classes; but 16% stated that they were more easily distracted;
- Languages and Humanities stream: 35% of students claimed a greater interest in the subjects and were more motivated; 17% claimed that they participated more

in classes; 15% felt a greater commitment; but 17% stated that they were more easily distracted;
– Technological stream in Computer Technology and Management: 35% claimed that they were more easily distracted; 23% claimed that they participated more in classes; 19% felt a greater commitment.

In this research 108 secondary school teachers[8] also answered a questionnaire. Most teachers (89%) stated that the attendance of private tutoring changed the behaviour of students in the classroom. Slightly less than one third of these teachers (31%) felt that the students became noisier; 23% that the students improved their participation in classes; 19% that the students were more easily distracted; and 15% that the students showed increased self-confidence.

The fourth study, by Madaleno (2009), was based on a questionnaire distributed to 86 students in the 12th Grade of the general streams (Sciences and Technologies, Social and Human Sciences and Visual Arts) of a Catholic private school in 2007/08. In this Lisbon school, 26.7% (23 students) of the respondents stated that they had received private tutoring during secondary education (pp. 78-79). The percentage of respondents was low, but the study showed that the demand for private tutoring was also present in the private sector.

Data from the national survey conducted by Portugal's Ministry of Education in 2005, cited above, revealed that 10.1% of private tutoring students studied in private schools. This percentage closely resembles the one provided by the Portuguese Cabinet for Studies and Planning of Education, which indicated that 10.2% students in general streams (11th and 12th Grade) enrolled in private schools. We can conclude that this type of support outside school has the same magnitude in both public and private schools. The popularity of private tutoring in Portugal can also be seen in the results of the Xplika Project: in the four schools studied, the aggregated results of three years (2004/05; 2005/06; 2006/07) show that 56.6% of students in the 12th Grade had received private tutoring. Findings based on the questionnaire sent out by the Ministry of Education in 2005 indicated that 57.9% of students had received private tutoring during their academic career. In her analysis, Amaral (2009) distinguished between 11th and 12th Grades students by stream of study. She concluded that students of Science and Technologies were the most frequent users of private tutoring (53%), followed by students of Languages and Humanities (26%), and students of a technological stream (8%). Azevedo and Neto-Mendes (2010) showed that 49.4% of Portuguese university students surveyed stated having received private tutoring during high school. Despite the admittedly exploratory nature of some of these studies, they seem to agree that about half of high school students seek this type of support provided outside school.

Azevedo's (2011) study was the first Ph.D. thesis conducted on private tutoring in Portugal. It was also the first study to include a focus on tutoring in higher education in Portugal. At an international level, the study of private tutoring in higher education has not received much attention. Questionnaires were handed out to students attending the 1st, 2nd and 3rd year of their degree studies in two Portuguese universities in the second semester of 2008/09. The questionnaire had

five main parts, focusing on the respondents' personal and family characteristics; experiences with private tutoring in secondary school; use of this service in higher education; the use of private tutoring during the 2008/09; and the activity of the student as a private tutor.

Based on 791 validly answered questionnaires, results indicated that the use of private tutoring was greater in secondary school (49.4% of the total sample) than in higher education (8.2% of the total sample). Only 65 students answered they had used this service during their university studies (see also Azevedo & Neto-Mendes, 2010). These students were questioned about several aspects of their use of private tutoring. Most students (46.2% of the students who answered positively to the question of whether or not they had received private tutoring during higher education) answered that they had received private tutoring mainly in the weeks or days preceding a test or examination. Concerning the impact that this activity had on their academic achievement at university, 16 students (24.6%) indicated that the service had either a negative impact or a neutral impact. By contrast, 47 students (72.3%) answered that private tutoring had a positive impact (1 extra point, 2 extra points or 3 or more extra points) on their academic results. The questionnaire also asked students if they were attending private tutoring sessions in the academic year in question. Of the 65 students who indicated that they had received private tutoring at some point in time during their higher education studies, 19 stated that they were doing so in the present year. Regarding the main reason that led students to private tutoring, three students answered that it was due to a lack of competent teachers, five stated that they were fearful of not being able to succeed without help, and three stated that they had to bridge gaps from secondary education.[9]

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This chapter analysed some aspects of the impact of private tutoring on Portuguese students. Private tutoring cuts across all levels of education, from primary school to university. Tutoring is visible in both public and private spaces, including homes, shop windows, cafés, and bus stops. It certainly cannot be disregarded in terms of its consequences and implications.

Private tutoring is not evenly distributed across the school system. The highest demand occurs in the 12th Grade, a pivotal moment in the Portuguese education system. The 12th Grade is the year of high school completion and certification. It is also a decisive year for access to higher education, particularly universities (in contrast to polytechnics), where the very few seats available in medicine and architecture are highly competitive. To enter the prestigious programmes at top universities, prospective students have not only to get the best possible marks in high school but also in the final national examinations. National examinations of high school certification therefore transform high school graduates into potential customers. Private tutoring is present in both public schools (in which most of the studies mentioned in this text were undertaken) and private schools.

The impact of private tutoring is varied. The surveys indicated that at least one quarter of students who received private tutoring had a parent with higher

education. This suggests that the demand for private tutoring is especially strong among the middle and upper classes. The fact that over 90% of the students surveyed stated they wanted to pursue studies and that 85% stated that private tutoring had a positive impact on their school results seems to reflect an environment conducive to the affirmation of the interests of 'new heirs', i.e. those who seek to strengthen an already privileged social position in the fight for places in the best programmes at top universities. This scenario fits the conclusions advanced by Tavares et al. (2008). These researchers found a relationship between the level of education of parents of students in higher education and the subjects chosen. Students from the less established social classes tend to be concentrated in educational sciences and economics, whereas those from families of higher social and academic privilege choose areas such as law, arts and sciences.

The use of private tutoring has a significant impact on household budgets. In a country where the minimum monthly wage is slightly below €500, it is easy to understand why low income families may have serious difficulties paying for this kind of support. Analysis of the type of degrees according to the social and academic level of the students in higher education shows the deep stratification in Portugal. When almost half (48.5%) of the students spend €71-140 per month, 14.4% €141-210, and 4.9% over €210, there is evidence of a highly selective process in the construction of students' achievement.

The impact of private tutoring on the personal life of students also deserves attention. In addition to the time devoted to school, 44.3% of the students surveyed in the Xplika Project devoted four to 10 hours per week to private tutoring and may also have had other complementary activities such as sports and music. The first national study that we mentioned appeared to show a more modest time devoted to this activity, but still significant enough to let us wonder about the quality of the socialisation and experiences that contemporary society offers to young people at this crucial stage of their lives.

The educational impact of private tutoring at school, particularly the impact in the classroom, has also been noted. Tutoring has both positive and negative effects on students and teachers. For many students, the effect is positive, promoting interest, motivation, participation in class, and commitment; but it can also increase the moments of distraction. Many teachers (89% of respondents in high school) feel that the use of private tutoring changes the attitudes of the students in the classroom. A significant proportion (31%) of these teachers negatively evaluate this change in attitude, mentioning noisier students. However, positive changes are also reported, such as improvements in classroom participation and self-esteem.

The present chapter shows the importance of private tutoring in Portugal. Yet private tutoring is still a relatively new field of research, and a broadening of the ground that supports this research is needed. Nevertheless, knowledge on this subject is increasing and academics and policymakers can no longer claim ignorance of this matter.

NOTES

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[2] Mathematics was chosen, as it was the most sought-after subject in private tutoring in the sample analysed.

[3] In order to undertake a Chi square test, the choices 'seven to ten hours' and 'over 10 hours' were grouped into one category, namely 'Over seven'.

[4] Access to higher education is determined by two components. The first is the result of the classification the student acquires with the completion of secondary school; the second depends on the national examinations for completion of secondary education, organized by the Ministry of Education and used by institutions of higher education for the selection of their students. These examinations are called 'entrance tests'. Each university can choose one or two of these entrance tests, except for the degree in medicine in which three entrance tests can be chosen (the areas of Biology, Physics, Mathematics and Chemistry are mandatory, according to the *Guias do Ensino Superior – Provas de Ingresso 2011*). The formula for the calculation of the final access classification has flexible grading intervals that are chosen by each university.

[5] The questionnaires were distributed to two classes, at each of the 5th to 9th Grades; to three classes, each at the 10th and 11th Grades; and to two classes, each at the 12th Grade (Neto, 2006, pp. 116-117). In total 748 questionnaires were distributed (374 questionnaires to students – 225 of the 2nd and 3rd cycles and 122 of the secondary school – and 374 to parents). From the questionnaires that were delivered, 337 were answered (215 from students of the 2nd and 3rd cycles and 122 from students in secondary school). From the questionnaires distributed to parents, 247 were answered (Neto, 2006, p.168).

[6] This school cluster comprises a head school (a basic 2nd and 3rd cycle school with students from the 5th to 9th Grades), a secondary school (with students from the 7th to 12th Grades), nine basic schools (with students from the 1st Grade to 4th Grades) and eight kindergartens.

[7] Only the answers of 15% of students or more are reported.

[8] Only the answers of 15% of teachers or more are reported.

[9] Eight students did not answer.

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