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Experiencing Shadow Education: The Rural Gambian Context

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Experiencing Shadow Education: The Rural Gambian Context

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1- a. On the Issue of Supplemental or “Shadow Education” in The Gambia

The practice of fee-based private tutoring or “shadow education,” on the part of teachers in Gambian schools was banned in 2010 by the government. Widely considered to be a practice leading to corrupted teachers, decaying educational provision during the official school day, and leading to deepening inequities between families, a total ban was mandated for all schools alongside a provisional policy for free “remedial” classes targeted at those students most in need. But increased testing and visibility of performance measures have contributed to the perceived need on the part of schools and communities to engage in supplemental learning activities, and the drivers of “shadow education” have not dematerialized through the implementation of the policy to ban it. And “shadow education” as a phenomenon fits into a larger educational landscape that prioritizes internationally defined measures of success such as standardized testing.

Moreover, the targeted groups for “remedial” classes would encompass the vast majority of students living the rural areas of The Gambia, not simply a small percentage, who could be easily accommodated. And while urban centers have a plethora of “legitimate” tutoring options and opportunities for both broader and higher educational attainment, teachers in rural areas are frequently among the few prepared to offer any supplemental services to students. There are also social and cultural realities not reflected in most education policy that complicate school and community relationships. Therefore a deeper understanding of the complex relationship that “Shadow education” has to the formal school system is needed to enact sensible policies and guide educational practice in rural areas.

2- b. Purpose of the Study:

Full consideration of the perceptions and experiences held by those involved in shadow education is needed to understand the needs and core beliefs towards schooling. Doug Reeler's (2007) theories of change outline a dominant adherence in international development projects to a "projectable" or engineered approach to educational planning. Projectable change assumes a problem-solving stance to educational needs and implements external measures to implement initiatives.

On the one hand, larger scale education strategies in The Gambia have been linked to projectable development strategies of change. These strategies are driven by the Gambian Ministry of Education and its many official International partners, which have placed a strong emphasis on education for employment and poverty reduction. On the other hand, these measures tend to assume universal values linking the individual economic benefit of education to performance in school. This drive toward *testing* may in fact be a creator of "shadow education" in the first place, as students and families strive to get ahead within the system. These measures place an emphasis on the rural regions where net enrolment, performance and longevity in school remain markedly lower than the urban centers, but do not highlight the experiences and understanding of the very communities who are targeted.

While Gambia's Ministry of Education is technically decentralized by region, the majority of policy is centrally created and reaches into the regional directorates, where the responsibility of collecting data on schools, of monitoring school progress and allocation of resources falls, but not the larger educational agenda.

Yet teachers and administrators in these regional areas have their own story to tell, and may be accessing community resources and measuring success in ways not captured by

national statistics and externally devised measurement tools. The use of supplemental or “shadow” education, spontaneous teacher consortiums at the cluster (group of schools) level, and locally based fundraising all speak to grassroots initiatives that may have an impact on educational provision that frequently go unobserved and unaccounted through the national data collection. In some cases, collaborative, local strategies may contradict policy mandates, as educators and school heads strive to staff their schools and promote their students.

The purpose of this study is to gain insights into the practices that emerge at the community and school level to promote change and to understand the underlying values at play in local educational practice compared to and inside the larger structure of national or state level educational planning. The phenomenological approach to this study focuses on the lived experience in the provision, monitoring and receiving of educational services in the rural Gambian context. Attitudes and perceptions are explored, divorced from assumptions about universal educational goals. This provides a descriptive, rather than evaluative, record of the relationship and meaning that supplemental education has in the daily lives of those it affects.

2. Conceptual Framework

2- a. Theories of Change on Education and Development

‘If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences’- sociologist William Thomas, 1928

The theoretical approach assumed by this study acknowledges that patterns and practices of education, particularly where they pertain to the notion of “development,” always have at their roots an underlying theory of change that affects how they are

implemented at all levels. Doug Reeler's (2007) framework for a three-fold theory of change argues that development is greatly affected by what theories are applied in the undertaking of educational activities. Reeler posits that *projectable* change dominates the international development agenda, seen as an approach wherein social change can be administered through the engineering of projects with an outcomes-based model inherent in the design. In the context of this paper, concepts of educational attainment, enrolment and the setting of educational goals are treated as examples of initiatives with an inherent underlying theory of projectable change.

Projectable change engineers solutions to stated problems or deficiencies, and then measures the efficacy of the posed solutions using measurable targets and logistical frameworks. It associates all outcomes measured with the intervention applied to a given situation. Reeler also presents theories of *emergent* and *transformative* change as often overlooked but essential processes in development and education. Emergent change can be seen as a complex process that accounts for the relationships between all agents in the development process and the ways in which attitudes and behaviors are influenced by these relationships, often gradually. Forms of emergent change are complex social processes of adaptation and emergence into new attitudes and patterns of behavior. Reeler describes *Transformative* change as a widespread and deliberate response to crises, or to a situation requiring immediate and sometimes revolutionary response. Most importantly, it is acknowledged here that theories of change operate in concert, and it is therefore essential to gain a comprehensive picture of the development and educational landscape by taking stock of all forms of change and uncovering the less visible.

This study is not inherently critical of a projectable theory of change; rather it aims to acknowledge the potential for synthesis within educational planning of various theories of change, particularly the theories and beliefs held by those at the “bottom” of the educational development experience. It seeks to recognize that underlying assumptions are held by any actors involved in education. Reeler argues that examining one’s theory of change helps situate the agenda of all educational endeavors and helps interpret the outcomes. This concept is supported in this research by the inclusion of perceptions of supplemental education by those engaging in at the “ground” level, and to remove pre-suppositions of what those meanings might be to various informants. Educational priorities and practice can be seen in light of these perspectives on change.

2- b. *What constitutes Privatization/ Marketization of Education*

The term “privatization” is defined by Merriam Webster’s 2010 dictionary as “The transfer of business, service or industry from public to private ownership and control. “ Privatization is widely used in economics to refer to government policies allowing such transfer on a large scale affecting entire industries or sectors. Privatization programs aim to increase economic development through the encouragement of private enterprise. Donaldson (2003) points out that “many developing countries have launched privatization programs, and many more are joining the club.” (p. 2)

Privatization can be seen as a term of growing significance in the economic and political landscape of many countries, due to globalized processes of increased trade and capitalist economic systems. However, within education, privatization has gained other conceptual meanings and may at times refer to more ambiguous applications of private provision of various educational goods and services, sometimes difficult to discern from

public provisions. Private and public resources and actors within the sector have a complex interplay that is not always programmatic as in the economic sense.

In the context of The Gambia, many services are mandated by government policy, but administered privately, such as early childhood development centers (ECDC's) and the majority of secondary schools. Shadow Education, or private tutoring, falls under private provision and is therefore not subject to government regulation, but can have significant effects on public education. This concept is carried further and explored later in this research. Other services may have their funding source from international agencies, or Non-governmental organizations or charities, but employ state providers to implement, creating a set of characteristics that often defy concepts of privatization and create a challenge for examining its economic, political and social implications.

The term "privatization," is also politically heated, and this must be addressed to further refer to the term in this paper. Lieberman, (1993) argues that competition and allowing for market forces to drive education keeps it functioning. The traditional education system, he contends, is dominated by "producers," the established educational institution that is described as self-protecting and unwilling to change. This view on education is situated within a neoliberal perspective that has traditionally viewed centralized control of economic processes as limiting to growth and subject to corruption. The neoliberal school of thought proposes that privatizing educational processes can work along the same lines as other economic processes.

Opposing views to the neoliberal or free market approach to education assert that this shift denies the public from oversight and creates an unequal concentration of wealth. Burch, (2010) attributes increased privatization globally to a broad ideological shift toward

neoliberalism under which “government becomes an extension of the market; it is expected to do its work and follow its principles.” (p. 2)

When education reforms its model to reflect business principles, critics argue, this creates a commodification of education wherein certain values may be significantly compromised. Proponents of economist Amartya Sen’s capabilities approach to education and belief in various essential “literacies” argue that with a shift toward privatization, economic and human capital are valued above essential abilities and freedoms that education should provide. Nussbaum, (2010), whose philosophical work is rooted in Sen’s capabilities theory points to tenets of democracy reinforced in “traditionally” valued aspects of education such as the humanities. These areas of inquiry are deemphasized in a marketized education system, which increasingly weighs the importance of skills deemed essential in the growing information economy, such as technology and particular hard sciences. This is further problematized by the concern that by allowing market forces to dictate educational priorities, a generational gap occurs where market demands and the resulting “supply” of students do not correlate on a reasonable timeframe to adhere to the logic of privatization.

Actors in the Gambian education system are undoubtedly affected by these processes. The universalizing of education in the country is occurring at a time when the global push towards privatization- and concurrent resistance- is shaping the course of educational practice and reform. This research is not directly situated within a critical stance to neoliberal economic policies as they apply to education, as the aim of the research is not to evaluate the effects of such policies within the Gambian context. It is essential, however, to unpack the notion of “privatization” as it is understood in this context and to

avoid its casual assumption as a purely economic process divorced from political or social meanings and interpretations. Privatization plays a role in the expectations that citizens place on their education system, how education is accessed, the context provided and the very purpose of schooling.

Privatization pertains to the processes of shadow education in its global context, and as will be discussed in this paper, can be debated in the Gambian rural context as to what constitutes “private” vs “public” when discussing supplemental education and tutoring.

2-c. Education as a Public Good

The purpose of education, and its place as a *public* resource aimed to better society as a whole must also be approached conceptually and disentangled from ones political or philosophical stance. Education is unique to other resources in that its benefit can be seen to impact both the *individual* and the *society* the individual exists within. Gaikadou’s (2010), longitudinal analysis of educational attainment against various indicators of health and wellbeing, economic stability, and the affects of education on family and child mortality, demonstrate a strong case for both the personal and societal benefits of education. It is well observed in nearly every country on earth that basic education attainment is linked to improvements along these lines.

However, the extent to which education is viewed as an asset and responsibility of the public depends heavily on philosophical approach to the purpose of learning and school. In line with neoliberal assertions that market models serve educational purposes better as they pertain to the *needs* of those *consuming* education, one approach is to move toward education as a benefit to the individual. This promotes competition and, it is

argued, higher educational attainment. Examples of market-driven, “demand” based education proliferate in some societies today- including the rise of for-profit institutions of higher education and the industry of private tutoring discussed further in the literature review.

A rationale for this stance comes from Leiberman (1993), who argues that, “as consumers, we expect improvement.” (p. 46) Education’s formal sector, it is argued, cannot improve and meet the needs of educational consumers, but the privatization of such can create sufficient competition on the part of “providers” to meet demand for more innovative and relevant educational provision. This argument assumes the *private* benefit of education is born out of individual need to compete in a market economy, and therefore stresses the provision of education by sources (private or a multi-sector blend of private and public) that will promote competition and choice in the school marketplace.

In line with the phenomenological approach to this research, the stance of respondents engaged in shadow education on various levels is not assumed and is instead explored, acknowledging the lingering and ongoing debate of educational responsibility. Public funding, services and oversight of education are complex issues that are linked to the Gambian context through the multiple manifestations of educational provision in the country.

The paper does not seek to satisfy the question of education as a public good, rather to incorporate this philosophical discourse into the theoretical perspective taken here. It can be assumed, therefore, that this debate is acknowledged in this context and considered relevant to asking questions pertaining to shadow education, its benefit and the challenges

it poses to policy makers. So too is the notion of responsibility for education explored in light of community based investment in education.

3. Background: The Education System in The Gambia

Here, educational trends and context within the Gambian Education system are outlined. A summary of recent shifts in The Gambia are as follows:

1. Shift from an elite education system located in municipal centers to a *mass* education system encompassing basic and adult education
2. Growth in English-based education, decline in strictly Arabic education with the inclusion of Arabic/Koranic teachers in English-based public schools
3. Sector-wide focus on attaining EFA/MDG goals and aligning of educational priorities to internationally based standards
4. Stronger performance-based outcomes in urban centers compared to rural areas
5. Increases in national testing at primary levels; shift in “shadow education” to the primary level.

a- a. Schooling

Western-style schools run by the government have existed in The Gambia since the decade preceding independence from Britain in 1967 (Forayaa, 2012) with an expansion occurring in the 1960's of both primary and secondary schools throughout the country. English language schooling prior to this time consisted of basic education established primarily by missionary groups. Arabic education and Madrassa schools also existed in small numbers through the country and were completely decentralized until very recently. However, prior to the World Education Conference in Dakar in 2000, provision of formal education was limited to few schools located near the municipal centers of The Gambia's six regions. At the Dakar conference governments of 155 countries and international representatives across the spectrum of development focused agencies committed to the

aligned goals of 1990's Education for All Act (EFA) and the United Nations initiative referred to as the Millennium Development Goals (MDG's). The Dakar conference affirmed the adoption of the World Declaration on Education, marking the most significant universalizing of a human-rights justification for education, and growth in education can be seen globally since this time as a result.

Expansion of the education system of The Gambia since that time is dramatic with enrollment between 1998-2007 in the country's formal school system effectively doubling from approximately 154,000 students to nearly 300,000. (MoBSE 2012) Since 2007, growth has slowed somewhat, however marked increases in provision can be seen in certain regions, particularly at the secondary level. For example, in the Upper River Region (region 6), three additional secondary schools have been established in the past seven years, bringing the total up to five and the number of students accessing secondary education more than tripling. Of note is also the fact that rural secondary schools are primarily government established and either public or grant-aided, whereas the vast majority of secondary schools in the urban center (both regions 1 and 2) are privately funded schools. All secondary schools are fee based, adding a significant cost to continued education for families with limited income.

While secondary educational provision remains limited in the three most rural regions (4, 5 and 6) expansion at this level has become the most dramatic in the country since 2005. However, region 4 has only one secondary school to which students must travel up to 60 miles to attend, with net enrolment dropping sharply between primary and secondary school. Region 6 had a net enrolment of only 6% for secondary students (Statistical summary, 2006) compared to Region 1 at 55%. The urban center of Gambia,

consisting of regions 1 and 2, shows secondary schooling continues to be accessed at faster rates, and performance on national and international exams in this region is significantly higher than the rest of the country. Excluding data from region 1, the educational landscape of The Gambia places it far below EFA and other targets.

The sector gained new designations as a result of the EFA/MDG renewal and the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education now encompasses a system of “basic cycle” education consisting of grades 1-9, two year early childhood development (ECD) programs for ages 4-6, and Adult and Non-formal Education. ECD centers continue to serve less than 20% of the age population in the country, however this is also a substantial increase as ECD was not acknowledged by the ministry nor provided on a broad scale until recently. Due to its provision mainly from private sources or international partners such as Catholic Relief Services, ECD programs are concentrated in the urban areas and generally serving families who can afford this. Rural ECD centers exist in some towns and communities, and are generally fee-based. Worldwide patterns for educational attainment show that pre-school and early childhood education contributes greatly to later attainment of education and higher literacy levels. Access to ECD is also limited in this case to groups with the economic privilege to enroll their children in school, in areas where literacy rates and English language acquisition are already higher among the general population.

Since the year 2000, the Ministry of Education has also undertaken the oversight of Madrassa education, and has registered Madrassa schools and recorded enrollment data. Madrassa enrollment has remained relatively static in absolute numbers, and has declined by NER since this time, suggesting a large push from the Gambian government and international partners to focus on meeting EFA goals within the formal “Western”

education sector. The English based school system has also formalized the teaching of Arabic studies as a regular class subject in recent years, likely as an attempt to increase enrollment in communities where Western education is generally resisted. Student to teacher ratios and teacher deployment statistics for each region show that rural regions 4, 5 and 6 actually have a lower student/teacher ratio than the government recommended 45-1 (for basic education), suggesting that rural communities often experience low enrollment in primary schools. Net enrolment ratios (NER's), which are the percentage of children within the official age level for a particular grade, are also lower in these regions. This indicates that there are rural schools serving grades 1-9 where a high percentage of families do not enroll their children in government schools.

3- b. Educational Priorities and EFA Goals

To support the achievement of EFA and the MDG's as a result of the Dakar conference, UNESCO developed an educational development index (EDI) to measure the extent to which a country is on target with the goals of achieving universal education. Both EFA and MDG goals correspond more consistently with the English based formal education sector of The Gambia than of Madrassa or other forms of education along this index. While Madrassa education, adult non-formal and vocational education all receive some recognition and oversight within the sector, it is basic and English-based education that can be most easily measured and evaluated to improve on these goals.

This can be assumed to have contributed to the significant growth in basic education, the EFA goals include improving learning outcomes which are measured by standardized exams. Other goals of EFA include "providing free and compulsory primary education", "strengthening partnerships", "promoting gender equality" and "improving

quality.” In 2000, the MDG educational goals were aligned to these aspirations and refined for measurability. The EDI index takes into account enrollment at the early childhood and primary level, disaggregated by gender. Quality is measured by survival rate to grade 5, an indicator available in most countries.

EFA has been taken up by The Gambian state to a highly integrated degree. The educational priorities of the Gambian government can be observed to have aligned with the agreement made at the Dakar conference along policy lines and through its stated partnership with the World Bank and other agencies, all of whom place EFA and MDG goals centrally in their underlying aim. This is evidenced by the emergence of directorates aligned towards MDG benchmarks, the development and implementation of evaluation measures, such as the World Bank’s Participatory Planning and Monitoring system (PPM) and the restructuring of the Ministry to incorporate data collection strategies geared to satisfy the need for a data supply to support EDI measurements for educational development. The Gambia, like many lower income countries has incorporated the institutional logic of international development agencies into its core operations.

Examples of local initiatives that emerge from the prioritization- or growing imperative- of education can be seen throughout the country. These instances signify that while “EFA” might not have entered the colloquial conversations of community members who whom formal schooling may tend to hold a mystique, a motivation to send children to school exists even in pockets of society deemed “resistant”. Government efforts such as supplying Koranic teachers to public schools and various sensitization campaigns, radio advertisements, posters and local language community meetings may also contribute to the shaping of public attitude towards formal schooling. While far from universally accepted in

its current provision and form, school may generally be seen in this context as a desired and perhaps increasingly needed service to rural populations.

3- c. The State of Teaching

The relationship of teachers to the phenomenon of shadow education and of tutoring is significant. A prominent theme in the literature on private tutoring and based on the researcher's lengthy experience working with teachers in The Gambia, is that of the pursuit of tutoring as a sustainable livelihood or a supplement to the government salary teachers receive. Observations of teachers' experience with this is limited in this and other research, however Mulkeen's (2010) study of the issues pertaining to the state of teachers in The Gambia and other Anglophone African countries sheds some light on the state of teaching in The Gambia.

It is generally assumed that teachers seek supplemental income due to the state's inability to provide livable and consistent salaries to teachers at government schools. Indeed, Mulkeen's work, which consisted of broad mixed-methods research over the course of two years in eight countries, highlighted problems with deployment of salaries to teachers during the course of the research. This may account for the engagement in the pursuit of other financial endeavors, including tutoring. However, compared to other forms of income, teacher salaries in The Gambia ranked considerably higher as an average to high salary, particularly in rural areas where subsistence farming and informal work constitute a large share of employment opportunities. The introduction of "hardship" allowances to teachers posted in rural regions as part of the Fast Track Initiative in 2005 is also linked positively in Mulkeen's research to an increase in teacher attendance in schools.

Teacher student ratio is disproportionate throughout the country, particularly for placement of trained teachers. Country-wide, The Gambia has satisfied its goal of maintaining a 45-1 student to teacher ratio in the basic cycle schools, though classrooms of far fewer or far more students can be found in rural areas. One first grade classroom observed for this study contained at least 75 students and was headed by an untrained teacher. However, between 2005 and 2011, the majority of untrained teachers have undergone an alternative training process through World Bank's accelerated Primary Teaching Certificate program.

The state of teaching in The Gambia can be seen as one in transition. The sector has undergone significant growth and teacher training and support have been at the forefront of development initiatives in an effort to satisfy EFA. This is significant to the Shadow Education phenomenon as increasing numbers of teachers gain qualifications and begin to earn more competitive salaries, potentially offsetting the incentives to tutor. However, teacher professionalism can have complex implications for tutoring and shadow education as other sector demands continue to rise- pressure to perform along EFA measures can fall upon educators as well as individual students, and incentivize tutoring in order to satisfy the increasing notion of "quality" in schools.

3- d. Access to Education:

The economic and social benefits of education are widely accepted and are generally assumed as the motivation for striving to meet the globally defined educational goals of EFA at the national and local levels. Along with government compliance with internationally defined goals, a level of social concurrence can be observed in the general patterns of educational growth and increased prioritization of schooling in The Gambia.

Osborne, (2003 pp 45-58) enumerates the compulsion towards wider access to schooling to include the following:

“the economic imperatives created by global competition, technological change and the challenge of the knowledge economy, individual responsibility and self-improvement, employability... social inclusion and citizenship.”

Within the Gambian context, a variety of factors likely drive the compulsion to move toward a system of universal schooling. Several factors affect the ability on the part of families and entire communities to access education. Allocation of resources, particularly to areas with limited infrastructure, is a material limitation in accessing education. Other material resources create a household expense on the part of families, such as incidental fees levied, contributions to the school feeding program for primary students, uniforms, exercise books and pencils.

School supplies and adequate desks and classroom space are provisions charged as government responsibilities, though as one regional education officer in an interview stated, “government pays salaries, that’s all” and grant-supported schools under programs such as the World Bank funded “Whole School Development” are a funding source for material needs, construction projects and sustainability plans for schools to create sources for self-funding such as gardens and poultry projects. The Gambia also received a multi-year World Bank funded grant to support EFA called the “Fast Track Initiative” which targeted multiple facets of educational provision including teacher training, transportation of school supplies to rural areas, and incentives for teaching in rural areas.

Access to education is also affected by functional factors such as training and supply of teachers to schools, distance to school, safety concerns and in some cases, physical presence of a school. Access to education has been the targeted goal for many other

development initiatives, and the concern of equity between rural and urban, different socio-economic groups and gender.

These interventions deal primarily with technical “solutions” to accessing education with an underlying assumption of projectable change. At the same time, community attitudes, gender roles and perceptions on education also require consideration in the discussion on access.

3-e. Educational Performance

The drive to perform on national and international exams is frequently tied to the rise of shadow education and other supplemental education strategies. While the country has not been measured internationally on exams such as The International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement’s (IEA) Math/Science (TIMMS) exam or Reading/Literacy Exam (PIRLS), other sub-Saharan countries such as Ghana have begun to conduct sample testing and be ranked by IEA along international measures and the regional influence of similar testing models is apparent. The Gambia does compete on the West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) administered by the West African Examination Council since the 1950’s in Anglophone West African countries, and on which, over 90% of students did not pass a core subject in 2004, 2005 or 2006. (Examiners report, 2006.) The number of students examined has increased over time, as enrolments to secondary education also rise.

In 2008, the literacy skills and basic reading tools of younger primary students was formally assessed for the first time by a sampling for a USAID driven diagnostic exam called the “Early Grade Reading Assessment.” The aim of this test was to produce Results of the EGRA test showed that almost none of the second and third grade students tested had basic

reading skills in the language of instruction, English. Private school samples scored marginally higher on the exam. A widespread policy response brought forth literacy and reading-based strategies with a newfound focus on early grade reading emphasized in the curriculum. Teacher training strategies introduced phonics and other reading strategies. The Gambia most recently introduced a series of tests called the National Achievement Tests (NAT), which have reshaped the structure of primary education and created a level of visibility in primary schools as to achievement levels of students. Schools are encouraged to post their results each year and compare to past performance.

Examples of the treatment of examinations and sector-wide response to exam performance demonstrate an institutional acceptance of a performance-based model. Despite widespread inability to demonstrate satisfactory performance on national exams, pressure to improve has driven the implementation of increased monitoring and assessments of a similar nature. While EFA and other goals are measured along indicators drawn from exams like the NAT, exam performance may not take into account important cultural and social factors, nor the variety of limitations such testing has on assessing educational value in this context.

Most importantly, education in the rural Gambian context is primarily a first generation endeavor. Gaikadou (2010) asserts the impact of parental literacy on that of children, notably a serious limitation for children in rural Gambia. The language of instruction in The Gambia is also English, the colonial language and official government language, however opportunities to hear or speak English outside of school are few in many rural communities. Teachers are often linguistically distinct from the communities they teach in (Mulkeen, 2010) and begin instruction of subjects in English without the

ability to translate or explain concepts in the first language of the students. While this was seen as an intentional measure on the part of the government to promote the use of English in schools, a review of curriculum materials shows that English is treated as a first language from grade one. One of the educational officers interviewed stressed the seriousness of children thrown immediately into “the second language was never given its due.” Tollefsen, et al (2008) highlight the complexity of language of instruction policy for multilingual countries like The Gambia, wherein teaching primarily in local languages becomes a complex and impractical solution, despite strong evidence that literacy attainment is most effective in the learner’s first language.

The perspective and values inherent in the society cannot be ignored when disentangling the notion of “performance” from that of “success” in school. The one elective subject that no students failed on the WASSCE exam was knowledge of Koranic studies. Significantly higher than their reading and math skills on the EGRA exam, students nonetheless showed a significantly higher grasp on oral comprehension, despite the fact that English was not their first language. These patterns suggest important underlying cultural norms that may provide links to how education is perceived and attained in rural areas.

4. Shadow Education in the Literature and Discourse:

The aim of this review is to examine the current discourse and literature pertaining to the phenomenon of supplemental education referred to as “shadow education” and link current research on its drivers and implications. Shadow education is strongly tied in the literature to the processes of globalization within the education sector and the rise of

international and national testing. These processes are summarized here to provide a framework for observing supplemental education as it is understood in current research and to guide the researcher in determining whether global patterns of shadow education can be seen in the context explored in this study. This review also aims to compare and critique methods of study with regards to supplemental education, as these are intrinsically tied to the underlying assumptions that drive educational planning, policy and research goals. The review also strives to identify what is unknown in the emerging field of “shadow education,” and seeks to locate a relevant approach for examining the phenomenon in the rural Gambian context.

4- a. Shadow Education: A Global Trend Identified Simultaneously

The concept of a Shadow Education system, encompassing the supplementary and privately provided educational services arising globally, emerged in the early 1990's. The term first appeared as a metaphor (Bray, 2009) to describe the burgeoning industry of private tutelage in parallel studies throughout Asia. In one such study, Stephensen and Baker (1992) gave name to the trend in their longitudinal study among Japanese students, highlighting the likelihood among higher income families to participate in tutoring programs that reinforce advantages for entrance to top universities. Socioeconomic factors influencing the participation in shadow education was thematically significant in other studies conducted in Asia throughout the 1990's, such as Marimuthu, et al (1991), highlighting the impact of tutoring in Singapore on equality of educational services. This research argued, in agreement with Stephensen and Baker among others, that private tutoring patterns point to inequities in educational access.

Mori and Baker (2009) attribute the emergence of the tutoring industry to the beginning of international testing in the late 1980's. Shadow education was seen to imitate or "shadow" the formal school system, adapting and responding to public education's own shifts in priority and following its systemic logic. As formal education grows and expands, so too does the shadow system, ostensibly existing to support individuals in succeeding within the formal sector. As a metaphor, it implies a certain mystifying aspect- evoking perhaps a dark or hidden aspect of education that lurks beneath the normal educational landscape. Indeed, much of the response to shadow education as a phenomenon has been both critical of it and confounded by its ambiguous agenda. At the same time, the "shadow" sector is increasingly accessed by millions of families and students to improve test scores, be promoted to higher grades and gain entrance to highly ranked institutions, all shared goals within the "legitimate" or visible formal education sector.

The term itself is sometimes synonymous with essentially any supplemental education- encompassing all learning that occurs outside of school but which is aimed toward succeeding inside of school. In some cases the term "shadow education" may refer to educational provision that entirely replaces formal education, such as privately funded alternatives to school. However for the purposes of this study it is assumed that shadow education is sought and administered in addition to a formal school program, typically by individuals or groups invested in school success at a particular level. Shadow education can also be defined to refer to paid educational services, specifically tutoring, occurring outside of school. (Bray, 2009)

4- b . Perspectives on Shadow Education as a Development Issue

While the shadow system has been in existence for some time, only in the past ten years has it received international attention and drawn a response from governments and international agencies and the body of knowledge on the phenomenon is rapidly growing as research and policy strategies spread into regions where it has largely gone unnoticed until recently. Bray and others point out the surprising reach of shadow education into lower income countries where even basic educational provision is a continued priority, and the body of knowledge continues to spread into Sub-Saharan Africa.

Why is shadow education of concern at all in an educational landscape occupied heavily by strategic issues within the formal sector? Why take interest in supplemental or “side” education when sufficient debate continues to surround the formal sector, its aims and goals, and the allocation of resources at each level? By all accounts, shadow education is causing increased influence in the formal education sector, and as the global debate over it emerges, questions arise as to whether the shadow education sector must be shifted to avert potential negative impacts on the formal sector or whether the education sector itself must harness and benefits from the practices of shadow education.

Mori and Baker (2009) identify patterns of shadow education and argue that it has gradually begun to move inside of the formal sector and is becoming a universal norm. Indeed, increases in tutoring by purely quantitative measures are found in geographically and economically diverse countries from Kenya to Romania to Egypt and the United States. Regardless of policy strategy or positioning on the appropriateness or utility of the shadow system, it is shaping aspects of the formal sector. If tutoring accounts, as Dang and Rogers (2008) assert, for nearly the same level of investment as the formal sector in countries like Korea, and as it grows, the relevance to formal education is crucial to all aspects of

planning. Shadow education continues to grow in its provision throughout most regions of the world, and understanding these drivers are critical to determining responses to it.

International agencies are concerned with shadow education as a growing influence in developing countries. Unesco (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) has adopted in its agenda, strategies for addressing shadow education. In the case of Bangkok, Thailand, Unesco partnership with the department of education strives to seek a “remedy” to the shadow education system, based on growing concern that Thai families are spending significant portions of their income to provide needed tutoring. (Unesco, 2012). Three primary concerns are identified in the agency document:

Prevalence of private tutoring combined with strong social competition has several implications for education. First, it creates and perpetuates social inequalities. Second, it consumes financial resources that could be used for other activities. Thirdly, exam-oriented private tutoring may distort the curriculum in the formal schools. (Unesco, 2012)

As an initial framework for understanding the variations and dynamics of shadow education, Bray (2009) provides a useful model for a macro-analysis for working with governments and policy makers on addressing shadow education through Unesco partnerships. Its particular dynamics, through this classification, allow planners to discuss appropriate policy response. Shadow education, using Bray’s framework, can be classified based on measures of intensity, quality, equity, costs and economic implications. Much of what is described in subsequent country studies uses Bray’s framework to help “take stock” of the particular brand of shadow education observed in each setting. This can be used to inform policy or state response to shadow education. However, Bray points out the tendency on the part of governments to employ reactive measures due to limited ability to regulate the shadow sector.

4-c. Methodological Approaches to Shadow Education

The theoretical perspective of some studies on Shadow Education may pose methodological challenges to accessing and understanding the various phenomena occurring. While tutoring is highly debated along lines of equity and access and its implications in the perceived educational divide between those who use it and those who don't, its efficacy for individual success is less contested. Evidence of the effectiveness of supplemental education is reliant upon the setting and type of services provided, but the rise and use of tutoring and tutoring systems have expanded to a level that far outpaces research on whether it works. Tutoring has been "proven" both effective and ineffective depending in similar settings, though patterns tend to indicate that tutoring generally contributes to improved scores on international and national tests at targeted grade levels. Dang and Rogers, (2008), examine studies undertaken in twenty-three countries that attempt to connect private tutoring to school success.

While particular studies make compelling arguments for its effectiveness, Mori and Baker's (2001) classification of tutoring types can be helpful in demonstrating that few significant patterns exist to show *which* types of tutoring are most effective to the individual learner. The studies examined here were conducted across regions and compared outcomes of tutoring with regards to specific goals, for example, test preparation. The variation of tutoring strategies by nature makes it far more challenging to compare, and yet its heavy use in some contexts account for much of the data collected within the formal sector. While higher income households across countries are likely to invest more in private tutoring, compensatory and remedial programs also exist at a lower cost to underserved populations in some countries. Therefore, it cannot be universally

stated that higher-income families benefit more from shadow education simply because they pay more for it. Studies have connected the prevalence of private tutoring to the rise of high-stakes testing across countries.

While much of the research on shadow education aims to take stock of its scope through largely quantitative measures, questions with regards to the rural Gambian setting arise with regards to its place within the effort to achieve basic education. In comparison with countries where high levels of competition for higher education are seen as a driver for shadow education, the rural Gambian context has its primary educational goals set at providing basic access to education. The drivers of shadow education in this context are likely to be centered around performance on examinations and, perhaps, an effort to achieve EFA goals. Due to the known factors affecting educational provision in this area, two central questions arise that drive this inquiry.

1. To what extent is the shadow education system a grassroots strategy for addressing a locally defined need?
2. Does supplemental education as it is being done encourage EFA in a way that traditional programmatic initiatives cannot?

5. Methodological Approach:

5-a. Research Setting:

Interviews and observations were conducted between two rural communities and respective schools in region 4 of The Gambia. Located near the regional center, both communities have their own primary school. Populations of both communities were between 3-5,000 with students traveling from smaller villages to attend school in the larger of the two communities. The Regional Education Directorate overseeing education in the

entire region is located within three kilometers of both communities, and for this reason the schools are considered to be among the better equipped in the region. Within the proximity is the only secondary school in the region, which stretches approximately ninety kilometers on the south side of the Gambia River. Both communities are within walking distance of the largest town in the region. Language groups are mixed in this area, with Mandinka and Fula predominating. English is the medium of instruction in schools, widely spoken among professionals and civil servants in the area, but less frequently among families. Interviews with education professionals and internationals were conducted in English, and communication with community members was conducted in Mandinka, which the researcher is fluent in.

The schools where observations took place were both lower basic schools serving grades 1-6. The larger school had over 1,000 students, many of whom came from surrounding satellite villages. The smaller school had just over 400 students including an early childhood class. All students walk to school and the majority are located within 1-2 miles of the school although some travel much further. "Studies" classes were taking place in the regular school classrooms. The library was being used for a teacher "consortium" one day, where qualified teachers worked with unqualified teachers on lesson plans and other professional development activities. The regional education directorate was the site of interviews and observations with the education officers. The staff of this office was about 15, although four were present during the formal visit. The community members were interviewed in their home compound, located approximately 2 miles from the school. Their children were observed and informally interviewed coming and going from school.

5-b. Getting at the Experience of Shadow Education, a Phenomenological approach:

Qualitative methods allow for in-depth analysis and the inclusion of relevant information that is conveyed relationally rather than through traditional reporting means. Phenomenology is a qualitative approach to research characterized by inquiry within the natural settings of those observed. Drawing from psychological and anthropological approaches, phenomenological studies seek to disconnect inquiry on a particular phenomenon from preconceived notions that may influence the understanding of what is experienced. Phenomenology seeks to “understand the essence and structure of the experience” (Patton, 1990) of a particular phenomenon through the perspectives of those living it.

Rural schools in the Gambia have received much examination and evaluation along quantitative lines, measures which provide us with clues about educational attainment, resource allocation and traditional statistics of examination performance over time. While sometimes incomplete or insufficient, a review of these measures is incorporated into this study as a starting point for defining the conditions under which schools operate. However, these quantitative measures alone are limited in their ability to disentangle the complex circumstance of rural schools and their relationships to the community. They may lead us to conclusions that incorporate the comparative performance of schools and thus of educators across the country, but fail to illuminate the very meaning and interpretation that education holds in the contexts deemed most “in need.”

The opportunities for data collection included field visits at two schools and a regional education directorate where activities of interest were taking place over five days. Additional data collection occurred via skype and email interviews and through a social networking website. Two community members were also interviewed formally on two

occasions in a family compound during a supplemental education activity while their children were at the school.

This study includes the combination of iterative interviews with subjects on state, regional and school levels within the education sector and three participants interviewed at the community level. Interviewees were identified for their specific roles and personal connection to the activities of interest, but not for any perception of their specific belief or philosophy with regards to education.

“Shadow Education” and contextually, “studies”, has been linked to noncompliant activities and teacher corruption, and direct inquire of this subject is likely to inhibit robust or meaningful responses. For this reason, the study focuses on taking an appreciative stance to educational practices in the research setting, asking participants to highlight strategies that had meaning to them and detailing their own educational goals and perceptions.

Because the inquiry focused on locating and identifying constructive or positive strategies being used within the rural school context, some participants were indentified by or their involvement in a particular intervention of interest. Others, the researcher because of their known accomplishments in their respective schools in particular, sought out the headmaster and education officers. A review of the MoBSE monitoring and evaluation training videos, radio and poster campaigns and strategic policy documents also prompted additional correspondence with respondents working at the state level. Published materials from MoBSE, including minutes from strategic planning meetings, regional reports on school performance and resource allocation as well as internal monitoring reports were shared with the researcher by the school monitors from the regional

education directorate were also reviewed for consideration of patterns and themes in planning at the regional and state level compared to the identified experiences and priorities of community members.

Approach to inquiry depended heavily on the role of each participant interviewed. For educational planners, formal meetings were considered appropriate, while for other participants, time spent in “bantabas,” or informal gatherings at their workspace or home was appropriate. The following table highlights the roles of participants in the research and their relationship to the phenomenon:

Participant Role	Relationship	Inquiry Method
Parents/Family Member	Sending students of third and fifth grade to supplemental classes	Discussion in the family compound, observation of students preparing for lessons.
Teachers	Conducting “studies” lessons and working in a school where “studies” takes place	Focused interviews at the schools, participatory observation during a teacher consortium, visit to classroom.
Principal	Planning “studies” at the school level, encouraging participation	Formal interview in office, email correspondence.
Educational Officers	Overseeing teacher training and Monitoring and Evaluation at the regional level.	Interviews at the regional directorate and through Skype/email. Shared review of policy documents and literature on “Shadow Education.” “Bantaba” meetings on supplemental education strategies and impacts.
International Agency Workers	Implementing a participatory monitoring model at the regional level, working through the regional education directorate.	Interviewed in offices and through skype/email correspondence.

5-c. Considerations on the part of the researcher:

Consent of participation and conveying the purpose and intent of the study to participants was of utmost concern to the researcher. Language was a consideration and community members were interviewed in Mandinka and asked to reaffirm their comfort and perceptions of the study's purpose and scope. The researcher's familiarity and prior work within the setting allowed for considerable access, and the environment could be considered of high trust. Ethical considerations for maintaining this trust were also made in light of the fact that educators and community members tend to be highly compliant and willing, and "checking in" with participants on a regular basis assisted with negotiating these tendencies. The researcher's own identity as an American could be seen to place undue pressure on participants to respond in ways perceived as desirable or to conceal practices considered to be less desirable, and an effort was made to create ease and allow participants to speak freely on broader notions of education and learning that might be of importance to them. An effort to capture these perceptions and attitudes was made in both the note-taking and the writing process.

6. Findings:

Studies as observed in the research setting continues, despite its policy ban. However, awareness of its potential problems cautions those engaging in it to provide tutoring on a broader level at little or no cost. Does this continue to embody the notion of "shadow education" in its current form? The characteristics of shadow education observed in this setting can be summarized as follows:

1. Supplemental to the formal program

2. Funded privately by way of World Food Program supplies and student “contributions” (approximately 50 bututs or U.S. 15 cents in cash or kind donation of supplies for cooking)
3. Oriented toward a national exam
4. Provided by school educators rather than outside providers
5. Occurring in groups or nearly complete class sizes, not individually focused

By these descriptors, we see that supplemental education in the research setting fits under generally recognized notions of “Shadow Education,” however the context reflects a focus on basic education rather than competitive higher education. This distinguishes the Gambian context from many of the widely studied examples in Asian countries where Shadow Education is a known and established part of the education system. Instead, we see an entrenched but flexible practice wherein known policy response to corruption and other issues associated with tutoring on the part of teachers leads to a “reclaiming” of supplemental practices to better align with the educational aims of the “public good” vision of education. The Gambian context differs greatly between rural and urban, as is further explained here.

***6-a. “Courses” and “Studies”: Shadow Education in the Gambia Forms that it takes
Tutoring in the Urban Settings:***

The Gambia has two basic types of private tutoring. In the urban areas and larger towns, an emerging industry of tutoring companies has begun to take hold. All fee based and privately (and often foreign) managed, these companies cater largely to the secondary and tertiary levels, generally existing as outside-of-school certifications in computer technologies and other related competencies. The largest tutoring company, with several locations, offers language and TOEFL instruction as well as alternative secondary diplomas

and examination preparation for entrance to tertiary institutions in The Gambia or abroad. The costs of these programs generally exceed fees and tuition at the government institutions they sometimes prepare their students for.

While some forms of this provision might fit within the parameters of “Shadow Education,” it is also often a separate industry providing alternatives to the formal system. Wherein preparation for examinations and entrance/access/performance in the formal sector are the stated goals, it can be seen to reflect the patterns of Shadow Education as outlined by Bray and others as a system that is *supplemental* to schooling, *privately offered* and *academically focused*. But this industry’s proliferation in the urban center, where signs and advertisements can be seen on many streets for various courses also exemplify a prioritization on “international” and globally focused content.

Most tutoring companies link themselves to institutions in the U.K. or other countries and the concept of marketization of education is visible in their menu-like course options, and “sale” of various popular credentials such as accounting and business administration. The tutoring industry as it exists in this form, may be remotely linked to the educational practices of the rural areas, but is in scarce existence outside of the urban centers. While the drive for higher education may also exist in rural areas, the reality is that a fraction of students attending schools “up country” will reach the tertiary level for various reasons. For this reason “shadow” practices in urban areas may contribute to the perpetuated divide in educational attainment between rural and urban Gambia. It may also perpetuate the economic disparities between these two distinct areas, given that access to such programs is seen to provide economic opportunities. The Shadow industry of tutelage grown out of private companies operating separately but to support the success within the

formal sector can be known in the Gambian context as “courses.” One rarely sees “courses” available in the rural areas.

Tutoring in the Rural Settings:

In the rural areas, another form of tutoring tends to occur far more frequently. Private tutoring that occurs in school settings or teachers employed by the government system who administer outside-of-school lessons are known commonly as “studies.” While some private tutoring also occurs in homes by individuals other than teachers, this receives fewer mentions by informants and is less visible in the research setting. It is common to hear students report along the roadside during off-hours for school that they are heading to “studies” and this was observed several times during the course of this research. Most dramatically compared to prior visits to the research site, was the prevalence of younger (primary grades 3 and 5) students moving, en masse, toward the school on a Saturday for a full day “studies” session administered by the same school teachers they had in class during the week.

The teachers interviewed stressed the importance of third and fifth graders passing the NAT exam, which was soon approaching during the research period. Informants were unclear about the length of time that Saturday studies was occurring during the school year, however the headmaster of one school reported that it took place throughout the school year with teachers agreeing to cooperate in teams.

It was described, by those administering it, as a service to the community, as the teachers were working without extra pay, receiving lunch from the World Food Program food supply that primary schools in regions 3-6 receive as part of a school feeding program.

The willingness of teachers to participate in tutoring for minimal financial gains may reflect a desire to demonstrate and grow their professional abilities, and examples of teacher selection for tutoring and also peer advising on the part of those selected are present. Teachers considered capable of tutoring are given opportunities to inform school action plans and to teach other teachers.

The notion of community service is also present in the educator narrative of the supplemental education discussion. Most educators are posted in rural locations from urban areas and recognize that the community members have often not gone through formal schooling. An educator comments on the necessity for teachers to provide most, if not all of the learning opportunities that will take place in a child's life:

'The parents cannot take part. We only have the mandate when the children come to school by helping them, guiding them to do certain things... when they are off from school, we cannot follow them any more.'

6-b. "Shadow Education" of the past and Present: Coming out of the Shadow?

The term "Shadow Education" as such is non-translatable in local languages in the Gambia. In fact, the concepts of "reading," "learning" and "school" are indistinguishable in Mandinka. Disentangling the concepts of education as a requirement and as a supplemental strategy was not easily done by participants who were not part of the education sector. Utilizing the working definition for the purpose of this study, however, all informants were familiar with, or actively participating in a form of shadow education. "Studies," has been widely acknowledged as a large part of educational life in rural Gambia, though perspectives vary on its benefit and purpose. Prior to the introduction of the National Assessment Test (NAT) at grades 3 and 5, tutoring was typically administered to students

hoping to pass the ninth grade exam and move on to senior secondary school. One Cluster Monitor commented that,

“Teachers will hold the necessary material and those who can afford will come at night to get it.”

This response corresponds to recognized patterns of the foundational literature on Shadow Education, illustrating concern for the tendency of private tutoring to further stratify socioeconomic groups by providing a “better” education to the privileged minority- and the improved opportunities it is purported to supply- while decaying the quality of education available to all students. Herein we see that while the term “shadow education” is unrecognized in this setting, its meaning has been interpreted similarly to other contexts in the world.

The population attending ninth grade “studies” in the research setting may indeed represent a small percentage. One cluster monitor estimates that about ten percent of students in the area have traditionally attended this type of “studies” session with any regularity. Teachers interviewed intimated that while this was no longer happening in the community, it had been a small percentage of students attending. Reasons for not attending, according to teachers, were not related to household expense so much as “motivation” of the students to learn. It is worth noting that in the context of this particular community, the one senior secondary school that students were “competing” to gain access to was within walking distance, providing an advantage to access that students from other communities might not have. Cluster monitors do not oversee the senior secondary school, but felt that the exam score was not critical to gaining entrance if one had the money to pay school fees.

“They will give you remedial courses and you may stay for 4 or more years, especially the women.”

Perhaps motivation to succeed in the ninth grade exams is tempered by the reality that payment is what is needed to enter senior secondary school. In addition, exam scores from the region show that the vast majority of students fail the exam entirely or pass only one or two subjects out of nine. Performance scores on the ninth grade exam verify that more students were accepted into the senior secondary school than who passed the ninth grade exams successfully. The likelihood for students to be able to afford tutoring implies that they may also be among those who can afford senior secondary school fees, likely lessening the incentive for those who might benefit from tutoring.

The shift to providing tutoring for students in third and fifth grades reflects pressure on the part of schools to demonstrate performance on exams which are now made more visible to community members and, starting far earlier than the past, have required a number of responses on the part of primary level schools to demonstrate performance measures. At the same time, community interest in schooling and belief in the education process may also contribute to the rise of this more “transparent” brand of tutoring, as reflected by the willingness of participants to share these strategies with the researcher. While past efforts on the part of ninth grade teachers were associated with corruption, withholding of curriculum and favoring of families for whom tutoring costs were within reach, much of this criticism has been addressed by educators and planners in the research setting. Shadow Education, as such, may be organically responding to the needs of the community and the mandates of the state simultaneously.

6-c. Effects on Educational Provision and Implications for Policy

Shadow education supplied by teachers in the school environment is broadly criticized. At the community level, this was reflected in the experience of the informants,

whose thought on “studies” for ninth grade exams was in agreement with recent government policy reaction to it. “Studies” classes in this form have been criticized by many as an extra necessary cost to parents- even where they are not required, as families may sense that educational provision in during the school day is inadequate, as some informants implied.

An educational planner highlights the incentivized venture that tutoring can be:

“I know a lot of teachers in Kombo who earn three times more than their salaries on tutoring. My own junior brothers, who are attending university, do it.”

“Kombo” here refers to the urban setting, wherein a considerable number of “consumers” are prepared to pay for tutoring. This research suggests that tutoring in rural area cannot be supported by market processes given the low economic levels of most families to demand it, and the lack of qualified professionals to supply it. Teaching in rural areas is already a markedly profitable livelihood in comparison to other rural opportunities in the wage sector. Independent tutors are also criticized by providers within the formal sector who also plan and supply supplemental education. An educator comments on the nature of tutors who do not possess a valid teaching credential.

“It is usually not well-structured. Tutors are not properly monitored and can teach irrelevant stuff. Many are motivated by the extra bucks and not a strong desire to help”

This perspective may represent a threatened response to the imminent demand for additional provision of educational services on the part of the education establishment. However, where practiced within schools and at minimal cost to students, the practice is considered widely beneficial.

As Bray, (2009) affirms, the potential affects on the quality of public education itself creates a challenge for policy response to the phenomenon. Those in the best position to speak to its particular dynamics- its cost, procedures and efficacy, are unlikely to be willing to engage in thorough investigation given the inherent criticism embedded in any kind of inquiry. This research context faces similar constraints- while trust was given to explain and demonstrate forms of supplementary education that appear less “shadowy”, uncovering the cost of ninth grade “studies” and the content taught would pose difficult. While the question can be posed as to the benefit that tutoring might serve students or the teachers themselves in their own pursuit of livelihoods, the act of inquiry itself tends to assume otherwise. Therefore, shadow education in its more acceptable forms were explored here, though this does not negate the existence of tutelage by teachers in ways can be seen as detrimental or problematic on the part of the provider or teacher.

“Studies” for these stated reasons, most specifically for the presumed conflict of interest in poses for the teachers providing it, has been raised as a concern that has reached national levels of intervention. The government response to “Studies,” exemplifies Bray’s (2008) construction of policy strategies to Shadow Education as the typical initial response of a “total ban.”

Bray cautions that this response does not take notice of driving factors that give rise to the shadow industry and advises that such response might create further problems in regulating such measures. While the presence of “studies” - and interest on the part of those participating in it- might indicate a weak state unable to provide adequate basic educational resources to its people, as Baker (2008) proposes, it may also undermine the

provisions that the state is already doing by diverting resources such as teachers' time and instructional materials to the pursuit of tutoring.

MoBSE and policy makers are sufficiently familiar with the practice of private tutoring as to be aware of its proliferation throughout the country and to have responded to it with an all-encompassing policy measure to eliminate the practice where it occurs within school settings and is administered by teachers themselves. Community members, however, were not sure, though no less favoring of the practice.

It is unclear what process took place to illuminate the "threat" of studies sessions as a national issue to MoBSE, but its explicit targeting as a symptom of inadequate provision on the part of the state gave rise to a corresponding policy granting funds to rural communities for the teaching of remedial classes to struggling students to be taught by the classroom teachers. This strategy implies a focus on preserving the quality of education provided by the state, while attempting to address issues of equality in educational attainment and provision.

The decentralized school system also poses a complication to the "stopping" of studies and the "starting" of remedial classes, as the interpretation of what each mean can vary depending on the region, the school, or the individual inquired about it. To the school headmaster, remedial classes meant extra time in school for everyone, since none of the students in the school were performing at mastery level in any subject. The community members interviewed were unaware of "remedial" classes and continued to send their children to "studies". The introduction of the NAT exam and the mandate that NAT scores be published in the newspaper and visible in the school has refocused the nature of studies sessions to be for academic mastery for those in the targeted testing grades.

The context of Shadow Education in The Gambia gives it specific meaning that may differ from other settings, its distinction can be summarized as follows:

1. Outside of the urban areas, private tutoring is limited to provision on the part of individuals or formal school professionals, rather than embodying a separate and developed commercial industry. This could shift over time as educational attainment continues to improve in the rural area, driving the demand for tertiary education and “options.”
2. While private tutoring may indicate a source of supplemental income for some teachers, the relative salaries of teachers compared to other forms of employment in the area is stable to high and some tutoring occurs without financial benefit to the teachers. Supplemental income and livelihood stabilization can be seen as a potential motivator for some, however since fee-based studies are banned, it is less likely to occur in the school setting for such.
3. “Shadow Education” is an unknown term to policy planners, school monitors, education professionals and community members. It is however, a known practice that nearly all are familiar with.
4. Unlike systems where Shadow Education fills the role of supporting the “top” students to negotiate competitive school environments, supplemental education in rural Gambia has a broader focus that emphasizing widespread effort to achieve basic education. The benefit of supplemental education is less individualized and more public than other systems.
5. The local adaptation of supplemental education does not significantly stratify the socio-economic groups by excluding those who cannot afford it in the rural context, rather it may contribute to the stratification of more privileged groups in the urban areas relative to those in rural areas.

7. Acknowledging and Encouraging multiple modes of change:

Strategies that emphasize projectable change, and which account only for outcomes predicted by these approaches fail to recognize the multiple modes under which education continues to situate itself into the fabric of the society it exists in. This research proposes that emergent forms of change contribute greatly to the progression and form that education takes and should be of central consideration at every level of the educational development process from policy to practice. Emergent change relies on the relationships between actors to continually influence public perception and choices.

This is best exemplified by the attitudes of community members presented here, whose tenuous trust in the education system reveals both a sense of the *pressure* to perform along projectable lines, but also a sense of connection and *will* to engage in education. Their own shifting attitudes toward school and toward shadow education should be incorporated into any intervention that seeks to provide “quality” education. Further inquiry should continually seek to understand the complex relationships that all actors have on how education is perceived and received. All educational practices adapt a contextual and highly localized form that may be viewed as “failure” along traditional programmatic measures, but which may also signify tremendous gains along lines of interest, participation and attitudes toward education.

8. Recommendations for further Research:

Supplemental or “Shadow Education” will continue to be practiced in The Gambia, despite the government ban. This study reveals that locally defined educational needs can be reflective of the internationally defined goals of EFA. It also suggests that communities and schools have complex relationships that should be analyzed in any study aiming to interpret or inform policy on educational planning in rural areas of The Gambia. This study can be seen as preliminary, highlighting the experiences of educators and parents, but also limited to these groups. Here, perspectives on the *intensity* and *quality* of supplemental education are examined, but further analysis of the *economic implications* and *cost* of “Shadow Education” in both rural and urban areas, would be useful for informing policy strategies. Examining the quality of “studies” against other educational practices would prove challenging, although the question arises naturally from such research whether “studies” is effective in meeting its intended goals in this context.

This could be approached through larger scale, mixed methods approaches such as student and household surveys and observations of “Shadow” lessons, however observing and analyzing the quality of such lessons may prove sensitive given the government stance on “studies” and was avoided for this study in order to maintain the level of trust within the research setting. An appreciative approach to supplemental educational practices might incorporate so-called “shadow education” into its inquiry and in this way address further the economic impacts and reach on Educational planners and teachers who were interviewed. Those working at the regional level, in particular, took an interest over the course of this study in the topic of “Shadow Education” and felt emphatically that this area of research would be beneficial in the Gambian context. This can and should be pursued internally as a means of informing educational planning that is more reflective of local realities. Shadow Education in this context has the potential to be “harnessed” rather than banned outright, however a greater understanding of its scope and intensity in current practice are needed to inform decisions at the policy or state level.

In-depth qualitative research that aims to gain insights on the nature of supplemental education in The Gambia is helpful in reframing the discussion on rural schools as failures along projectable determinants of success. It is the hope of the researcher that community interest and investment in education are highlighted within this research and that interventions at the local level can assume an important role in educational provision. The experience of community members and educators themselves is often overlooked in much of the educational research as well as in the monitoring and evaluating of schools in the rural areas, and much can be learned from observing and discussing educational goals and provision with actors at this level.

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