



Doherty, C. and Dooley, K. (2017) Responsibilising parents: the nudge towards shadow tutoring. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*,(doi:[10.1080/01425692.2017.1377600](https://doi.org/10.1080/01425692.2017.1377600))

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Deposited on: 11 September 2017

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Responsibilising parents: the nudge towards shadow tutoring

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Acknowledgement: This research was funded by a Discovery Grant from the Australian Research Council (Grant DP160100848).

ABSTRACT: This paper considers moral agendas projected on to parents that mobilize them to supplement school literacy education with private tutoring. The theoretical frame draws on the concepts of responsabilisation as emerging market-embedded morality, ‘nudge’ social policies, edu-business and hidden privatisation in education. This framing is applied to two empirical moments: firstly, debates around the Australian government’s ‘Tutorial Voucher Initiative’ of 2004; and secondly, tutoring advertisements and items in school newsletters collected early 2016. In the first moment, parents were somewhat reluctant to take up free supplementary tutoring; in the second, private literacy tutoring is increasingly normalised and legitimated as parents are nudged to supplement the work of the school.

Keywords: nudge policy, shadow education, tutoring, responsabilisation

Introduction - new moral scripts

Under strategies to nurture competitive conditions in the markets constructed for schooling in many national settings, consumer choice has been elevated over expert knowledge systems to serve as the arbiter of quality. New moral scripts have emerged around what constitutes the ‘good’ teacher (Connell, 2009), the self-managing principal (Keddie, 2015), the enterprising student (Down, 2009), and the citizen-consumer parent (Campbell, Proctor, & Sherington, 2009). In these reimagined normative scripts ‘a double movement of autonomization and responsabilization’ is evident in the way the state’s coercive power has been replaced with a more diffuse ‘ethico-politics’ (Rose, 2004, p. 174,192). This adjusts the moral order and

shifts the burden of responsibility, security and risk management from the state to the individual consumer, in this case, the parent.

The concept of responsabilisation has been defined as:

self-government that requires individuals to make choices ... 'Choice' assumes a much wider role under neoliberalism: It is not simply 'consumer sovereignty' but rather a moralization and responsabilization, a regulated transfer of choice-making responsibility from the state to the individual in the social market. (Peters, 2005, p. 130)

Responsibilisation entails 'a call for action; an interpellation which constructs and assumes a moral agency and certain dispositions to social action' (Shamir, 2008, p.4), reflexivity and willingness to bear the consequences of one's actions. There is a gradual fusion between market and moral logics underway in the moralization of markets 'which essentially grounds the very notion of moral duty within the rationality of the market' (Shamir, 2008, p. 4).

Neoliberalism thereby morally enlists and mobilises autonomous individuals in the pursuit of socially valued goals such as literacy performance, but on condition they do so under their own steam, at their own cost, and at their own risk. With this has come a 'new prudentialism' (Peters, 2005) whereby the citizen-consumer pursues strategies of self-investment that are informed by a calculative 'actuarial rationality' that weighs benefit against cost and risk. The prudential disposition encourages insurance strategies and demand for products that help manage anxieties, minimise risk and maximise benefit.

What some view as 'insurance' has been construed in the field of mothering studies as the intense, sustained and gendered work of status safeguarding. This involves 'vigilant labor ... doing everything possible to ensure that a child's future social and economic status in a competitive marketplace is sustained or improved – in essence, weaving an individualized

safety net' (Milke & Warner, 2014, p. 66). Milke and Warner argue this new mode of intensive mothering cuts across US social classes, due to the erosion of social safety nets and increased competition for favourable life chances under neoliberal conditions: 'there are no guarantees for the intergenerational transfer of status' (2014, p. 71). To safeguard academic status, mothers are 'preoccupied with high stakes reading and math grades and test scores' (p. 77). They monitor teachers, homework and results at every juncture to plan optimal placements, investments and routes in a 'decades-long project' (p. 69). In short, mothers increasingly take up the moral responsibility for assuring children's academic achievement. In this moral climate, private tutoring is booming.

In this paper, we look at how private literacy tutoring, as an insurance strategy for the prudential parent, has become more thinkable and doable in recent years, in part through government efforts. We argue a project of responsabilisation is becoming increasingly evident in the field of literacy education in first world economies. The No Child Left Behind Act in the US included a section explicitly outlining 'the shared responsibilities of educators and families for children's learning and success in school' (Epstein, 2005, p. 180). Similarly, in the UK, Torrance notes a shift in the logic in responsibility for assessment results: '(Lack of) responsibility has replaced (lack of) intelligence as the key explanatory variable in educational success and failure' (Torrance, 2015, p.7). Here we trace the parallel shift in Australia.

The paper proceeds in five sections. First, international and local research documenting the growing market in private tutoring is reviewed to highlight both the moral panics protesting the extent of tutoring, and the relentless growth of the phenomenon. Second, a theoretical frame around nudge policies and edu-business is developed to augment the concepts of responsabilisation and safeguarding. In the third and fourth sections, two historical snapshots

are presented. The first draws on parliamentary debates to describe Australia's brief experiment with tutoring vouchers for literacy remediation. The second draws on advertisements in school newsletters collected early 2016, to demonstrate how tutoring businesses are now actively promoted and naturalised at the parent/school interface. The paper concludes with reflection on implications of these developments for a national testing program that is supposed to measure school quality.

Literature review – shadow market tensions

Across the world, there is evidence of rapid growth in private tutoring (Bray & Kwo, 2013). Concern that this development is undermining the meritocratic logic and equity principles of education systems has prompted international research. The term 'shadow education' is widely used in this literature to characterise the tutoring market: 'Like a shadow it generally goes unnoticed and takes the shape of formal schooling in both purpose and curricula' (Buchman, Condrón, & Roscigno, 2010, p. 439). This term equally serves our study in an Australian context where private tutoring is present but typically ignored, and takes its form from the more visible curriculum and assessment of official schooling.

Mori and Baker (2010) trace the history of shadow education from a niche as a 'somewhat exotic cultural practice limited to East Asian nations' (p. 37) to a worldwide normative trend: 'there is a symbiotic relationship between the schooled society and shadow education; as the former intensifies, the logic of the latter expands and heads towards a universal practice' (p. 40). They highlight the example of the global spread of the Japanese Kumon method, and Japanese governments' capitulation over time from attempts to control shadow education, to officially legitimating partnerships between shadow education providers and schools. Bray and Kwo's (2013) global scan suggests that 'the scale of tutoring reflects the nature of social competition rather than absolute levels of educational quality' (p. 488). The international

literature thus offers two broad social explanations of the shadow market phenomenon – a loss of confidence in mainstream education, and an escalation of academic competition – social trends that perhaps exacerbate each other. The literature then makes a finer distinction between the phenomenon of increased uptake of shadow education in ‘high intensity’ markets such as Korea, China and Japan, and ‘low intensity’ markets such as the US, Canada, Europe and Australia (Aurini, Davies, & Dierkes, 2013; Bray, Mazawi, & Sultana, 2013).

High intensity settings in East and South Asia have a long history of private tutoring for exam preparation. The use of afterhours ‘cram’ schools is widespread, despite the burden on family budgets (Harnisch, 1994) and attempts by governments to curtail its encroachment on childhood (Dawson, 2010). Aslam and Atherton (2014) conducted a massive survey of 900 villages in north India and Pakistan, to gain some measure of the uptake of private tutoring in these settings. They report that 16% of school-aged children surveyed in Pakistan and 20% of those in India paid for extra tutoring, despite the cost for poor families. They question both the equity of access to this supplementary education, and the distortion of claims by private schools of achieving the improved outcomes. Dawson (2010) consider the relationship between schooling and shadow education in East Asia to be ‘parasitic’ rather than ‘symbiotic’, given the way it ‘feeds off the insecurity of parents and students who lose faith in formal education systems’ (p. 15). Koh’s (2014) study in Hong Kong similarly describes the ‘magic’ promised in hyped advertising that cultivates ‘a register of emotions, ranging from inadequacy to fear, which is what tutorial centres capitalise on to enlarge their market’ (p. 807).

In low intensity markets, the emergence of shadow education, its social distribution and its systemic effects can no longer be ignored. Different studies reveal different parts of the picture. Using data from the National Education Longitudinal Study, Buchman, Condrón and

Roscigno (2010) analysed the shadow market in US college-entrance test preparation.

Though the national Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) purports to require no preparation, they describe firstly a deep market of goods and services stratified by cost and effect, then which racial/ethnic groups engage with which forms of support:

While more students of all backgrounds may be using some form of test preparation now, it is also likely that students from advantaged families are engaging in ever more rigorous, longer-term, and more expensive forms of test preparation in the hope of staying ahead in the competition for admission to selective colleges and universities.

(p. 455)

In their analysis of the Canadian shadow market, Davies and Aurini (2006) describe the historical trend away from the cottage industry of remedial tutoring, to 'a much tougher business orientation' (p. 126) with US franchises and online services reaching into Canada. They highlight the growing use of standardized products in this market to control product delivery and reduce the need for qualified staff, and the trend to create and market services to a younger pre-school clientele to fill their school hour slots. They suggest that private tutoring has become attractive 'for those who can't afford private schooling' (p.128).

In Central Asia, post-Soviet states undergoing educational reform have been reluctant to recognize the burgeoning shadow market in private academic tutoring, given its presence serves as a critique of the socialist ideal of egalitarian schooling (Silova, 2009). Silova's quantitative study documents a reappraisal revealing a tension between socialist values and new consumer freedoms, and the corrupt practice of teachers privately tutoring their own students to supplement their limited incomes (also Dawson, 2010, re Cambodia). Silova argues that the state of the shadow market 'helps to determine the "health" of mainstream education systems' (p. 168). In post-Soviet nations, Silova thus interprets the rapid growth in

shadow education as ‘evidence of a dramatic crisis of confidence in mainstream schooling’ (p.169).

In the low intensity context of Australia, more explicit consideration of the nature, claims and distribution of shadow education is starting to surface. Noting the proliferation of coaching colleges in Sydney, Kenny and Faunce (2004) surveyed the student population of an ethnically diverse non-selective girls’ school, correlating scores in academic test, university entrance and selection tests with ‘coaching intensity’ and the type of coaching pursued. They surveyed both parents and students, but noted that ‘parents sometimes deny that their children are being coached, particularly for scholarship and entrance examinations’ (p. 120). This intriguing observation suggests a degree of covert strategy or shame attached to tutoring at the time. Sixty-five per cent of the students reported participating in private tutoring. Using the student data, this study documented bifurcated motives (tutoring for the underperforming and tutoring for the hypercompetitive) and their different outcomes.

Sriprakash, Proctor and Hu (2016) report on a small interview study in Sydney, Australia, with six middle class parents of Chinese-migrant background. The interviews explored the parents’ pedagogic preferences behind their purchase of private tutoring that was ‘for competitive school examination success, rather than what might be seen as broader or more general learning or academic development’ (p. 428). This sample’s motives thus accord with the hypercompetitive tutoring in Kenny and Faunce’s (2004) study. Sriprakash, Proctor and Hu situate their participants’ preference for didactic ‘visible’ pedagogy in broader controversies dignified in local media including: a general discomfort with intensely competitive ‘tiger’ parenting and its script for childhood; a fear of the ‘ethnicization’ of academic achievement; and mounting tension between progressive student-centred pedagogies and standardised testing regimes. In their interview accounts the parents

expressed concern about ‘a lack of rigour, homework and examination practice’ (p. 433) in schooling. This resonates with both Silova’s (2009) argument about the erosion of trust of mainstream schooling, and Bray and Kwo’s (2013) argument about the escalation of social competition. By the parents’ report, their turn to the shadow market attracted disapproval from their children’s teachers.

Davis’s (2013) doctoral research involved five case studies of ‘bespoke’ education enterprises in Western Australia, interviewing tutors, parents and children engaged with each provider. Davis employs Bourdieu’s concept of ‘educational legitimacy’ indicated by ‘an educator claiming the authority to teach’ (p. 196). In line with Silova’s (2009) observation of how the shadow economy thrives when confidence in mainstream schooling falls, Davis suggests such legitimacy has been eroded under contemporary testing and privatization trends.

This last point demands more attention to the bigger picture and contextual conditions stoking the anxieties and strategies behind shadow market investments. As backdrop, Lingard, Thompson and Sellar (2016) offer an overview of the testing programs now embedded in Australian schooling systems, in particular the National Assessment Plan – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) which involves standardised testing of all students in Years 3, 5, 7, and 9. The tests have promoted ‘the datafication of schooling’ (p. 2) enabled by ‘data infrastructure that enables test results to be linked to other administrative data’ (p. 3). The scale of such interoperability is set to escalate with the move to computer adapted testing, and the prospect of articulating national and international datasets (Thompson, 2016). Thompson (2016) argues that these practices of calculative abstraction and the promise of predictive profiling will intensify and control institutional life, ‘providing a complete,

continuous and commensurate profile of each learner, each classroom, teacher, and each school' (p.6).

As such calculative 'abstraction of education' (Thompson, 2016, p.4) gathers pace, bald test scores carry greater consequences for students, teachers, principals, schools and systems. The production of authoritative scores for comparative purposes at different scales have created 'perverse' systemic effects (Lingard & Sellar, 2013), new emotional currents (Sellar 2015), and new uses for such data (Klenowski, 2016). Of most interest here, anecdotal evidence suggests that students are being asked to supply NAPLAN results at enrolment interviews with private schools. The status-guarding parent will be alert to these second-order uses and implications of NAPLAN scores, and prey to anxieties about their children's performance under such logic. Their project becomes one of maximising test scores.

From this brief review of recent research, the shadow market emerges as the global phenomenon of an increasingly sophisticated, for-profit, para-education industry that is actively generating, as well as responding to, anxieties associated with schooling achievement to cultivate a wider market. The vitality of the shadow economy in particular settings is understood to be related to the loss of public confidence in the schooling sector and/or the competitiveness of the higher education sector and credentialed labour market. Current testing programs and 'choice' agendas are fanning both these trends. The industry services two motives – to remediate the disadvantaged learner, and to prime the hypercompetitive advantaged learner. Further, the presence and activity of a shadow market is not a benign adjunct to formal schooling. Rather there is concern about its backwash effect on school pedagogy, as well as the inequity of access to its apparent forms of advantage. Across the literature, there is a sense that the horse has already bolted and that rising educational stakes will only continue to drive further demand for competitive edge. As more

people invest in this affordance, there will be commensurate pressure on others to follow.

Rather than curtailing or suppressing the shadow market, the policy problem becomes how to manage it, mitigate its inequities and understand its contribution.

Theoretical framing – nudging towards edu-business

While the research to date has empirically tracked growth and documented local particularities and trends, there has been little theoretical elaboration of the phenomenon and its catalytic conditions. As outlined above, this paper is interested in insurance products offered to the proactive ‘status safeguarding’ parent in the shadow market to improve student performance in literacy achievement. More particularly, we are interested in the work of governments and schools to encourage the uptake of such insurance strategies in a delicate game of responsabilisation and ‘ethico-politics’ (Rose, 2004). In this section, we draw on the concepts of ‘edu-business’, ‘hidden privatization’ and ‘nudge’ policy to conceptualise this moralized market.

The term ‘edu-business’ (Ball, 2012) has been coined to represent the agents and enterprises behind the incremental privatization of education sectors. Where there was previously an impermeable barrier around the service of schooling, the public sector in particular, to protect it from the play of market forces and profit motive, this protection has been weakened and penetrated by a growing number of edu-businesses supplying goods and services for profit within schooling. Ball and Youdell (2008) argue that there is a process of hidden privatization in public education systems that is currently re-working the idea of the provider state into ‘the state as a market-maker’ (p. 70), re-interpreting education as an ‘object of profit’ (p. 12), and ‘re-agenting’ (p. 70) the field with new players. Burch (2009) offers an account of these processes in U.S. settings. Hidden privatization legitimates new individualised motives and opportunistic tactics in what was previously the provision of a

collective public good. By Ball and Youdell's (2008) analysis, the privatization of public education as a 'policy tool' (p.12) is progressing on two fronts: the 'endogenous' being the transformation of public sector practices along the values, practices and rhetoric of private enterprise; and the 'exogenous' being the creep of for-profit enterprises into the daily services of schools. However the 'parasitic' or 'symbiotic' shadow market does not really fit either of these categories, being neither in nor of education systems. Rather it is a privatization of educational services in a hidden or tacit 'public private partnership' that works to both parties' mutual benefit: for-profit tutoring may increase student achievement and with this, the school's performance as well.

The concept of 'nudge' policy comes from behavioural economics. It has recently been taken up in first world liberal democracies as conscious design to influence decisions made by private clients or public citizens in socially desirable directions without resorting to heavy-handed governance (John et al., 2011; Thaler & Sunstein, 2009). This revision of the rational choice theory underpinning neoliberal choice policies 'implies a change in the game, a change in the ends and the means of the governance of the subject within the neoliberal regime' (Bradbury, McGimpsey, & Santori, 2013, p. 250). At heart, this is social policy achieved by priming and prompting individual choice.

A nudge is defined as 'any aspect of the choice architecture that alters people's behaviour in a predictable way without forbidding any options or significantly changing their economic incentives' (Thaler & Sunstein, 2009, p. 6), that is, 'encouraging them to take – and to own – better decisions' (John et al., 2011, p. 2). Proponents of this 'libertarian paternalism' (Thaler & Sunstein, 2009, p. 4) seek to have it both ways: 'By properly deploying both incentives and nudges, we can improve our ability to improve people's lives, and help solve many of society's major problems, and we can do so while still insisting on everyone's freedom to

choose' (p.8). Thaler and Sunstein devote a chapter of their bestseller to school choice as a domain where nudge policies and strategies could help parents make 'better' choices for their children and improve outcomes for both individuals and systems. Their argument is premised on unapologetic open market logic referencing voucher schemes, with the caveat that not all parents will make 'good' decisions and therefore need to be nudged towards better choices. Bradbury et al. (2013) offer further examples of how nudge policies have been utilised in UK education and youth service sectors as a correction on earlier neoliberal faith in rational decision-making.

Our purpose here is to neither support nor deride 'nudge' policies, but rather to recognise the contemporary interest in more subtle strategies and layers of influence, and how such strategies might act as a catalyst endorsing and encouraging shadow market investments by the responsabilised parent. We now move to describe two empirical moments, 12 years apart, to trace the shift in the moral climate around private tutoring in Australia, and how parents are now being nudged towards the market.

First historical moment – the Tutorial Voucher Initiative

Australia is one of several countries in which governments have used public funds to intervene in shadow education markets in the interest of students who are low achieving and/or living in poverty. In high intensity countries, such as Singapore, Korea, Japan and Malaysia, measures for impoverished families have included supplementary after-school and e-learning programs, and vouchers for private tutoring (e.g., Hassan & Rasiah, 2011; Mori, 2013). In low intensity countries such as Australia, England and the U.S., governments variously encouraged schools and families to engage with private tutoring in literacy and numeracy for low achieving students during the 2000s (Watson, 2008). Vouchers were a feature of the Supplemental Education Services (SES) provisions of the 2001 *No Child Left*

Behind (NCLB) re-authorisation of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (1965) in the U.S., and of a series of remedial provisions for some of the students who did not reach the NAPLAN benchmark in Australia.

The SES mandate of NCLB brought together two forms of supplementary education: private tutoring which had been historically accessible to more affluent families, and publically-funded measures for at-risk students affected by poverty (Heinrich, Meyer & Whitten, 2010). Under NCLB, school districts and schools which did not meet certain annual yearly progress targets were required to designate a set proportion of their Title 1 funding for SES delivery by private or other providers. The measure was a political compromise: it was supported on one hand by tutoring industry and political advocates of school vouchers, and on the other by politicians committed to market-based reforms as the means to public sector reform (Mori, 2013). Poor take-up by parents was one of the many problems of the SES mandate in addition to the waiver options that were eventually put in place being heavily subscribed (Sunderman, 2006; Burch, 2009; Koyama, 2010; Mori, 2013). Parental lack of interest in the program was attributed to U.S. cultural norms, amongst other things. Nonetheless, the SES experiment seemed a boon for large private tutoring companies in particular (Koyama, 2010; Mori, 2013). The 2015 re-authorisation of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, *Every Student Succeeds*, introduced greater flexibility into provision for at risk-students, maintaining tutoring as but one of several ‘alternative supports’. It has been argued that the SES mandate effectively normalised private academic tutoring in the U.S. schooling system. SES has been described as an instance of the ‘new privatisation’ of public-private partnerships in which the private sector takes over service delivery while the government takes on contract management (Burch, 2009).

There are strong resonances between the Australian experience of vouchers for private tutoring and the SES mandate. In late 2004, Australia's Coalition Federal government legislated the 'Tutorial Voucher Initiative' (TVI, also referred to as the 'Tutorial Credit Initiative'), a pilot scheme funding remedial tutoring for children who did not meet the 2003 National Year 3 Benchmark for literacy on the state literacy tests (the precursor to NAPLAN tests). Hansard records of parliamentary debates give some sense of the context in which this initiative arose and how it was received.

The TVI proposal was legislated in the *States Grants (Primary and Secondary Education Assistance) Legislation Amendment Bill 2004* which was debated alongside the Second Reading of the *Schools Assistance (Learning Together – Achievement through Choice and Opportunity) Bill 2004*. These bills enabled Commonwealth grants to state education systems and the non-government sectors of Catholic and independent schools, thus any delay in their passing would have had serious consequences across the nation's schools. While funding for these grants had been built into the 2004 budget earlier in the year, this second reading was delayed till December 2004, just weeks before a general election. The TVI allocated AU\$6.8 million for a one year pilot program to distribute \$700 vouchers to parents whose children did not achieve the Year 3 minimum national reading benchmark in 2004, to help them purchase tutoring for their child. This money and service was to be managed by a broker in each state, appointed through a tender process.

In the parliamentary debates, opposition party members acknowledged that they would not hinder the passage of the laws, given their crucial funding of schools. However, Labor members of the opposition expressed serious reservations about aspects of the Bills, in particular the Government's new socio-economic modelling that adjusted funding formulae in favour of richer independent schools. Within this larger critique of underfunding

disadvantaged schools, the TVI was considered by some (for example, Mr Sidebottom MP, Member for Braddon, House of Representatives Hansard, 5 August 2004, p. 32270) to be merely an opportunistic ploy, a political comeback to the Read Aloud Australia policy proposed by the then Opposition Leader, Mark Latham. Both major parties were thus, at this time, agitating and preparing political strategies around literacy achievement and an associated moral panic in the media (see Snyder, 2008).

The opposition at the time argued that the TVI money would be better spent in schools, where there was credentialed expertise and ongoing curricular connections, for example:

It is not surprising that many educators are sceptical of the initiative and many believe that the money would be better spent on existing remedial reading programs, such as Reading Recovery, which is integrated into a student's total learning program. (Julia Irwin, MP, Member for Fowler, 5 August 2004, House of Representatives Hansard, page 32226).

The decision to deliver funding to individual students rather than to school programs was questioned:

Rather than being individualised, the focus should be more directly on the areas and students with greatest need. ... What is the situation for schools and principals with regard to that? What they say is pretty simple. They say that they would rather that the funding go directly to them than that it cut across schools' own remedial programs ... to put it where it is most effective: with the teachers and programs that are trying to remediate the problem in the first place. (Michael Hatton, MP, Member for Blaxland, 1 December 2004, House of Representatives Hansard, page 26).

Doubts were raised about the long term impact and uptake of such individualised assistance.

Other comments were concerned about the funds lost to brokerage, and the exposure of families to further market pressures:

Can we assume that 10 hours of tuition will bring all students up to the national benchmark? What happens if they do not reach that benchmark after 10 hours of tuition? Will their parents be pressured to pay for additional tuition? Will brokers be allowed to up-sell other programs to parents? We are entering a very grey area and there are many unanswered questions. (Julia Irwin, MP, Member for Fowler, House of Representatives Hansard, 5 August 2004, page 32226).

More generally, there was a discomfort with the concept of ‘voucher’ and what it might herald:

When I first saw the word ‘voucher’, I immediately thought of this initiative as a thin end of a wedge to apply voucher funding on a much wider basis, and that is a very big worry. (Julia Irwin, MP, Member for Fowler, House of Representatives Hansard, 5 August 2004, page 32226)

The real fear is that these are the first steps – and I do not believe this is an exaggeration – towards the privatisation of our public education system. What are we going to have next: voucher systems for numeracy and civics? ... The voucher proposal is a denigration of all our schools and the hardworking teachers within them. ... So if you want to put your money somewhere, Minister, you should put it into the schools instead of into the grandstanding voucher system that has been introduced, with very little accountability to it. (Sid Sidebottom MP, Member for Braddon, House of Representatives Hansard, 5 August 2004, p. 32270).

The idea of a voucher at this time was politically loaded and contentious. It flagged the Conservatives' discourse promoting 'school choice' as indicated in the associated Act's title, and their policy position which resonated with the charter school movement underway in the U.S. As the more radical pole of choice policy, the concept of the voucher places the power of choice in the hands of the autonomous consumer, rather than the producer or the expert. The major political parties were thus lined up in opposition: one championing the expertise of the school and teacher; the other championing the right of parents 'who want to make sacrifices for the education of their children' (Dr Brendan Nelson, MP, Member for Bradfield, then Minister for Education, Science and Training, House of Representatives Hansard, 1 December 2004, page 126). The voucher offered a mechanism to mobilise both parents and the private sector in this service domain. It was also a mechanism for directing Commonwealth funding away from state education systems, to the nascent private sector in shadow education.

The TVI pilot went into operation ahead of schedule. The appointed brokers included a mix of Education Departments for NSW and SA, a private company based in Sydney for Queensland and Victoria, a private provider headed by an academic for ACT, and a Group Training enterprise for WA. The Tasmanian government initially chose not to tender as broker for the state's public school students, and therefore missed out on some of the available funding. Meanwhile, the Australian Tutoring Association, a national representative body, was formed in March 2005. It lobbied for more interstate parity, more hours per student in the scheme and more quality controls on the selection of tutors.

The funding allocated in the pilot year was later extended given the poor uptake of vouchers by those deemed eligible, and the difficulties and delays in contacting eligible families

(Watson, 2008). Labor Senator Penny Wong (Senate Hansard, 27 March 2006, p. 80) was disparaging of the outcomes of the private broker model:

Answers to questions at Senate estimates revealed a nationwide take-up rate of 36 per cent by mid-November last year. However a state-by-state analysis of the figure shows a much poorer performance on the part of commercial brokers for this program, particularly in comparison to the performance of school authorities. For instance, state education departments in New South Wales, South Australia and Tasmania topped the table of take-up rates, ranging up to 69 per cent of eligible students. The most notable failure of this program is the performance of a private company... Figures provided by DEST show that just 656 of 5,717 eligible Victorian students received any help through the tutorial vouchers program, only 12 per cent of eligible students... [Company] also charged a \$250 administration fee, so the few students in Victoria who actually received any tutoring at all only got \$450 of the value of their \$700 vouchers.

Despite poor uptake, problematic administration and poor evaluation processes (Watson, 2008), the precedent was established and tutoring vouchers were extended to students in Years 5 and 7 under the Liberal government's Even Start National Tuition Program in 2007, then continued in a revised, more coordinated form under Labor in 2008, before being discontinued in 2009. Funds were then re-directed into Smarter Schools National Partnerships, a more flexible devolution which vested expectations of improved achievement in schools. Since then, the tutoring industry has continued to advocate for a return to publicly funded private tutoring, citing the TVI and the SES, and parallel programs in South Africa, Malaysia and Britain as precedents (e.g., ATA, 2014, 2015). The industry has also sought to

work through charities to mitigate inequalities by providing scholarships for private tutoring to low achieving students affected by poverty.

For the purposes of this analysis, the reluctance of both education systems and parents of students performing below the benchmark to engage with this voucher scheme at this point in time is telling. It speaks to an early experimental phase in processes of public sector privatisation, where both government and private sector parties were learning how they might articulate and some parties were suspicious of private enterprise involvement. The arguments made by the Opposition, that the tutoring function would be better and more efficiently handled in the context of the school, were somewhat vindicated in the better uptake under departmental brokerage. With the lens of the operative 'ethico-politics' (Rose, 2004, p. 192), this historical moment could be characterised as being more comfortable vesting moral responsibility for literacy achievement/remediation in the institution of schooling than in the shadow market. The voucher initiative was a clunky experiment in shifting such responsibility, but the parents targeted so explicitly by the strategy were not convinced.

Second historical moment – the newsletter interface

We now jump ahead 12 years to consider the visibility of private tutoring marketing in the contemporary parent/school interface, as evidence of modes of tacit legitimation that might 'nudge' parents to make this responsible choice. Across the first four school months of 2016, we monitored 18 schools newsletters available online from a sample of Queensland schools selected to achieve a representative spread of socio-economic dis/advantage, rural/urban and degrees of ethnic mix. Our rationale behind the selection of these clusters of Queensland schools was pragmatic, purposeful and strategic. The online newsletters were collected in a broader media sweep. The pragmatics of proximity allowed us to collect environmental print, local newspapers, as well as relevant parenting web sites, and monitor local radio and

television over the sampling period. The selection of schools was purposeful to establish context for the next interview phase in the research project within affordable spatial reach. The selection of Queensland was also strategic, testing the strength of tutoring practices outside the more extreme case of the heated market in Sydney that has attracted so much media attention and controversy.

In the decade since the TVI experiment, the hidden privatization (Ball and Youdell, 2008) of education has proceeded in protean and symbiotic ways. For example: in the editorial copy of school newsletters, Ashton Scholastic Book Club, a long-standing edu-business in Australian primary schools, is regularly promoted with payment possible through the school finance portal; schools exhort parents to collect 'points' in supermarket promotions to win resources for the school; and many school newsletters are hosted on private websites, underwritten by advertising targeting the local community. In our collation and readings of school newsletters, we were looking for whether and how private subsidy of literacy achievement was represented.

With the move to online school newsletters in many schools, a number of private providers have emerged to host these publications (and other functionality) for school communities, with costs covered or profits supplemented by advertising. In the school newsletters we monitored, there were two major providers: one offering a vertical banner of advertisements on the right that cycles through advertisements while scrolling; the other offering a fixed banner of smaller advertisements along the bottom of the screen that alternate between two images for each advertiser, and an additional vertical column on the left frame offering larger advertisements with more layered images.

Significantly, in any such school newsletter with either web host, there was consistently one advertisement from a 'brand name' tutoring franchise. Textual hooks in the tutoring

advertisements included: 'Your children are amazing. We help them prove it', 'Professional tuition', 'Tailored learning. Endless discoveries', 'ABC to Year 12'. We enquired further into advertising conditions on the provider websites. One made the following pitch to potential advertisers re exclusivity:

Imagine having no competition. Our exclusive advertising policy means your competitors are excluded from the same opportunity, until you decide to give your space to them. You may advertise in as many different schools newsletters as you like and be guaranteed that your business will be the only one of its kind on that newsletter.

This business practice served to map tutoring companies' catchments to spatial territories organized by school communities. In one case, the advertised tutorial classes were held on the school premises after school hours.

In all instances, these online advertisements were hyperlinked to company webpages, with entry through the webpage for the local franchisee. Further hyperlinks lead to deep, sophisticated company websites. As well as a tutoring business, many of the sampled newsletters featured a hyperlinked advertisement for a particular set of home-study materials promising 'every curricular strand of each year covered ... an abundance of revision/consolidation'. By our sampling, this shadow edu-business had invested heavily in this sharply focused mode of advertising that delivered their message to parents of school-aged children, and was marketing in rural areas that weren't serviced by the large tutoring franchises.

We would argue that the repeated presence and familiar salience of advertisements by the same tutoring edu-business, actively embedded in school newsletters over the school year naturalises the co-existence of the shadow economy, making tutoring more thinkable and

doable. By describing this as a process of ‘naturalising’, we would highlight the benign everyday-ness of tutoring advertisements in this historical moment, their legitimation in the official interface between school and family, and the contrast to the earlier moment when tutoring and schooling had a more uncomfortable and unresolved relationship. Where schooling and tutoring were considered to compete for public and private resources in the earlier moment; there is no evidence of such mutual suspicion in the contemporary moment. In a FAQ page addressing teachers of their clients, one tutoring franchise website constructs a triangular relationship of school, partners, edu-business, all happily converging to address school achievement:

We see education as a collaborative task that begins with input from parents and classroom teachers. Our role is to provide supplementary learning when necessary, so that children develop confidence and achieve required standards.

We would further argue that schools’ habitual hosting of these advertisements in their official communication with their parent body communicates a tacit endorsement by the school, nurturing and promoting an unofficial public/private partnership to mutual benefit. Placing the advertisements under the parents’ noses so regularly amounts to a nudge strategy. Tutoring and other edu-business products are offered to the parent who is thus granted both autonomy and responsibility – there is no compulsion, just subtle suggestion offered in the architecture of moralised choices. Such routine advertisements help parents towards making the ‘responsible decision’ to subsidize their child’s school achievement

With the lens of the operative ‘ethico-politics’ (Rose, 2004, p. 192), this historical moment could be characterised as being more comfortable with sharing the moral responsibility for literacy achievement/remediation between the school and the private market. The key player

becomes the responsabilised parent, nudged and mobilised by the constant reminders of ever ready tutoring businesses waiting to help.

Conclusion – nudging parents towards shadow tutoring

The moral agenda of neoliberal logics seeks to shift the responsibility for schooling achievement from the school as provider to the parent as consumer. This ethico-politics offers the parent more freedom to choose, and more power to demand, but equally more responsibility for the outcome. The moral climate fosters a new culture of calculative prudentialism devoted to safeguarding children's academic achievement. These conditions have stimulated a moralised market in shadow education offering educational services and products. This growing market is understood to actively cultivate the anxieties it purports to assuage, and to erode learning conditions in schools at times. It is thus considered parasitic by some. Nevertheless private tutoring is no longer the domain of failing students, or a competitive strategy to be shamefully hidden. It has become the right and proper way for responsible parents to optimise children's achievement, one which governments have been prepared to fund.

The literature review demonstrated growing concern over the rate of growth of the private tutoring market in diverse settings. This trend was associated with the loss of trust in mainstream schooling, and the escalation of social competition. These conditions are both reflected in, and exacerbated by, regimes of standardised testing generating scores that are accruing more consequences for students, as well as teachers, schools and systems.

Two historical moments were then characterised – one reconstructed from parliamentary debates, the other from school newsletters. The former captured the moral climate around Australia's Tutorial Voucher Initiative launched in 2004, and the degree of general discomfort with its displacement of schools' expertise, and with privatization processes more

generally. The second moment, sampled twelve years later, captured the contemporary everyday practice of embedding advertisements for tutorial products in school newsletters. We argued that this naturalising practice, making private tutoring both more thinkable and doable, amounts to a nudge strategy, encouraging parents to make the ‘right’ choice. Private tutoring is no longer considered to be trespassing on the work and charter of schooling, but rather as an ally.

The new partnership between school and private tutoring provider gives cause for reflection about the validity of national testing. The Australian Curriculum and Reporting Authority (ACARA) which administers NAPLAN explicitly distances itself from the burgeoning tutoring industry with the following statement on its website:

ACARA does not recommend the use of commercial products such as booklets and practice tests, to help your child prepare for NAPLAN tests. None of the commercial products currently on the market are endorsed by ACARA. The use of services by coaching providers is not recommended.

(<http://www.nap.edu.au/NAPLAN/parent-carer-support/>) (accessed 29 September, 2016)

While commendable, this stance does not acknowledge the shadow market and anxieties its tests have spawned.

Thompson’s (2016) future-gazing suggests the calculative logics of national and international testing will only escalate as big data analytics becomes enabled. While such design claims to “open up” previously closed surfaces’ (p.3) of school performance, we would argue that the numeric scores that represent student achievement have become increasingly inscrutable.

The optimisation of numeric scores becomes the point of the exercise, yet what contributed to the scores is rendered invisible. If tutoring has bolstered some students’ scores, and thereby,

the aggregate school performance, it is concealed. Rather, in a move akin to Bourdieu and Passeron's (1977, p. 19) concept of 'misrecognition', the school can claim the outcome. Under this spotlight, we argue that it is increasingly in schools' interests to enlist, nudge and responsabilise parents. This is not a case of hidden privatization, but a public/private partnership between the education sector and the para-education market to mutual benefit.

By not effectively accounting for the existence and intensity of shadow education, the reporting of aggregated test data as a powerful indicator of teacher or school quality loses its validity. This is potentially harmful. Some communities will have the resources and opportunity to engage with the shadow market much more than others, but their family subsidy of school achievement is masked. In so constructing a specious level playing field, national testing misses the point. The status-guarding parent's interest in optimizing their child's NAPLAN results and familial social standing more generally helps to explain the growth in shadow education devoted to maximising achievement in terms of test scores, as distinct from simply remediating gaps in learning. If this growing subsidy and outsourcing of school achievement remains unrecognised and unaccounted for, it makes a nonsense of the use of test scores to judge teacher performance or school quality.

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