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Shadow Education and Its Implications for Finland

Bachelor's Thesis
FACULTY OF PSYCHOLOGY AND EDUCATION
Intercultural Teacher Education
2023

Oulun yliopisto

Kasvatustieteiden ja psykologian tiedekunta

Varjokoulutus ja sen merkitykset Suomelle (Elina Vanha-aho)

Kandidaatin tutkielma, 40 sivua

Huhtikuu 2023

Varjokoulutus-termi kuvaa yksityistä lisäopetusta, globaalisti merkittävää koulutuksen ilmiötä, jonka tunnetuimmat esimerkit ovat Itä-Aasiasta. Tätä epävirallista rinnakkaiskoulutusta on myös Suomessa, mutta se jää usein käsittelemättä huolimatta sen mahdollisista vaikutuksista yhteiskuntaan ja koulutukseen. Käytyäni vaihto-opiskelun aikana kurssin varjokoulutuksesta halusin ymmärtää sitä suomalaisesta näkökulmasta.

Nojaan klassiseen viitekehykseen, jossa varjokoulusta määritellään kolmella piirteellä: se on valtavirtakoulutuksen ulkopuolella tapahtuvaa täydentävää koulutusta, se toimii markkinana, ja painopiste on akateemiset aineet. Varjokoulutusta on haastava tutkia, koska se on usein sääntelemätöntä ja valvomatonta ja kehittyy nopeasti, mutta viime vuosikymmenten tutkimus on täyttänyt monia aukkoja tiedoissa. Suomalainen kirjallisuus aiheesta on kuitenkin vähäistä ja rajoittuu lähinnä yliopistojen pääsykoevalmennukseen, vaikka palveluita on muitakin, myös alemmille kouluasteille.

Tässä kuvailevassa, narratiivisessa kirjallisuuskatsauksessa hyödynnän kansainvälistä ja suomalaista kirjallisuutta varjokoulutuksesta ja sen taustavaikuttajista, kuten neoliberalismista. Kirjallisuus on kerätty pääosin verkkotietokantojen asiasanahauilla. Katsauksesta nousseiden teemojen perusteella olen jakanut työn seuraaviin päälukuihin: varjokoulutuksen esittely ja määrittely, sen leviämiseen vaikuttavat taustatekijät, ja sen seuraukset ja merkitykset. Lisäksi varjokoulutuksen suhde Suomeen on työn läpi kulkeva teema.

Kansainvälisesti katsottuna varjokoulutus on levinnyt Suomeen poikkeuksellisen viiveellä. Analysoimani kirjallisuus ennakoii varjokoulutuksen alati muuttuvien muotojen laajenemista, mikä Suomessa voi uhata ilmaisen, tasa-arvoisen koulujärjestelmän peruspilareita. Koulutuksen yksityistäminen siirtää vastuuta ja hallintoa pois demokraattiselta valtiolta. Varjokoulutuksen ja yksityisen sektorin kasvavalla läsnäololla koulutuksen kentällä on seurauksia, joita tulisi käsitellä tutkimuksessa ja päätöksenteossa. Vaikka tämä tutkielma on laajuudeltaan rajattu, sen tavoite on osaltaan lisätä tietoisuutta tästä koulutuksen yksityistämisen muodosta.

Avainsanat: koulutuksen tasa-arvo, varjokoulutus, yksityistäminen

Shadow education is a term that describes private supplementary education, a significant global education phenomenon best known for examples found in East-Asian societies. This unofficial parallel education also exists in Finland but is rarely discussed despite the potential effects it has for society and education. After taking a course on shadow education during an exchange period, I wanted to understand it from a Finnish perspective.

I lean on a classical framework of three defining features to understand shadow education: it is supplemental education outside of mainstream education, functions as a market, and is focused on academic subjects. Shadow education is a challenging subject of research because of its often unregulated, unmonitored status and fast pace of development, but in the recent decades research has filled in many data gaps. However, Finnish literature on the topic is sparse and mostly limited to university entrance preparatory courses, despite the existence of other services also for lower school levels.

In this descriptive, narrative literature review, I employ global and Finnish literature on shadow education and its influencers such as neoliberalism. The literature is gathered mainly by online database keyword searches. Based on the themes emerging from the review, the work is divided into chapters as follows: introduction and definition of shadow education, background factors influencing its spread, and effects and implications of shadow education. Additionally, the theme of shadow education in relation to Finland is carried throughout the work.

From a global perspective, shadow education's spread to Finland has been unusually delayed. The literature analyzed here predicts an expansion of ever-changing forms of shadow education, which in Finland may threaten the pillars of the free, egalitarian education system. Educational privatization shifts educational governance and responsibility away from the democratic state. The growing presence of shadow education and private sector in the field of education have consequences that ought to be addressed in research and policymaking. Although limited in scope, this thesis aims to contribute to raising awareness of this form of educational privatization.

Keywords: educational equality, privatization, shadow education

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1. Introduction

1.1 What grows in the shadows

In the summer of 2022, I was sitting in a classroom of Professor Jing Liu at the Tohoku University in Sendai, Japan. We had just had a class discussion on the course topic, shadow education, using the example of children and teenagers joining after-school lessons led by private tutors who are paid by the parents. I had been aware of the practice in Japan and South Korea, but thought that in Finland, paying for extra academic guidance outside of school is unheard of. After the discussion, memories contradicting this initial thought began to emerge. My mother's colleague taught me and my sibling German after school for a brief period when we were in elementary school. A friend used to do have a part time job helping a pair of siblings with their homework. How about the expensive online training course another friend paid for, hoping to guarantee her place in the medical school?

Shadow education covers a wide array of educational activities outside of school that are intended to supplement formal schooling (Stevenson & Baker, 1992). The Finnish examples felt insignificant at first, but they fit the description of shadow education, which gave me a framework to consider these practices from the viewpoint of equality, commercialization, and accessibility of education, and how societal values concerning these issues are changing. I felt like I had gained night vision and started to see what was in the shadows of the formal Finnish school system. In Professor Liu's class, we scraped the surface of shadow education's negative aspects: its "potential for corrupting intentions of educational process, possible social reproductions, greater inequalities" and so on, as Baker (2020, p. 314) puts it. We also considered why there is a demand of supplemental private teaching and what positive outcomes it has, but I felt that much of the research was difficult to understand from a Finnish point of view.

Bray (2013) briefly notes that Finland does not have strong tradition of tutoring, but only eight years later he reassesses, saying that patterns are becoming evident (Bray, 2021). Having studied abroad in Japan twice and consequently familiarizing myself with shadow education's prominent role in the East-Asian education and societies, I have made first-hand observations of its effects. I believe shadow education is a topic worth understanding and bringing into light. Wiseman (2013) describes supplementary education and shadow education to be "high-profile" in comparative and international education research in a decade-old publication, and the expanded interest in it is noted in more recent work as well (for example see Baker, 2020), but

the Finnish discourse seems to lag behind. I had not even encountered the term in my four years of studying education. In my bachelor's thesis, I utilize global and Finnish literature on shadow education to introduce and define the term. I also consider some main influences and implications of shadow education's existence both globally and locally in Finland. My research questions are:

1. What insight on the shadow education phenomenon can be gathered from the existing literature?
2. What implications does shadow education have for the Finnish society and education?

1.2 Methodology

My bachelor's thesis is a descriptive literature review and qualitative in nature. As a literature review is a general overview and does not need to have strict methodological rules (Salminen, 2011), it offers me enough space to review the patchwork of literature that sheds light on shadow education in Finland. Atkinson and Wallace (2016) advise that gaps in the existing literature can help one generate research questions, and that is how I initially approached my topic. My first searches were simply on shadow education, related to Finland or not. As I mapped out existing literature in Finnish and English, my suspicion about the lack of literature on shadow education specifically in Finland was confirmed. I therefore lean on Atkinson and Wallace's (2016) advice and draw from global research to ask what is known and under exploration about the topic to create a basis for my thesis.

I considered integrative literature review as a method due to its ability to produce new knowledge of the research topic, but a narrative literature review was easier to execute and enabled me to prioritize readability (Salminen, 2011). One of the objectives of a narrative literature review is to draw disjointed information together into a connected picture (Salminen, 2011), which is a good match to the field of shadow education research, described as a puzzle by Bray (2007, 2011, 2021). I already had certain authors and texts to include in the puzzle thanks to the course centered on shadow education at the Tohoku University. After briefly analyzing the first round of searches, it became evident I need to introduce and define shadow education well: since the term is rarely used in the Finnish literature, global literature must be applied to Finland with care for the local context but also with a clear understanding of what research talks about when it talks about "shadow education".

Bray (2010) discusses the methodological challenges and directions of researching shadow education, noting universal challenges and the specific dilemmas of cross-national and cross-cultural, especially comparative, research. He repeats the established truth in comparative research that terminology must be treated carefully. Issues related to the multiple local variants, names, and related practices may confuse shadow education research (Zhang & Bray, 2020). Therefore, I needed to ensure that my search for literature on shadow education in Finland was not hindered by the wrong search terms. In my second round of searches, I paid attention to the synonyms for shadow education and continued searching for relevant literature with the following terms: shadow education, private tuition, private tutoring, academic tutoring, out-of-school lessons, supplementary tutoring, and supplementary education. I used the databases and search engines of Oula-Finna, Ebsco, ProQuest, Scopus, Google Scholar and ResearchGate.

Furthermore, I followed the paths I found in the literature to read more about the privatization and marketization of education, and that way I also found more research on university preparatory courses in Finland. Bibliographies from the field's books, articles and dissertations helped me discover important discourse that gives background to the phenomenon. Reading around the subject supports the literature review especially in a case like this where literature on the specific topic itself is sparse (Atkinson & Wallace, 2016). I also received literature recommendations based on my interests from my thesis advisor, Anu Alanko.

Multinational comparative research on the field including Finland is still limited, but exists (Christensen & Zhang, 2021; Bray, 2021; Entrich, 2020). Same applies to Finnish case studies explicitly discussing shadow education. Kosunen (2018), Kosunen et al. (2018), Jokila et al. (2021), and others have recently contributed to the field by investigating preparatory courses. I have included some case studies such as Doherty & Dooley (2018) in my literature review because of cultural, political, economic, or other parallels with the Finnish society. There is an ongoing effort to fill the gap for cross-national, comparative research where researchers balance global and local context: some recent contributors include Bray (2021), Bukowski (2017), and Byun et al. (2018) and Entrich (2020). However, when using global sources with a comparative approach instead of more Finland-focused literature, I need to carefully assess the relevance of each piece of literature against my research interests: different research motivations produce different queries. Bray (2010) demonstrates this with the example that a researcher who is interested in the economic effects of shadow education must distinguish between fee-free and fee-paying tutoring to benefit from data gathered with academic performance as a primary research interest. Similarly, some validity issues emerge from analyzing the Finnish situation with tools created for other contexts.

Bray (2010) compares shadow education research to general educational research but identifies three particular problems: conceptualization is in the early stages, there are data gaps, and there are rapid changes in the field. Revisiting the topic of conceptualization, Bray (2021) evaluates that enough data has been gathered to identify core themes and agendas. However, it is unclear if this applies to Finland quite yet. The second concern, data gaps, arise from the unofficial status of shadow education. Most governments do not keep records on private sector's out-of-school educational activities, meaning that publicly available data is insufficient (Aurini et al. 2013; Bray, 2007, 2021). On top of this, in many societies shadow education is informal, unregistered, or even purposefully obscured for example for tax evasion purposes (Bray, 2013). Both tutors and families may be reluctant to report spending on shadow education, which would be of interest to many researchers wondering about the financial effects and equality issues of the phenomenon (Bray, 2007; 2010; 2013).

The third point Bray (2010) mentions is tied to the entrepreneurial nature of shadow education: it is, for example, quicker to adopt new technologies than mainstream schooling. Staying on top of rapid developments in the field is a challenge for research. Zhang and Bray (2020) discuss the quick pace of changes and note that while uncharted territories must be mapped out, the scenery is ever-changing also in the areas where shadow education is a long-established tradition. Baker (2020) calls for more research prioritizing the similarities across nations, suggesting that shared causal processes are hiding under the differences that have been a typical focus of earlier comparative research in the field; but Entrich (2020) says that the processes are too complex to generalize yet. Zhang and Bray (2020) call for continued attention to rigorous methods and deep analysis, and hope to see more interdisciplinary approaches to respond to the fast developments in the field.

I came across the pieces of advice presented in the above paragraphs at different points of my literature review and analysis, so I had to constantly re-evaluate my work and reshape my analysis. Early on, I began to group contributions from the literature under different themes, which step by step emerged as the three chapters that form the body of this thesis. Chapter 1, introduction, is not tied to any specific theme. Ontological discourse became the base for chapter 2, where shadow education is defined. Chapter 3 builds on research that explores causes of shadow education or the lack of it, because I wanted to understand the background to the phenomenon. In chapter 4, I delve into the theme of implications and consequences. The last theme is the relationship between Finland and shadow education, which is carried through the whole thesis but especially in sub-sections explicitly discussing Finland. In the concluding chapter 5, I compile the findings and consider future research avenues.

2. Defining Shadow Education

2.1 Origins of the term

Shadow education is a term unknown to many in Finland, and so is the phenomenon it represents: private supplementary education. According to Bray (2010), “shadow educational system” was first used as a metaphor by Marimuthu et al. (1991) to describe a prevalent system of private tutoring in Malaysia. David Stevenson and David P. Baker (1992) used the term shadow education to describe what they then thought to be “an exotic Japanese cultural oddity” (Baker, 2020, p. 311). Discussing this, Baker (2020) states he coined the term with Stevenson, while Bray (2010) simply says that Baker and Stevenson used the term independently. Others also used the metaphor in the 1990’s, but their connections to each other are unclear (Bray, 2010).

Regardless of who exactly first invented the metaphor, the term caught on in educational sociology research around the turn of the 21st century (Baker, 2020). Supplemental private education had been a subject of interest since the 1980’s, but views of it have since shifted, especially in the 1990’s as academics with research foci outside of East Asia made their debut in the field (Mori & Baker, 2010). A seminal publication in the field is Mark Bray’s 1999 booklet *The shadow education system: private tutoring and its implications for planner*. I cite the second edition of the book, published in 2007. In the book, Bray (2007) gives four reasons to use the term shadow education for private supplementary tutoring:

First, private supplementary tutoring only exists because the mainstream exists; second, as the size and shape 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; and fourth, the features of the shadow system are much less distinct than those of the mainstream system. (p. 17)

Therefore, shadow education calls attention to the phenomenon more critically than other names. It separates the phenomenon from the ages-old practice of tutoring itself, a form of education that descends from the time when formal schooling was yet to exist (Mori & Baker, 2010). It directs us to consider the complex and partly hidden nature of fee-paying supplementary education and enables problematizing this phenomenon that is often represented in an exclusively positive way by its providers. Baker (2020) says that in hindsight, their 1992 article (Stevenson & Baker) was sociologically quite naïve, but in three decades much valuable research has undeniably developed the field.

2.2 Conceptual framework

My theoretical framework for understanding shadow education builds on the early contributions from Stevenson and Baker (1992) and Bray (2007). Bray created a three-step model for defining shadow education, understanding it as 1) supplemental, 2) a market, 3) aimed at academic subjects. This framework has since been widely accepted and used (Byun & Baker, 2015) and covers the basic aspects of understanding what shadow education actually is and what it is not. Further additions have been made by a plethora of authors, some of whom I lean on here for clarifications.

Firstly, shadow education is supplemental, i.e., additional to the provision of main schooling. Shadow education does not happen in the school during school time, but the content mirrors mainstream educational systems. Bray (2003, 2007) mentions common subjects to be mathematics, science and language, while non-academic topics like sports or instrument lessons are not included in the discourse. Aurini et al. (2013) note a practice where “learning centers” – that traditionally focus on academic subjects – promise to develop skills also outside of supplementing school studies, and Kim and Jung (2019) say shadow education often goes beyond mainstream curricula. This demonstrates that the scope of shadow education is becoming broader as time goes on, but these efforts still aim towards success in mainstream studies.

The second feature, the state of shadow education as a market, defines that it brings together the buyers and sellers of educational products and services, and the providers receive financial gains. This feature emphasizes the commercial nature and market-making processes in shadow education (Jokila et al., 2021). Jung and Kim (2019) include after-school programs as one type of shadow education despite some of them being under the supervision of school administration and tightly integrated with school even when an external agency provides the program. I disagree with this inclusion in the Finnish context primarily because Finnish after-school programs mostly serve the role of daycare for school children and are not targeted at academic support, which connects to the third condition.

The third condition – shadow education aiming at academic subjects – is sometimes presented by Bray (see for example Bray, 2003) to encompass tutoring in the core mainstream subjects only. In the Finnish context, this would create confusion regarding the university entrance preparatory courses, as the subjects they cover may fall outside of the “core” or “mainstream”. Therefore, I find Byun and Baker’s (2015) version of the definition more useful and choose to include the significant educational activity of preparatory courses in my thesis. This choice is

supported by Stevenson and Baker (1992) who specifically express concern over firstly, cramming during secondary school and secondly, post-secondary school cramming to prepare for resitting university entrance exams. This line of research is also evident in Finnish existing research on shadow education (see for example Jokila et al., 2021). Some borderline cases exist, as non-academic topics such as ballet or music lessons are not considered shadow education, but for example preparatory courses for architecture studies may put a heavy emphasis on drawing (Teho-opisto, 2023). Bukowski (2017) determines that if a student is enrolled in a program whose curriculum heavily includes a subject, then private lessons of that subject should be considered shadow education.

2.3 Who, where and when?

Although shadow education is by most definitions located in the private sector, although certain government efforts for example in Canada, USA, South Korea, and Norway have blurred the line (Bray, 2010; Aurini et al., 2013; Kim & Jung, 2019; Christensen & Zhang, 2021). In Finland, shadow education providers include not only private companies, but also non-degree awarding educational institutes, folk high schools, and student associations (Jokila et al., 2021). The teachers, or tutors, as they are commonly called in many systems, have varying qualifications and backgrounds, but common recruits include university or college students and recently retired ex-mainstream teachers (Bray, 2007, 2013). Kany (2021), who founded a popular Danish tutoring company, explains that they call the staff mentors in order to avoid the traditional teacher's image and negative connotations that students may have with needing extra help. The choice of words is a way to create the desired image.

Shadow education is constantly evolving and adjusting to new environments as it spreads, which is reflected in the service providers. Stevenson and Baker (1992) list categories such as private tutoring with an individual tutor, mock exams created by private companies, and the *juku* practice: after-school lessons by what they refer to as private schools. Silova et al. (2006) divide private tutoring into two categories in their study of formerly socialist, mostly European countries: private tutoring lessons, which are offered by individuals, and preparatory courses, offered by institutions. Bray (2007) differentiates tutors who are also mainstream teachers and in charge of the same students they teach out-of-school, and those that are not involved this way. Websites that gather a commission fee that list tutors who can teach both online and in person are common in many European cities (Bray, 2021).

Supply of shadow education may create demand for it, and depending on what is offered, different customers are attracted to the service (Bray 2007). As for those who attend shadow education, recent research implies that in most societies over the world, majority of partaking students are low-achieving (Entrich, 2020). Earlier findings indicate an opposite situation, which still holds in East-Asian societies and probably in several others: that most of the students are already well-performing, high-achieving students who aim to stay competitive (Bray, 2021; Bray, 2003). Moreover, two studies from 2001 and 2018 report that in low-income countries, families buy shadow education as the main source of schooling due to access and quality barriers in other education (Baker, Akiba, LeTendre, & Wiseman, 2001; Byun et al., 2018). This may distort the Entrich (2020) findings as in these cases, shadow education is not truly supplemental, and low-achieving students are simply using shadow education as they would otherwise attend mainstream education.

“Approximately about one-third of all 15-year-old students from 64 countries/economies across the world” attend fee-paying, out-of-school classes according to Byun et al. (2018, p. 71), but they do not differentiate between the various, greatly differing forms of shadow education and the results are therefore only indicative. In Finland, Jokila et al. (2021) found 350 different preparatory courses offered at university applicants in the fields of medicine, law, education, and economics. According to Ahola et al., (2018) applicants in these fields participated in the courses at the following rates: law, 65%; economics, 54%; medicine, 47%; and education, about 33%. On the other hand, in 2012 Finnish primary and secondary students’ participation rate in shadow education was under 8% (Bukowski, 2017). More research is needed to map who partakes in shadow education in Finland.

Shadow education is offered to students of all ages, in wildly differing conditions and with varying power dynamics (Mori & Baker, 2010). In some situations, teachers are practically forced to tutor to earn enough to live, and in others the students are practically forced to attend shadow education to receive necessary teaching. Primary and secondary level students are most involved, with the last years of secondary school as the typical boiling point for the activity (Bray, 2007). In Finland, the bottleneck of education is the transition to higher education, so that is where shadow education is also focused (Jokila et al., 2021). Globally, the timing is more dispersed. The lessons may be a constant evening activity in one’s childhood and teenage years, or the teaching can be arranged during the school holidays and weekends (Bray, 2013). Summer school for upper secondary students is sometimes organized as a camp in Finland.

Shadow education is not tied to a certain physical location. Depending on the country, many options may be available. Lessons in school-like buildings at private tutoring institutes which may call themselves academies or learning centers, and after-school programs organized by private agencies or tutors are common in countries where shadow education is extensive (Mori & Baker, 2010; Bray, 2007). Some forms of shadow education do not even require the student to leave their home: there are franchise-based subscribed learning programs where subscription-exclusive materials are sent to the customer, often combined with home visits that are, on their own, the most traditional form of shadow education (Kim & Jung, 2019). Internet-based private tutoring even offers asynchronous classes and learning games. Traditionally, the urban–rural dichotomy has been a strong factor in shadow education attendance (Bray, 2007) but this has been transforming in recent decades due to online solutions (Bukowski, 2017) that have become even more wide-spread and well-known during the coronavirus pandemic. In Finland, the scattered population demands solutions that do not rely on a specific time and place, raising the popularity of online, asynchronous courses (Jokila et al., 2021).

In Finland, the most common form of shadow education is the preparatory course for university entrance exams (Jokila et al., 2021). As with the content of the studies, there is also some timing-related debate whether this falls under the umbrella of shadow education. While analyzing shadow education within the European Union, Bukowski (2017) ponders on how to classify the preparatory courses but ends up including them in the analysis. Bray (2003, 2007) mentions British *crammers* and Japanese *yobiko*, where students who have already left school can study to bring up their exam scores, but he says this is not the focus of his studies. Contrary to this, Stevenson and Baker (1992) fully include these activities occurring after leaving high school in their definition of shadow education. They seem to group this together with the primary and secondary school supplementary education because of the shared end goal: successfully entering the student’s desired university through entrance examinations. In Finland, the preparatory courses are taken by students still in school as well as those who have already graduated from the secondary level and included under the shadow education umbrella by Christensen & Zhang (2021) and Jokila et al. (2021). I agree, because even when the preparatory courses do not happen in the same time frame as the official education and sometimes focus on topics not taught in the secondary school, the activity is still meant to supplement the mainstream school. The goal is, after all, re-entering formal education with success in the studies.

3. Background Factors

3.1 Neoliberalism as a global trend in education

Educational phenomena do not spring out of nowhere; they are shaped by the surrounding society. Caillods (2007, p.11) states that “the development of private tuition has to be interpreted within the overall trend of privatization and marketization of education”. Furthermore, privatization and marketization are part of a larger societal phenomenon called neoliberalism. It is a set of ideologies and practices originally revolved around political economic theory leaning on free markets with minimal state intervention as a basis of human well-being (Harvey, 2007). Additionally, it includes the assumption that a market is the most efficient and moral social institution which leads to the normative statement that all areas of life should function as markets (Springer et al., 2016). Rising in popularity since the end of the 1970’s, with Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher as famous advocates, neoliberal policy and thinking has spread globally to various areas of life, grown more complicated, and become a broad cultural ideology (Lerch et al., 2022).

Neoliberalism is a slippery term, often used in a pejorative way to refer to undefined “bad” (Springer et al., 2016) but more reasoned critique is easily found in literature. On a basic level, neoliberalism differs from earlier forms of liberalism so that the collective, especially nation-state, is less important and less in charge (Harvey, 2007; Springer et al., 2016). Instead, individual human beings are assumed to have immense agency as empowered “entrepreneurs” across all sectors of life (Lerch et al., 2022; Värri, 2018). The role of education in neoliberalism is to offer schooled, abstract, and universal knowledge to increase the individual’s agency, but it is also an important locus of social stratification (Lerch et al., 2022; Baker, 2020). Lerch et al. continue that while neoliberalism is “built on doctrines of human equality, it sustains and creates enormous inequalities” (p. 113). Harvey (2007) likewise states that neoliberalism originates from the economic elite’s need to protect their position and is structurally unequal. Springer et al. (2016) discuss the unequal and even violent realities of neoliberal policies being implemented and brings up the coercive actions of states in enforcing the ideology that itself frowns upon state intervention.

Värri (2018) criticizes neoliberal educational policies for setting the goal at market competitiveness instead of social and cultural tasks of education. Education’s importance as a nation-building tool has also eroded (Mori & Baker, 2010). It is nowadays often seen as cultivation of

human capital: personal attributes that can be utilized for growing capital (Peters, 2016). Education is therefore seen as an investment in one's future. In the neoliberal education landscape, the investor is increasingly likely to be a student or their parent, looking for a superior product or service to grow their human capital. From the latter's point of view, one interesting offer that shadow education makes is an incredible level of specialty (Bray, 2007). Students or parents are customers, and shadow education providers have a vested interest in offering the exact services that parents and students could want. This aligns with the overall growing individualism in society (Santos et al., 2017) which is echoed in curricula and pedagogy to centralize student choices and interests, for example in the form of participatory learning and teaching (Lerch et al., 2022; Värri, 2018).

However, the freedom to choose does not come alone. Academics have used the term *responsibilization* to discuss how in the neoliberal education landscape, the state no longer takes responsibility for education (Doherty & Dooley, 2018; Peters, 2016). Instead, new moral norms dictate that parents take charge of their children's learning, evaluate what is needed and bear the costs and risks. In neoliberalism, the state's role is to establish markets where they are not yet present and guarantee that the market may function freely but not otherwise intervene, including in the education sector (Harvey, 2007; Ball & Youdell, 2008). In a completely deregulated market education businesses would be free to offer any service or product they want at whatever price they can attract customers without the government enforcing any educational policy. While this is not the reality in any mainstream educational system, the neoliberal influences in education emerge as behaviors that resemble investing or insuring with education (for examples, see Doherty & Dooley, 2018; Jokila et al., 2021; Kosunen et al., 2018).

Shadow education holds a specific position within this education market and functions in a distinct way. In privatization, education transforms from a public good to a private commodity. The process usually starts with importing business-like thinking and structures into educational institutions, which gradually leads to the private sector profiting from direct participation in public education, according to Ball & Youdell (2008). These two lines of privatization, firstly importing business thinking, and secondly integrating private sector into school, have since been well recognized (Seppänen et al., 2023). However, Doherty and Dooley (2018) say that shadow education fits neither model, as it instead functions in a parasitic or symbiotic relationship with mainstream educational systems. In other words, shadow education does not act according to the traditional ways of privatizing and marketization of education: it does not even fully engage with public education but maintains its outsider position while benefiting from the inside.

Education being a central source of social stratification and therefore a site of competition creates profit for shadow education. As a business sector, it benefits from responsabilization of individuals and the resulting anxieties and fears on the parents and students' side. An example of these factors coming together is competition-like mainstream examinations. They are – or at least are perceived to be – increasingly important for students' future, but parents and students themselves may feel that mainstream education is not doing enough to prepare the students. As mentioned earlier, students attending shadow education tend to be well-performing, but they do not always view themselves that way, and perception of inadequate school performance is a big motivator to attend shadow education (Bray, 2007). Shadow education presents itself as the road to success (see for example Seppänen et al., 2023), and in today's cultural atmosphere shopping for educational services is increasingly seen as a boon, or in some societies, even an obligatory part of parenting (Lerch et al., 2022). Sometimes even children's leisure time is posed as a hindrance to productivity and success at schooling, which is used as a justification for replacing it with private tutoring (Aurini et al., 2013), which demonstrates the level of pressure put on students, or on parents on their behalf, to steer their education careers so that every investment pays off.

Influences outside of neoliberalism also drive privatization and marketization of education. In some cases, societal changes have left the space open for private companies to step into the field. Bray (2007) mentions the 1990's transition towards market economy in China and Vietnam, as well the Eastern Europe's societal changes and the somewhat chaotic public education situation at the same time, explored in more detail by Silova et al. (2006). In these situations, it is not primarily the pressure of examinations or, a factor discussed later, cultural norms of competition that create the shadow education market, but the lack of adequate pay for the teachers, and adequate teaching for their students, Bray (2007, 2021) notes. Still, these two factors spurring shadow education may sometimes emerge due to neoliberal culture and economics. Inadequate teaching is a typical problem at the lower strata levels of an unequal education system, and neoliberalism often upholds inequality, as noted earlier. Moreover, neoliberalism as a societal order has also weakened labor rights (Harvey, 2007; Jackson, 2016) so that low pay and otherwise poor working conditions for teachers are unsurprising, or even purposeful and systematic (Ball & Youdell, 2008).

The effects of neoliberalism in education are complex and multi-faceted. Ball and Youdell (2008) ponder that the hidden processes towards privatization and/or commercialization of public education may transform our views of education and the values underpinning it. Even though shadow education does not directly privatize or commercialize public education, the resulting

cultural change is similar because of how normal and normative shadow education has quietly grown globally. Furthermore, shadow education fusing with mainstream education has become reality in certain contexts, as unintentional as such a transformation may be (Mori & Baker, 2010). The ethos of education is affected by whether we accept the ideas that firstly, education is a marketable service, and secondly, the state is not responsible for it. Neoliberalism pushes for both and shadow education embodies its ideals. Yet, traditional neoliberal powers are constantly interacting with other influences, such as human rights and the idea of education as a public good which belongs to everybody, and shadow education should be understood as resulting from a dynamic mix of sometimes opposing factors (Baker, 2020).

3.2 Finnish ground for growing shadow education

In the Nordic countries, education has been focused on egalitarian, free, comprehensive, non-competitive schooling, but shadow education is growing in the region, which raises the question if the above-mentioned ideals are eroding (Christensen & Zhang, 2021). Shadow education derives its legitimation from overall appreciation of education (Mori & Baker, 2010) which is the case in Finland, but increasingly the rationale for valuing education is a narrative of market competitiveness and knowledge society's advancement, or awareness of exportation opportunities (Kiesi, 2023). The Finnish society has both imported neoliberal thinking discussed in the previous section and formed its own versions of consumerist society values (Värri, 2016) which are present for example in the public discourse around school choice. Furthermore, centering private sector solutions over welfare state solidarity has affected the field of education on a policy level for the last decades (Harni, 2022). While "edu-business" has criticized Finland for stagnating education, changes in education initiated by private actors are materializing at a pace that leaves some researchers worried that the consequences are not fully thought through (Kiesi, 2023).

While shadow education was described as practically non-existent in the Nordics as recently as 10-15 years ago (Christensen & Zhang, 2021), nowadays even a casual observer is likely aware of preparatory courses for entering certain university programs (e.g. medical sciences). In Finland, admission to the tertiary level (universities and universities of applied sciences) is among the most competitive of OECD countries, and specific tutoring for entrance examination has been present in Finland since the 1960's and is well-established (Jokila et al., 2021; Ahola, et al., 2016). Most of the shadow education related research published in Finland focuses on these preparatory courses (see for example Kosunen et al., 2018; Jokila et al., 2021) and the phenom-

enon has even prompted a bachelor's thesis (Rautasalo, 2020). Many preparatory course partakers disregard the role of structural barriers in the admission process, reducing the factors in play to the student's own motivation and willingness to sacrifice something for the studies (Kosunen et al., 2018). This reflects responsabilization and other neoliberal logics discussed in the previous section.

Considering other normalized ways of thinking around education, Finland has a cultural aspect that the shadow education sector may benefit from: individuality (Helkama, 2015, p. 67-72). Shadow education provides very tailored forms of learning. For instance, Swedish and Danish private tutoring companies that may be wishing to conquer the Finnish markets offer homework support services that are based on the student's own wishes and materials (Kany, 2021; Bray, 2021). Mainstream education rarely has resources to cater for every individual student's needs, but shadow education has. Finland has long battled with relatively high student disengagement (af Ursin et al., 2023), and some students may prefer shadow education over mainstream school, as the business is able to meet students where they are, from the platforms of communication to the personal interests of the student (Bray & Kobakhidze, 2014). This is already evident with the preparatory courses (Kosunen et al., 2018).

Private companies' involvement in education ought to be examined, but we must not forget the endogenous privatization discussed by Ball & Youdell (2008). One such project in Finnish comprehensive education is entrepreneurship education. Entrepreneurship education is a term for educational activities that aim to support entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial attitude in children and teenagers regardless of whether they will work as entrepreneurs themselves (Harni, 2015). In Finland, the earlier form was entrepreneur training focused on vocational school students, but the wider definition appeared in the Finnish National Core Curriculum (FNCC) in the mid-1990's (Harni, 2022). In the current FNCC, "working life competence and entrepreneurship" is one of the seven transversal competences promoted throughout the curriculum (The Finnish Ministry of Education, 2014). The FNCC mentions technological advancement and globalization of economy as motives to prepare students for future work in many ways, including teaching entrepreneurial operating and risk management – in other words, market-managing skills.

These kinds of subtle changes around the educational culture and discourse are various and usually hidden well, as their effects are combined slowly over years or even decades, with hard-to-trace origins in multiple areas of society. Recent shadow education research has brought up the need for interdisciplinary studies, as the field diversifies as fast as it expands (Christensen

& Zhang, 2021; Bray & Zhang, 2020). Blurring lines between private and public education are one area where research is insufficient. In Finland, private businesses have both formal partnerships and informal connections with public sector schools, and especially the state actor Finnish National Agency for Education is well-known in the business field for facilitating public private partnerships (Kiesi, 2023).

Seppänen et al. (2023) detail how education came to be seen as a commodity in Finland. Following the PISA success of the early 2000's, the government turned to education as a new field of export. Education technology and tertiary education providers were put in the center of the stage even though PISA reports comprehensive schoolers' performance. During the 2010's, expectations increased for educational institutions to participate in the market, and there was a strong political push to make schools purchase various digital learning tools and serve as testing ground for these products and services. Seppänen et al. (2023) explain that "businessing" around education is justified by promising innovation that helps schools to transfer into the digital world, or otherwise develop education to suit contemporary needs (Kany, 2021). On the other hand, education businesses are expected to bring economic growth through exportation, which in return benefits the school system (Seppänen et al., 2023). At policy level, the private sector is already seen as a welcome resource for education.

These growing connections are seen in the field as well. Secondary schools routinely accept visits from preparatory course representatives to the mandatory lessons to inform students about the application process (Jokila et al., 2021). Shadow education could use these approving cracks in the sector to lobby its way more securely into the Finnish markets, but it remains to be seen how parents of school children react to this. Global research shows that children are put into supplementary tutoring for homework and test preparation support, but also because it is an alternative to child-minding and offers older children a constructive pastime (Aurini et al., 2013; Bray, 2021). Other motives include parent peer pressure and parents' perception of their own inability to help children with homework (Bray 2007), neither of which have emerged as themes in the Finnish research or public debate. As the effect of parental socio-economic status is increasingly affecting the child's learning outcomes (see for example Lobato & Bernelius, 2023), it is possible that some parents will want to pay for shadow education to ensure their children are not held back by their own educational backgrounds. University preparatory courses are already seen as such an investment among students from lower socio-economic backgrounds (Kosunen et al., 2018).

The global trend is that schools with good or even elite reputations do not satisfy parents who seek more support for their children (Bray, 2021), and even school systems that are regarded as egalitarian do not deter growing shadow education among families with higher socio-economic status (Matsuoka, 2018). Sanoma Pro, one of the biggest educational publishing companies in Finland, acquired a private tutoring company Tutorhouse in 2016 and the following year, launched an advertising campaign for students in 9th grade or in upper secondary school, offering services to raise grade point average (Seppänen et al., 2023). As an established business, Sanoma can safely experiment with different offers and see what takes root. Considering the extensive Internet access that Finnish youth have, it is reasonable to assume that accessing shadow education would not be limited to cities despite the traditional divide between urban and rural students. Internet-based shadow education, especially pre-recorded lesson type, tends to have relatively low fees as opposed to face-to-face teaching (Kim & Jung, 2019), which also predicts its popularity. On top of this, with the big presence of educational technology businesses in Finland (Seppänen et al., 2023) it would be logical that spread of shadow education will be seen through digital tools.

3.3 Factors delaying shadow education in Finland

From existing research, it is also possible to discern factors that may slow the shadow education market's growth in Finland. The first and biggest factor is that in Finland, school until 18 is obligatory for the student and free, and the latter applies also to degree studies in higher education for students from the EU/EEA region. The system aims to support all learning needs, create equal chances for all students, and is applauded for its ability to inclusively educate all students when compared to others around the world (Bray, 2021). Bray and Kobakhidze (2014) remark that Northern Europe in general meets student needs and provides extra lessons in the framework of public schools instead of a parallel system. Child-centered approaches that are tolerant of slow learners make shadow education less attracting (Bray, 2007), so the self-regulated, student-led learning and special education measures found in the Finnish National Core Curriculum (National Agency for Education, 2014) may contribute to the slow spread of shadow education to Finland.

However, some of the praises above no longer reflect the reality of schools. Finnish education is segregating and cannot provide education for all students on the level that it used to (Lobato & Bernelius, 2023). Still, there are areas where segregation and other challenges in education are not as evident, where interest towards extra teaching likely remains low. Even as the Finnish education system may not reach its ideals anymore, as suggested by Christensen & Zhang

(2021), its general structure with the lack of tracking and other competitive features seems to lower public interest towards shadow education (Entrich, 2020). Finnish education has been characterized as “world-class” as a whole, not because of individual stars.

It has long been known that ranking schools and individuals makes systems more susceptible to shadow education forming (Bray, 2007, 2013) and in Europe as well as rest of the West, PISA and other international comparisons have spurred private tutoring (Bray, 2021). In Finland, there are some rankings gathered and published by news outlets especially at the time of matriculation exam results, but no state-organized, constant, public ranking. Ball & Youdell (2008) discuss in their 15-year-old book how educational institutions have begun to function more business-like to adapt for accountability and performance management mechanisms, but in Finland these mechanisms are yet to present in comprehensive schooling (Pitkänen, 2023). There are signs of audit and quality assurance tools by private companies emerging (Seppänen et al., 2023) and global quality evaluation ideas are very present in discourse, but currently Finland still resists the global norm of high-stakes testing and school inspection (Pitkänen, 2023).

Some education businesses reported reluctance to accept private actors in the Finnish public education sector, especially others than the established publishing houses (Kiesi, 2023). General attitudes towards preparatory courses are “somewhat disapproving” (Jokila et al., 2021, p. 594) because it disrupts the principle of higher education access being independent of parental income or family wealth. Attitudes towards privatizing tendencies in Finland seem to vary depending on the stakeholder and the specific form of privatization, as positive experiences were also reported (Kiesi, 2023, Kosunen et al., 2018). To add on to factors related to public debate, peer pressure is a significant factor in shadow education participation (Bray, 2013), meaning that the low use of shadow education by Finnish primary and secondary schoolers decreases the likelihood of seeking it, and in some university fields, the substantial use of preparatory courses increases the likelihood of applicants seeking it (Kosunen et al., 2018).

Stevenson and Baker (1992) identified that in the Japanese society of the time, the main purpose of shadow education was to secure a spot in a – preferably prestigious – university. The rewards of successfully entering university are big, as the future work opportunities and social status of an individual were, and still are, strongly tied to their tertiary education in Japan. Seeing shadow education as a route to achieve educational advancement and thus social mobility is common in many countries, but Finland does not have as big income gaps or class differences as these countries (Entrich, 2020), which could be a factor why the competition in education has not

grown so drastic as to drive families to find any way to succeed. Bray (2007, p. 69) puts it this way: “the explanation is linked to the existence of wide differentials between the ‘haves’ and the ‘have nots’, and to the extent to which examinations, and tutoring which promotes success in those examinations, are a critical determinant of which persons gain economic prosperity.”

Finally, the Finnish traditions and cultural values are far from those societies where shadow education traditionally prospers (Baker, 2020). Finnish culture does not value studying, discipline, or social status in the same way as Asian cultures with strong Confucian cultural influences. Finland could perhaps be compared to Australia as presented by Bray (2007): relatively uncompetitive society where labor market differentials are loose compared to for example Japan and many developing countries. Additionally, the mainstream education system in Australia is flexible and supportive of individuals. Due to these reasons, supplementary education had not gained much popularity at the time of Bray’s publication. However, Doherty and Dooley (2018) characterize tutoring as “increasingly normalised and legitimated as parents are nudged to supplement the work of the school”. The authors present a rapid transformation of values and practices, but even if that were to happen in Finland, it is hard to predict exactly which de-escalators of shadow education would be swept away first, which would persist, and which would transform into enablers of it.

4. Implications of Shadow Education

4.1 Financial aspects

Shadow education is a huge market. In their 2013 book, Aurini et al. present a summary of shadow education spending data gathered from 17 countries, totaling \$41 billion, or nearly 39 billion in euros. The authors estimate that globally, the figure could be doubled. Considering privatization and other neoliberal trends in education, we can assume these numbers have only increased in the last decade. Same goes for household spending. Especially in Asian societies, already twenty years ago families could spend hundreds or thousands of euros yearly for each child’s private tutoring (Bray, 2007) and similar sums are present in more recent European research (Bukowski, 2017). This willingness to invest in shadow education is likely due to expectations of straightforward economic return later in life thanks to university education or such, but increasingly, shadow education advertises holistic development and learning, which may widen the consumer pool (Kim & Jung, 2019). Critical voices have pointed out that all this

spending may be diverting families' income to unproductive educational services (Aurini et al. 2013).

Aurini et al. (2013) claim that most countries fall either into high or low intensity when it comes to supplemental tutoring. They use a 40% enrollment rate to divide the categories and add that in most countries, attendance is either much lower or much higher, with very little grey area. Where tutoring is common, it is not only a big investment for the families. It is also a significant source of income for the tutors, who may be underpaid teachers and university students (Cailods, 2007; Bray, 2013). Holloway and Pimlott-Wilson (2021) discuss tutoring as a form of solo-employment. According to the authors, tutors in the United Kingdom have diverse reasons and ways to employ themselves in the private tutoring sector. While they recognize their work as a business, few were interested in growing the business. While opportunity to gain a higher income was one of the motivations to work as a tutor expressed by their study participants, so was a desire to escape intensifying work demands in schools. What all these diverse tutors shared, however, was a considerable vulnerability for lacking pension and having no protection in cases of sickness. This put many at risk financially compared to mainstream school teachers (Holloway & Pimlott-Wilson, 2021).

Meanwhile, shadow education companies are usually interested in broadening the market and their share of it, with financial growth as the primary motive. As Bray (2021) demonstrates, the sector has succeeded in conquering new markets at a steady pace throughout the last few decades. Not all attempts are successful (Kany, 2021), and in these situations we can see a reminder that despite rhetoric claiming to spread the joy and benefits of learning, shadow education companies will put profit first. Yet, for some tutors and shadow education organizers, shadow education is a form of charity or supporting underprivileged communities (Bray, 2007; Aurini et al., 2013), and in these cases an effort is made to keep the service affordable. In Finland, there are some actors offering free "shadow coaching" preparatory courses whose purpose is to make preparatory courses accessible for higher education applicants who cannot afford commercial courses (Varjovalmennus, 2023). Holloway and Pimlott-Wilson (2021) detail a case from the United Kingdom where two tutors charge generally low rates and offer free lessons for those who cannot afford to pay, citing unwillingness to exacerbate inequality.

Stevenson and Baker (1992) found that shadow education participation is associated with higher socio-economic status of the student's family, even after they controlled for the characteristics of the individual student and their school. Socio-economic status predictably affects

the amount of private tutoring that an individual student typically receives (Bray, 2007; Bukowski, 2017) but it also affects the type of tutoring: home visits are usually the most expensive type (Kim & Jung, 2019). Still, many low-income households globally prioritize shadow education spending over other expenses (Bray & Kwo, 2013; Bukowski, 2017). In Finland, most popular preparatory courses are aimed at law, medicine, and economics applicants, majority of whom have parents with higher education backgrounds, as Jokila et al. (2021) point out. When analyzing these and education preparatory courses, they found that the prices varied from 0€ to 6590€, with average prices ranging from about 300€ to about 1500€. Money is a big stepping stone in Finnish higher education access (Kosunen, 2018).

4.2 Educational and social aspects

The power of shadow education reaches micro, meso, and macro levels of society and education. At a micro level, shadow education can equalize educational opportunity by providing extra support to disadvantaged students (Aurini et al., 2013). Tentative results from recent research indicate that some forms of shadow education have positive academic effects, but more research is needed (Byun & Baker, 2015). For example, the “cramming” type of shadow education may be detrimental to creative learning (Caillods, 2007; Bray, 2013), but Finnish university preparatory courses have at least been found to be linked with admissions (Ahola et al., 2016). This may materialize the potential that shadow education has as an alternate source of developing human capital (Aurini et al., 2013; Bray, 2007).

Unfortunately, time spent in shadow education can be taxing and decrease the time spent for non-schooling activities, with family, or resting (Bray, 2003, 2007). Furthermore, tutoring-heavy societies like Japan, Hong Kong and Taiwan are notorious for problems such as students’ depression and suicide (Bray, 2013). At the same time, research recognizes many positive effects: shadow education can build up students’ confidence, motivation and positive attitude towards studying and help develop self-regulated learning habits (Bray, 2007; Kim & Jung, 2019). Likewise, shadow education as an alternative to leisure time after school may provide an opportunity to make friends, or it may even guarantee more safety compared to alternative after-school environments (Bray, 2007; Aurini et al., 2013). Kim and Jung (2019) also point out that at least in some forms of shadow education, tutor-student relationships may become very trusting and open, making the tutor a role model, friend or otherwise important person in the student’s life.

There is not much known about how shadow education affects tutors, but teachers who feel restricted by the bureaucracy of public schools may jump ship and become tutors instead (Bray, 2021). Educators opting to work in shadow education may feel that it allows them to realize their passion and skill for pedagogy and teaching in the best way (Bray & Kwo, 2013; Kany, 2021). For mainstream teachers, shadow education's implications depend on their situation. It may lessen their workload as students have more support from other sources (Bray, 2007) but also create wide gaps within class groups. Additionally, if the teacher tutors after the school day, the effect is likely exhausting (Bray & Kwo, 2013).

At a meso level, shadow education's implications reach into mainstream schools. Formal education systems in some countries suffer from a pattern where most passionate and skilled educators consistently choose to work in shadow education, making recruitment challenging for mainstream schools (Bray & Kwo, 2013). Students who reach their learning objectives in shadow education may be inattentive, bored and disruptive in mainstream class (Bray, 2021), influencing not only pedagogical challenges but also social cohesion in schools. Shadow education can even distort the curriculum in some cases: for instance, in some places students are expected to supplement the mainstream education with private solutions (Bray, 2007; Aurini et al., 2013). Stevenson and Baker (1992) also recognized the modifying power of shadow education in their research about Japan, noting that certain mainstream high schools are integrating mock exams into teaching, following the example of private companies offering this service. Shadow education occasionally acts as a model for mainstream schools, just as the private sector in education field in general is granted the task of innovating education solutions (Kiesi, 2023).

At a macro level, shadow education acts as a sort of a mirror for mainstream education. Shadow education creates new measures for all education, and its status as market (and often unregulated) allows for flexibility and quick launch of new content and delivery in teaching (Bray, 2007). This makes it a potential vitalizing agent to education, as states endeavor to match shadow education's contributions (Baker, 2020). Even if a school system is relatively well-funded, parents or students may seek shadow education if the education does not meet their demands (Aurini et al., 2013; Bray, 2021, Byun et al., 2018). Bray (2007) notes that in this way, shadow education can act as an indicator of what some parts of society want and are willing to pay for. Shadow education can be criticized for discarding what is deemed irrelevant for passing examinations compared to the more rounded curriculum in mainstream schools (Aurini et al., 2013), but Bray (2007) ponders that the demands expressed through

shadow education could be heard as a wish to keep curriculum planners from becoming too idealistic.

Often, shadow education use stems from an understanding that in the ideal world, it would not be needed, but realistically competition and standardized, high-stakes examination necessitates shadow education use (Byun et al., 2018; Bukowski, 2017; Bray, 2021). It is known that shadow education reproduces socio-economic differences in a silently accepted manner (Kosunen et al., 2021), is societally divisive, and may contribute to racial inequalities (Bray, 2007) although the last point is shockingly rare topic of research with mostly surface-level ethnic difference analysis emerging (as an example, see Byun et al., 2018). From the viewpoint of societal advancement, human capital theory argues that individuals' success results in benefit for the whole society, but there is little proof of this (Ball & Youdell, 2008; Bray, 2013).

Lerch et al. (2022, p. 114) make sense of neoliberal education trends by contrasting “equal schooled personhoods” and “unequal educational stratification”. The equalizing effect of shadow education may be real for an individual person, but the social stratification promoted by shadow education creates more inequality. Enrich (2020) presents two ways to approach shadow education in relation to social justice. He explains that according to the “cross-national differences model,” differing factors in societies may enable shadow education to increase inequality, while the “social reproduction model” argues that by default, shadow education will reproduce social inequalities. Enrich (2020) finds more proof for the latter model in his study covering 63 societies, but notes that in less stratified societies and school systems, the reproduction of inequality is uncertain.

4.3 Policy responses to shadow education

Shadow education literature is unanimous: the phenomenon is growing and will do so (see for example Bray, 2010, Aurini et al., 2013; Baker, 2020; Bray, 2021; Christensen & Zhang, 2021). Whether this is good or bad is a more complicated question as previous sections have demonstrated, and policymakers around the world have struggled to make sense of the issue. Bray (2007) lists six approaches that governments can take with shadow education: a *laissez-faire* approach, monitoring without intervention, regulation and control, encouragement, a mixed approach, or prohibition. Bray has made numerous contributions to shadow education policy literature and acknowledged the challenges of it in many of his publications, but also explored policy options (for example Bray, 2003, 2007, 2010, 2021). For instance, he suggests a ban for

public sector teachers tutoring, either just their own students or any, depending on how adequate their pay is (Bray, 2021). Despite the growing body of literature to draw from, a *laissez-faire* approach is still a very popular policy, or more precisely, lack of a policy (Bray, 2021; Zhang & Bray, 2020; Bukowski, 2017). At the same time, there are new mixed approaches on the playing field that were difficult to imagine in the end of the 1990's when Bray (2007) observed possible policy avenues.

Mori & Baker (2010) ponder that as the value of mass education for all is cemented, shadow education becomes just one way to achieve it. They even observe an underlying idea in policy-making that some students may need shadow education to do well. Mori & Baker (2010) predict mass shadow education's acceptance and integration into "education itself" (p. 46), saying this will happen soon, in most places. Baker (2020) estimates that attempts to distinguish shadow education will be futile. Indeed, the current rising trend seems to be state subsidies that make shadow education accessible to those who are left behind in mainstream education (Byun et al., 2018). It is arguable whether this is a mixed approach, as government usually gains control over the business in these arrangements, or encouragement.

In Japan, shadow education industry has been governed and monitored by state actors since the 1980's (Mori & Baker, 2010; Stevenson & Baker, 1992). Unlike in Korea, Japan's government has not tried at any point to regulate the companies out of existence (Mori & Baker, 2010). On the contrary, it has harnessed shadow education for national goals of educational development. Japan is a model example of controlled decontrol as Ball & Youdell (2018) present it: government steers through monitoring, contracts and targets, not through traditional bureaucracy. Corporations and their competition are utilized to provide services that traditionally belong to the state. Japan's approach is somewhat in line with Bray's (2021) suggestions, as he warns against strict measures before thorough investigation of the national field, but ultimately speaks for at least monitoring and restricting. He argues that tutoring enterprises, including solo-entrepreneurs, ought to be registered, as this would enable tax revenue and addressing safety issues such as proof that tutors do not have criminal records of child abuse (Bray, 2021).

Bray recognizes the difficulty in regulating informal forms of shadow education, for example agreements between individual university students and parents (Bray, 2021). To create effective policies that address high consumer orientation towards shadow education, Bray (2007) and Bukowski (2017) highlight that the reason behind the demand must be understood first. Bray & Kwo (2013) suggest that key factor behind shadow education is social competition, rather than the earlier assumption, lack of educational equality. This statement is supported by Baker's

(2020) remark that Korea is a leading country in educational equality, but also in record-high popularity of shadow education. When the reason for shadow education's popularity is social competition, Bray (2007) offers seven avenues: 1) reduce economic differentials, 2) make education systems less elitist, 3) reform assessment systems, 4) encourage teachers to support slow learners, 5) ensure that the curriculum is not overloaded, 6) find ways to make mainstream classes more interesting, and 7) promote public awareness. Most of the actions are echoed in Entrich (2020) study, which concludes with a suggestion that educational equality is best addressed in policy by targeting differentiation between educational institutions, not shadow education.

Shadow education market's fast developments challenge policy makers to react quickly if they wish to respond, but when much of the phenomenon is hidden or sometimes intentionally ignored (Jokila et al., 2021), there is a significant risk of creating unwanted consequences. Even temporary situations may change the culture around private tutoring and have long-lasting effects. Examples include Sweden, where taxation relief policy regarding education at home gave rise to tutoring companies, which then continued successfully after the policy was changed (Christensen & Zhang, 2021; Bray, 2021) as well as Eastern European countries where teacher salaries fell after the Soviet Union's collapse and the resulting habit of teachers' tutoring as a side job remained even as economies strengthened (Bray & Kwo, 2013; Bray, 2021).

4.4 The case of Finland

Finland is an interesting case because our most prominent form of shadow education is simultaneously a literature classic case of university entrance preparation (Stevenson and Baker, 1992) and often omitted from major research since it does not target younger students (see for example Entrich, 2020; Byun et al., 2018). Shadow education manages to evade attention in Finland. To develop well-functioning policy and proactively manage shadow education, a public debate is needed (Bray, 2021). Currently the discourse around private sectors' involvement in education happens mainly in a limited circle of stakeholders, as articles by Kiesi (2023) and Seppänen et al. (2023) demonstrate.

The Finnish shadow education market at primary and lower secondary school levels is small, but it does exist. On the Internet this is demonstrated by the first search results for “yksityisopetus”, which is a Finnish translation for private tutoring. They include a website meant for advertisements from private tutors that can offer services at all school levels (Yksityisopetus, 2023), and the company Uplus has offered private teaching for all schooling levels since 2013

according to their website (Uplus, 2023). Entrich (2020) uses Finland as an example of a society where comprehensive schooling system is inclusive and GDP per capita is above average, so well-performing students do not have incentives to use shadow education. Shadow education in Finland, as in rest of the Nordics, is currently mostly remedial and does not serve status attainment motives (Entrich, 2020; Bukowski, 2017). Most governments have awoken to the reality of shadow education with reactive policies (Aurini et al., 2013) but in the light of the presented literature, Finland could take a proactive stance towards shadow education in comprehensive schooling level to avoid future problems and steer changes towards desired outcomes.

At the junction of secondary and tertiary education, proactive policies are too late (Entrich, 2020; Kosunen et al. (2021). University preparatory courses have been acknowledged since the early 2000's but have not been addressed in policy per se; the closest example would be the reform of higher education admission, say Jokila et al. (2021). As they explain, two important changes were made: in 2016, first-time applicants gained priority position, and in 2020, admissions through entrance examinations were reduced in favor of admissions based on matriculation examination. The main objective was to speed up the transition from secondary level to higher education, but a side objective was to lessen the importance of specific entrance examination preparatory courses (Jokila et al., 2021). However, some wonder if this will not simply push the preparation to happen earlier (Kosunen, 2018).

As discussed earlier, shadow education can affect mainstream education. Becoming accustomed to paying tuition fees for preparatory courses makes it easier for international higher education institutes to enter Finnish markets and charge tuition fees (Kosunen, 2018). Another effect of preparatory courses is that they normalize parallel systems of education, questioning the idea of public education's adequacy. A colloquial saying "work smarter, not harder" may be replaced with ideals like Korean "education fever" where students and parents look for more and more education, filling young people's days with studying (Baker, 2020).

How exactly shadow education will impact Finnish lower levels of schooling remains to be seen. According to Bray (2007) and Kim & Jung (2019), Kitamura (1986) found that the Japanese *juku*, private tutoring institutes, make it possible for formal school to maintain functions guided by the values of egalitarianism and uniformity. There is a chance that the Finnish shadow education develops in similar fashion. The comprehensive education can build on the curricular values of equality, well-being and responsible citizenship and so on, while shadow education can offer students ways to gain a more neoliberal definition of success, like admission in the

competitive entrance process to the higher education. When the mainstream schools take ultimate responsibility for the students' education, companies can focus on what they see as avenues to profit (Kiesi, 2023).

According to Kiesi (2023), language of public private partnerships shifts attention away from privatizing public services, which has a negative reputation in Finland. It is possible that as an attempt to trim educational spending on the government's side, some services currently offered by public schools will be left in the private sector's hands. With a growing shadow, problems associated with it grow too, and many issues are hard to conceive yet. An enlightening example is the labor market. Teachers' working conditions under privatized education projects are a recognized cause for concern in Finland (Kiesi, 2023). Tutors' position is different from teachers and may be even more problematic. In many European countries, self-employed people in the tutoring business have a riskier financial position: involuntary part-time work, lower income, and worse position with loans (Holloway and Pimlott-Wilson, 2021). At the same time, teaching work shifts onto the shoulders of pedagogically unqualified tutors, whose main qualifier as a facilitator of learning is often thought to be that they have passed the level of education that the tutee is going through (Bray & Kobakhidze, 2014). If this type of tutoring becomes more common on the side of Finnish comprehensive education, the professionalism of teachers may lose its appreciation, as teaching is simplified to be a transfer of information from someone more knowledgeable to the student (Bray, 2021).

Seppänen et al. (2023) discuss global companies reaching into Finnish education markets, calling more attention to education business and how its actors are connected to policy-making. These developments "challenge democracy and in Finland they threaten schooling as public service and practice" (Seppänen et al., 2023, p. 149). The analysis of the current situation is applicable to shadow education. Kiesi (2023) explains that as the private sector becomes more involved in education, governance disperses to networks and through them, companies, that do not have the same commitment to function transparently and be accountable to the public as the democratic state does. As an example of equality concern that is familiar in Finland and does not guide shadow education companies, Jokila et al. (2021) note geographical injustice: preparatory course companies focus on marketing and providing services in urban areas, as opposed to public schooling that is guaranteed no matter where the student lives.

5. Conclusion

In this bachelor's thesis, I have reviewed shadow education literature and analyzed it to consider implications for the Finnish society and education. In order to keep the global discourse consistent, we need to look at every system and their shadows as distinct, although interconnected realities. Shadow education has its roots in East-Asia, but as a modern global phenomenon, it has been encouraged by the Western ideology of neoliberalism and the accompanying privatization, marketization and commercialization of education. It takes many forms and is constantly evolving, which causes challenges for policy-making, but also makes it an interesting contributor to the field of education. Multidisciplinary research is an important future area of exploration, and the line between public and private should not limit education research (Zhang & Bray, 2020; Baker, 2020).

The most important message that arose from this literature review concerning Finnish education and society is that change can and likely will come on a scale that may seem unrealistic today. Shadow education follows the overall expansion of education: massification and institutionalization are expected directions (Mori & Baker, 2010). Kiesi (2023) advises policy-makers to carefully consider how private actors influence public education and keep transparency in mind. When states withdraw from education in waves of neoliberalism and leave room for private actors and their interest groups, individuals need to take more responsibility since education's significance in society is in no way diminishing (Kiesi, 2023; Lerch et al., 2022; Doherty & Dooley, 2018).

State reactions to shadow education enterprise shed light on how committed they are to fighting inequality (Bray, 2021). Instead of only treating the "symptom" of a shadow, enough funding should be directed to mainstream schooling (Entrich, 2020). The social justice perspective is also discussed by Bray & Kwo (2013) who contrast increasing shadow education with the nigh-universally accepted Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and its statement that education shall be free of charge at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Until now, the Finnish preparatory course business has focused just on the other side of the declaration, but equality concerns have been voiced (Jokila et al., 2021; Kosunen et al., 2021) and indirect influences can be expected to materialize at lower, more fundamental stages of education. Preparatory courses for matriculation exams at the end of upper secondary school are already offered (Mafy, 2023; Valmennuskeskus, 2023).

Oftentimes, privatization of education is a shared trend across other state welfare services like social and health services, note Ball & Youdell (2008). Privatization of education may not attract attention from the media or public due to ignorance of its consequences, or the population having grown accustomed to the private sector's participation in organizing welfare (Ball & Youdell, 2008). In Finland, privatization of healthcare has made the headlines, but the same cannot be said about the education sector (Kiesi, 2023). Through this bachelor's thesis, I hope to raise awareness and discussion around the topic of privatization and its forms. Private solutions are not self-evidently more effective than public systems, as pointed out by Helkama's (2015) example that Finnish students' education requires significantly less money and time but is more effective than the system in the United States of America.

While I have tried to choose a wide selection of sources and interpret them with an open mind, it is undeniable that this narrative literature review produces a result that is somewhat suggestive or leading, as is typical (Salminen, 2011). This thesis hopes to serve primarily as a conversation starter, since my research skills are still at a beginner level and the limitations of a bachelor's thesis do not allow for extensive work with the topic. Other than possible misinterpretations of the literature due to my inexperience, a reliability issue here is the lack of empirical data concerning Finnish shadow education as well as theoretical frameworks created specifically the Finnish system in mind. For informing policy or drawing steadier conclusions, more rigorous and deeper research is of course required. My main ethical concern is related to avoiding oversimplifications and exaggerations in the narrative I present, since any new and sensitive topic in public discourse easily veers to black and white thinking because of how few viewpoints have been voiced. Still, simply the use of shadow education as the core term and the resulting critical approach may cause the phenomenon to come across here as more negative than literature confidently indicates. As for other ethical concerns, in this thesis I have not gathered data myself, only reviewed existing literature, so it is unlikely that any person experiences harm, privacy is threatened, or other such concerns materialize.

Recent contributors to the preparatory course discourse in Finland are important and I agree with their ambitions for more research on that topic (see for example Jokila et al., 2021; Kosunen et al., 2021). Comprehensive education in Finland is value-wise so far from systems where shadow education is readily used governmentally to subsidize mainstream education that it would also be interesting to analyze why preparatory courses are fairly accepted in Finland. However, I would hope to see research on elementary and lower secondary school level shadow education, for example investigations into parental readiness and motives to purchase such services. Quantitative mapping of the actual situation around the use of shadow education other

than preparatory courses is also a necessary step at some point. In my master's thesis, I hope to continue exploring shadow education. The scope of a bachelor's thesis left plenty of interesting literature on the topic unread, which is also a limitation of my analysis here, so I hope to find an interesting topic for my master's thesis from the yet-unexplored literature.

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