

Chapter 6

The Structures and Agents Enabling Educational Corruption in Cambodia

Shadow Education and the Business of Examinations

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Because we are too poor to pay for extra lessons, we did not do well [on the examination.]

—Student (grade 12)¹

Teachers will always help their students [pass the examination] because if lots of students fail the exam, it's the teacher's fault. But the teachers don't usually tell everything that's on the exam; they just tell some points for students to learn.

—Teacher (grades 7–9)²

A central feature of the contemporary education system in Cambodia is the perceived necessity of extra classes in order for students to pass monthly, semester, and national examinations. Although this perception is not always correct because sometimes more students pass exams than take extra lessons, it does nevertheless highlight the issue of educational corruption in and through a system of shadow education.

Shadow education is a general concept that refers to extra classes such as private supplementary tutoring. Extra classes in the Cambodian context, referred to as *rien kuo*, are the type of shadow education that is broadly

defined as fee-based educational activities that “elaborate...on regular schooling” (Bray and Kwo 2014, 1).³ The term “elaborate” can take different meanings, ranging from teachers providing remedial help on concepts not adequately understood during mainstream schooling to selling examination answers to students (Brehm, Silova, and Tuot 2012).

The latter meaning of the word “elaborate” is where educational corruption enters the shadow education system. Research on educational corruption in shadow education has typically been conceptualized in two ways. The first way focuses on teachers as behaving in ways that abuse their publicly entrusted power for private gain (Heyneman 2009, 2011). This perspective blames teachers for individually corrupting the system of public education. The second way focuses on the system and context in which teachers operate that force them into corrupt actions (Johnson 2011). This perspective blames the system of education and the broader political-economic structures it is embedded within for creating the circumstances where corruption is a routine behavior. In both cases, the act of corruption is generally agreed upon: teachers who take money from students and reward them with better grades or examination questions in advance are *corrupting* the public education system. It is the cause of this problem that is debated: either it is individual behavior or it is socially determined.

The quotes at the beginning of this chapter are typical in Cambodia and highlight the different ways to understand the causes of corruption vis-à-vis shadow education. Many students believe they must attend their public schoolteacher’s extra classes after school hours in order to do well on examinations; and teachers feel pressure from principals, government officials, and/or parents and students to ensure students pass examinations, even if that means providing answers at times. Cutting through these experiences are fees. Students often have to pay fees to attend extra classes, and teachers, who often claim their government salary is insufficient, rely on this extra income. These dynamics support the proposition that the cause of corruption results from both individual behavior and a socially determined outcome of the system.

There have been mixed reactions to educational corruption. Recognizing deficiencies like low teacher salary, overcrowded classrooms, and double shift schooling in the education system, a common strategy by nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), is to provide scholarships (i.e., money to pay teacher/school fees) to students in order for them to attend extra classes. Although this perpetuates the system of shadow education, many NGOs justify the scholarships in the language of equal opportunity. Even some teachers allow poor students to attend extra classes for free or do not mandate a fee at all and instead ask for a contribution,

indicating they too understand the structural inequality that results from a necessary fee-based shadow education system and high-stakes testing. On the other end of the spectrum, students who are too poor to afford the fees of extra lessons—and do not receive NGO scholarships—often blame teachers for unfairly providing help and/or answers to students who do attend extra lessons. The government too faults teachers for extra lessons, citing purposefully inefficient teaching during mainstream school hours as the reason for extra lessons.

In this chapter, I expand on the educational corruption and shadow education research by combining both conceptualizations of the reasons for the phenomenon. Neither succumbing to individualizing behavior (*blame the teachers!*) nor social determinism (*it's the system!*), this chapter conceptualizes educational corruption as an emergent property of social relations within both the structures and agents comprising an education system in specific spaces, places, and times. The historic structures of education at a given time produce certain vested interests, opportunity costs, and situational logics of action, mainly routine, habitual action, within which teachers and students must act. Out of these structures emerge the possible condition of action that could be labeled “educational corruption.” But corruption is not a given state—something that is to be predetermined. Agents have the choice to act in different ways within particular conditions, sometimes (re)producing corruption but sometimes not. As such, agents sustain and/or transform preexisting structures through their actions and interactions with other agents over time, which is mediated through reflection (i.e., the mental consideration by an agent of themselves in relation to his or her social context). Educational corruption from this perspective emerges out of different types of agential behaviors that can reproduce/sustain or change/transform the structures that allow for the possibility of corruption. From this conceptualization, educational corruption is a complex social phenomenon that emerges from structures, contexts, agents, and reflexivity, which are bounded by space, place, and time.

The chapter proceeds by first setting the scene in contemporary Cambodia by drawing on a range of research studies, including the author's extensive research on this topic (Brehm forthcoming). The focus is on the trends in the shadow education and examination systems in Cambodia. With the Cambodian context in mind, the chapter next discusses educational corruption and shadow education more generally, separating studies between individual behavior and socially determined conceptualization of corruption. The following section lays out an alternative conceptualization of educational corruption and shadow education that connects individual behavior and social structures in more nuanced

and complex ways than the research studies reviewed in the previous section. The chapter concludes by suggesting that the reconceptualized notion of educational corruption requires different context-specific prescriptions to it by policymakers.

Shadow Education

Cambodia is an interesting case of shadow education because households spend a large percentage of income on education, particularly extra lessons taught by government schoolteachers after formal school hours. Bray (1996) first uncovered this finding in a multicountry comparison of educational financing. Out of nine countries in Asia, Cambodian households financed nearly 80 percent of educational resources compared to the government's 20 percent. Vietnam was the second highest country in the sample with over 50 percent of education costs financed by households. In the remaining countries, household financing accounted for no more than 30 percent of total educational expenditures.

The high household costs to education have mainly been attributed to structural deficiencies—low education expenditures by the government (and therefore low teacher salaries), large class sizes, and too few teachers—caused, in part, by nearly 100 years of colonialism and 30 years of civil war (Brehm and Silova 2014a). This has resulted in teachers performing various “tricks” to extract additional money from students for a variety of services in order to supplement low salaries (Dawson 2009). Shadow education is also used to teach the government curriculum, and is said to contribute to socioeconomic class divisions within society (Brehm Silova, and Tuot 2012).

Since 1994, research studies in Cambodia have addressed shadow education, specifically *rien kuo thoeumda*, or regular private tutoring. Regular private tutoring is fee-based classes taught by mainstream schoolteachers. My ongoing research into this phenomenon suggests this type of tutoring emerged in the late 1980s or early 1990s and likely did not exist previously. It is considered “regular” (*thoeumda*) because extra lessons look similar in terms of class size and student makeup to mainstream classes and are a common feature in many—if not most—schools.

Previous studies have looked specifically at this type of shadow education. They found student participation in shadow education increases with grade level. In 1999, 22 percent of the schools sampled had shadow education in grade 1 (Bray 1999). This increased to 51 percent in grade 6. Bray and Bunly (2005) likewise observed an increase in shadow education

participation in a school in Kampot province from 0 percent in grade 1 to nearly 80 percent in grade 6.

Another trend has been that participation rates have generally increased over time. In Bray (1999), the median rate of shadow education participation was 36.5 percent; in Bray and Bunly (2005), the median rate was 52.5 percent; and in Dawson (2009) the median rate was 71 percent. This trend does not hold, however, in a study completed in 2012. Brehm and colleagues (2012) found that 41 percent of grade 6 students attended private tutoring, which is a decrease from Dawson's (2009) data and closer to the median rate in Bray and Bunly (2005).

The divergence in data reported in 2012 requires a closer look at Dawson's (2009) study, which was conducted in 2008. Why was there a spike at this time? Notwithstanding the differences caused by methodological variation across the studies, the divergence needs to be contextualized in the global political economy.

A global food and financial crises occurred at the time Dawson collected data (*c.* 2008). Global food prices began rising in the early 2000s and hit a peak between 2007 and 2008 (Johnston, Kay, Lerche, and Oya 2010). At the same time, interest rates increased during the global financial crises of the late 2000s because of Cambodia's dual currency (Riel and US dollar) economy (CIA World Factbook 2011). In Cambodia, the increase in demand for food, coupled with low global stock, high oil prices, and the depreciation of the US dollar, meant food prices skyrocketed (Sombilla, Balisacan, Antiporta, and Dikitanan 2011). As food prices increased, the effect was devastating, particularly on urban families who did not own farmland. The government likewise was unable to meet its budgeted needs in education: from 2007 to 2011 the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MoEYS) spent less on education than was budgeted (Brehm Silova, and Tuot 2012, 13). As a result, households likely had to fill the gap in educational expenditures during these precarious economic times, restabilizing when Brehm and colleagues collected data in 2011.

The crises affected urban and rural household differently. During the global food and financial crises, teachers, like everyone else, had to spend more money to buy the same amount of food as precrisis times. In urban settings where farming is less likely a second profession than in rural settings, teachers often conduct tutoring as a means to increase their salary (Benveniste, Marshall, and Araujo 2008, 57). Teachers may have therefore forced more students to attend private tutoring through the various "tricks" (e.g., withholding content from mainstream schooling). Dawson (2009) reported in order to generate more income. In rural areas, by contrast, some farmers saw an increase in profit as food prices increased. Compared to urban households, rural families in general spent a smaller proportion

of household expenditures on food in 2009 than in 2004 (NIS 2011, 9). It is possible a decrease in the proportion of household expenditures spent on food in rural areas in 2009 corresponded to an increase in household expenditures on education, not through teacher “tricks” but through greater household demand. Since private tutoring is the largest household expenditure on education (NEP 2007), it likely increased as a consequence of the exogenous socioeconomic factors beginning in 2007.

At higher levels of schooling, the participation rates of tutoring are not as well reported across time as is tutoring in primary school. In secondary school, the participation rate in private tutoring appears to be higher than in primary school. Brehm and colleagues (2012) observed that 68 percent of sampled grade 9 students attended private tutoring compared to the 41 percent of students in their grade 6 sample. Ley Dalen, et al. (2012) likewise reported that 94 percent of grade 12 students sampled in Phnom Penh attended private tutoring. These studies indicate that tutoring likely continues to increase with grade through secondary school, peaking in grade 12 before the national high school exit examination. Although more research is needed to capture the participation rates across time and in different places in the future, it is clear that shadow education is a common phenomenon across all grades. It is possible to conclude that most students today know about *rien kuo thoeumda* and have likely participated in it at some point.

Examination System

High-stake examinations have been connected to shadow education as a major driver of demand (Bray and Lykins 2012, 23). Examinations are considered high stakes when achievement results are the sole—or one of a few—factors for advancement to higher levels of schooling. In systems with high-stake examinations, shadow education is perceived by families as a way to “invest...to secure an edge in the competition” (Bray and Lykins 2012, 23).

In Cambodia, there are different types of examinations. Each month, students take subject examinations, which are developed and graded by students’ own teachers. The scores on the monthly examinations together with attendance determine if a student passes or fails a subject and, collectively, a given grade level. Teachers create the monthly examinations and have historically sold photocopies of it to students (at least since the 1990s). This happens because most schools do not have photocopy machines. When teachers charge more than the price to photocopy each sheet, profit

is generated. This practice has been banned since January 2014 (Channyda 2014b), forcing teachers to write the examination on the board and students to copy them into their notebooks.

There are also semester examinations held twice a year. These examinations take place for students in grades 6, 9, and 12. These examinations are developed by the provincial and district offices of education and graded by students' own teachers. The semester examinations determine if a student transitions from primary (grades 1–6) to lower secondary school (grades 7–9). Students must score a 50 percent on semester examinations to pass (UNESCO 2008). The transition from lower secondary school to high school (grades 10–12) and the completion of grade 12 are based on a national examination. National examinations are developed by MoEYS and graded by teachers other than the students' own. There are also entrance examinations for public higher education institutions.

In a system of multiple high-stakes examinations, shadow education in Cambodia partly serves the purpose of preparing students.⁴ Recognizing the multiple purposes of shadow education at the primary and secondary level, the NGO Education Partnership (NEP) found: "Some of the focus of the private lessons is preparation for exams and students who cannot pay for private tutoring invariably do poorly on the exams and are often required to repeat the grade" (NEP 2007, 16–17). This was confirmed by Brehm and colleagues (2012) who found that "across all subjects, students who attended private tutoring scored on average twice as high as students who did not attend private tutoring" (28). Since teachers-*cum*-tutors are heavily involved in the examination structures (from preparing students to developing examinations to grading them), teachers can unfairly reward students who attend private tutoring classes with higher grades. The elimination of the grade 6 national examination suggests MoEYS understood this dilemma. Nevertheless, "policies which eliminated sixth grade exit examinations in Cambodia had little effect on reducing the corrupt practices of private tutoring by public school teachers" (Dawson 2010, 22).

There is a range of practices involved in examinations that could be considered corrupt. These can be separated into three different categories of time in relation to the examination: before, during, and after the examination. Before the examination, students can attend private tutoring lessons in hopes of obtaining examination questions in advance or possible answers. As a result, there is a spike in attendance during the weeks or months leading up to an examination. There is also the belief that teachers grade examinations more leniently for students who have given money to the teacher prior to the examination. Indeed, some teachers keep meticulous track of money received during private tutoring and by whom.⁵ There is also the common practice of students photocopying various types

of cheat sheets (which range from miniature copies of full textbooks to supposed answers obtained through some sort of leakage in the supply chain of examinations) prior to the examination. It is not uncommon to see students crowded inside a photocopy center days or hours before an examination.

During the examination, students can pay money to teachers and proctors directly, work in groups, copy answers from other students, or obtain cheat sheets on their phones or thrown in through the window. The *Cambodian Daily* reported a grade 12 student saying, "We bribed [proctors] in order to turn a blind eye when we copied from answer sheets" (Naren 2004). A 2012 survey of grade 12 students in Phnom Penh found that nearly seven out of ten sampled students paid money to proctors during the examination (Ley et al. 2012). The same number of students reported seeing or participating in channeling examination answers by throwing or receiving cheat sheets through classroom windows.⁶ Half of the students reported that cheating took place through the use of smart phones or by the proctor of the examination.⁷ Almost 80 percent of students reported they could copy answers from their neighbors during the exam.

After the examination, it is possible for students to purchase higher grades. In this scenario student names are detached from their scores, allowing for the manipulation and commodification of scores without altering (i.e., making up) scores. Some students are forced to pay upward of US\$300 in order to receive their score. For instance, if a student who scored a 90 percent on the examination could not afford to pay extra money after the examination, then his or her grade could be sold to a student who had failed the examination but was able to pay. The prevalence of such a practice is unknown, but it has been reported and indicates a host of possibilities of cheating *after* the examination.

With such a high prevalence of cheating, it is to be expected that there is a high rate of passing. In 1994, 70 percent of students who took the grade 12 examination passed. This number increased to 79 percent in 1998 (UNESCO 2008, 15). In 2002, the number plummeted to 39.9 percent after MoEYS implemented a more difficult examination and attempted to stop bribery and cheating (Samean 2002). By 2007, the number increased to 72.7 (Channyda 2008). In 2009, the results reached 77.8 percent (Channyda 2009), climbing to 81.9 percent in 2010 (Chansy 2010). More recently, over 90 percent of grade 12 students passed the 2014 semester exams (Channyda 2014a).

There are multiple reasons to question the efficacy of cheating. One reason is that the passing rates are often dependent on factors other than a student's knowledge, preparation, or cheating. In 2005, for instance, the grade 9 examination was retooled to be easier (Naren 2005). Prior

to 2005, the grade 9 examination was scored out of 500 points. Passing grades required half, or 250 points. Starting in 2005, however, the number of points needed to pass the examination reduced to 220 and 210 points. This equates to passing grades of 42–44 percent. The reason for the retooling of the examination was because each province was pressured by MoEYS to obtain a passing rate of least 85 percent. In the end, 89 percent of students nationwide passed the grade 9 examination. This has stayed relatively consistent since then (e.g., in 2010, 90 percent of grade 9 students passed; Naren 2010).

Upward and Downward Conflation of Educational Corruption

As noted in the introduction, educational corruption is often conceptualized between two extremes: individualized behavior and social determinism. The former conceptualizes society as an aggregation of individuals (upward conflation) and the latter neglects agency (downward conflation). This section will briefly outline these two perspectives, offering a critique of both.

Blame the Teacher! Upward Conflation

The most common explanation of educational corruption locates blame at the individual level. Teachers are common targets because they hold power (over grades, attendance, etc.) in systems of education at the local level. Parents and students know when a teacher is acting in ways that are unfair and/or corrupt. For instance, the first example of educational corruption offered by Chapman (2002) is of “an underpaid teacher, to make ends meet, charges students a ‘paper fee’ in order for them to take the end of year national examination for their grade. Students must pass this test in order to progress to the next grade” (22). In this hypothetical situation, which is common in the Cambodian case, students, who may understand the socioeconomic conditions of the teachers, nevertheless experience the burden of corruption because they must pay paper fees directly to the teacher in order to progress through the education system. Corruption is located in the student’s relation to the teacher.

Heyneman’s (2009) categorization of education corruption places the onus squarely on individuals. He categorizes corruption into four main types. First, there is corruption in educational functions (bribery

or extortion by individuals). Second, corruption can be found in the supply of education goods or services. Third, professional misconduct can lead to corruption (e.g., withholding content during mainstream school to force students into private tutoring). Last, there is corruption in the use of educational property for profit making. These various forms of corruption prevailed and likely increased through the decentralization and privatization reforms in education during the 1990s. For Heyneman, Anderson and Nuraliyeva (2008) educational corruption increased when systems of education broke down: when "the central authority in education broke down and the various agents (ministry officials, rectors, faculty, and staff) no longer acted in concert" (Heyneman, Anderson, and Nuraliyeva 2008, 1-2). The actions by agents deteriorated the quality of education "because individual rent-seeking behavior by agents increased" (Heyneman, Anderson, and Nuraliyeva 2008, 2).

The portrayal of educational corruption by Heyneman and colleagues (Heyneman, Anderson, and Nuraliyeva 2008; Heyneman 2009) locates it as an individual behavior while contextualizing that behavior. In the various post-Soviet country cases, it was the "economic transition" that led "agents" to behave in corrupt ways (Heyneman, Anderson, and Nuraliyeva 2008, 1). In this perspective, it is the breakdown of educational systems that cause individuals to behave corruptly. Properly functioning education systems cannot, by implication, be a cause of educational corruption. This is similar to Bray (2003), who emphasizes the lack of government accountability structures that create an environment where teachers can misuse their monopoly power. As such, Bray (2003, 28) locates corruption as monopoly power by individuals who choose to act in a system without accountability. From this perspective, teachers may "slow down their pace of delivery in order to ensure that they have a market for the after-school supplementary classes" (Bray, 1999, 55). These individual actions are possible partly because there are no systems of accountability to prevent corrupt behavior.

When it comes to educational corruption and private tutoring, teachers are often the culprits because of the power they wield inside the education system. In a 2006 study, Silova, Johnson, and Heyneman (2007) labeled teachers who undertake private tutoring practices as "monopoly suppliers of tutoring services to potential university students" (p. 15). The concept of "monopoly" relates to the "misuse of public power" (Karklins 2005). Within the Cambodian context, Hayden and Martin (2011) have claimed "making attendance at private tutorial classes [is] the only way of acquiring knowledge that is essential for passing examinations" (p.13), thus placing a great deal of power in the hands of teachers.

The main problem with conceptualizing corruption as an individual behavior is that casual efficacy is only granted to individual agency. The structures of society, in this perspective, are constructed through the aggregation of individual behavior. This is methodological individualism, conflating individual agency with social structures. This is called "upward conflation" (Archer 1995) because it explains social structures through the aggregation of individual behavior. As such, corruption is perceived to result from "individual decision-makers, who are not only regarded as their own 'sovereign artificers' but are also credited, along with others like them, with making their society too—through the aggregate effects of their decisions" (Archer and Tritter 2000, 7). This conceptualization sidesteps the interdependence between social structures and human agency. Habitual, routinized behaviors—not to mention altruism—are not given credence in this approach. Nevertheless, Heyneman (2011) conflates the agency of individual teachers who tutor their own students with the structures that make such a scenario possible when he argues that "a classroom teacher should not be the tutor of the same pupil enrolled in the regular class. This conflict of interest is contrary to the professional standards of educators and should be punished with a fine and/or loss of teaching license" (p. 186). Upward conflation leads to individualized policy solutions to the perceived "problem" of educational corruption: if all individuals behaved ethically, educational corruption would disappear.

It's the System! Downward Conflation

An alternative conceptualization of educational corruption understands it as a result of particular circumstances that are out of the control of individual teachers. Blame, in other words, is placed on the context and the system, not the individual. Johnson (2011) captures this by saying, "blame the context, not the culprits" (p. 254). This perspective derived from Johnson's (2008) study in Kyrgyzstan where he found that "most [students surveyed and interviewed] believe that the reason for teacher corruption is systemic (the government, economy, or society), not the failings of an individual" (p. 190). This account is similar to Rose-Ackerman's (1999), who referred to corruption as "a survival strategy" (p. 72).

The causal explanations of education corruption derive from some sort of systemic failure. When it comes to tutoring, Biswal (1999) suggested the main reasons for teacher-supplied tutoring are related to (1) low salaries from governmental schools and (2) weak accountability and monitoring systems. In the Cambodian context, Brehm Silova, and Tuot (2012, 14) and Dawson (2009, 71) point to low teacher salary, overcrowded

classrooms, and double shift schooling as the factors causing corruption. Furthermore, Dawson (2009) claims, "The danger is that national and international actors have missed a window of opportunity to increase salaries earlier to avoid the institutionalization of corruption throughout the national civil service" (p. 65).

Corruption as "institutionalized" suggests it is not necessarily the fault of an individual teacher but rather is a natural part of the system. With the right policy interventions, the calculus of corruption could be alerted and eliminated. By implication, educational corruption is socially determined.

The main problem with viewing educational corruption as socially determined is that causal efficacy is granted only to social structures. In other words, agency is denied to teachers who are simply robotic actors performing habitual, routinized actions without subjectivity. This approach is downward conflation because "agency is explained *in terms of* structure" (Sibeon 2004, 97). In this view, the main reason for educational corruption derives from structural deficiencies, which if corrected would fix the education system by removing the conditions necessary for educational corruption to thrive. Teachers in this account have little if any ability to change the education system within which they teach and work.

A Critical Realist Approach

The two ways to understand corruption do not account for the "two-way interplay between" social structures and human agencies (Archer 1998, 74). Upward conflation emphasizes agency over structure and downward conflation emphasizes structures over agency. An alternative view starts with the assumption that individuals and society "do not constitute two moments of the same process. Rather they refer to radically different things" (Bhaskar 1989, 33). As such, "agents and structures are ontologically different, but they are intertwined and together they account for the state of social affairs at any time and place" (Archer 2014, 26–27).

From this critical realist perspective, educational corruption is trans-factual. That means educational corruption is enduring in all systems of education and not fleeting. In some specific cases, individual teachers can engage in (or "activate" in critical realist terminology) educational corruption, while in other instances it can be left dormant. Likewise, systems of education can be structured in ways that are more likely to result in the activation of educational corruption than others. There are various generative mechanisms (i.e., the underlying processes that account for an observable event) that "combine to generate the flux of phenomena that

constitute the actual states and happenings of the world” (Bhaskar 1978, 47). It is therefore important to look at specific cases and carefully examine the interplay between social structures and human agency to determine when and where educational corruption is activated.

The Cambodian education system, which is marked in part by its high-stake testing regime and underpaid teachers, has a transfactual property for educational corruption that is typically (but not always) activated through private tutoring by a student’s own teacher. Either by students’ demand or teachers’ supply, a teacher-*cum*-tutor may emerge as an empirical reality. When this happens, educational corruption is possible because the power relationship between teacher and students can take on new features—such as providing money in exchange for answers.

Despite the potential for educational corruption within systems of education marked by high-stakes testing and underpaid teachers, the transfactual property of educational corruption by teachers who are tutors may never be realized. It is an enduring property, but must be activated by specific generative mechanisms. These generative mechanisms may be “possessed, unexercised, exercised, unactualised, and actualised independent of human perception or detection” (Bhaskar 1989, 16). In other words, some teachers in systems of education that have high-stakes testing and underpaid teachers may never exhibit the property of educational corruption; some teachers may tutor his or her own students without exchanging examination answers for money. Although the property of educational corruption is present, it is not always and necessarily activated. The property of educational corruption is context specific and emerges under certain conditions.

In searching for generative mechanisms, it is important to look at social structures and human agency as distinct features although interdependent of each other. As such, human agents make the structures creating systems of education where corruption is transfactually possible, but agents are also made by those very structures that predate action. From this perspective, structures constrain, enable, and/or motivate agents. Structures produce specific vested interests, opportunity costs, and situational logics of action. These change across time and context. In addition, agents sustain and transform structures by their actions and interactions. As such, “there was no time when individuals were solely the cause of (or solely responsible for) their own social situations” (Archer 2014, 29).

Vested interests, opportunity costs, and situational logics of actions indicate there is a history to social structures. Teachers enter a schooling system not of their own making. Tutoring and corruption are social phenomena that predate a teacher’s own agency. As such, the situational logic of teachers in Cambodia conditions the possible types of action

by a single teacher. In fact, there are situational logics for all actors in the education system: in Cambodia, students understand that “you learn 50 percent in a government school and 50 percent in private tutoring” (cited in Brehm and Silova 2014b, 166) and as such make decisions within this logic in response to the perceived necessity of tutoring. These actions can be habitual and routinized—that is, commonly and unconsciously practiced by students—or deliberate—that is, the acknowledgment that going to tutoring may provide some sort of advantage. Situational logics provide “directional guidance for action” (Archer 2014, 34). In Cambodia, guidance is toward private tutoring and examination cheating.

Various actors have vested interests in the maintenance of the Cambodian system of education. Vested interests “arise out of scarcity, through social processes of unequal distribution” (Archer 2014, 31). Some teachers are able to seize upon the structural deficiencies (e.g., short school day caused by double shift schooling) to increase their salaries through tutoring. Likewise, principals may be able to charge rent for the use of classrooms by teacher-*cum*-tutors after school hours. Students and households may also have vested interests in the current education system because achievement can, in some cases, be purchased. This is an opportunity for some families who have disposable income and place value on educational achievement. NGOs also have a vested interest in maintaining the current educational system. That many give scholarships to students to attend private tutoring classes suggests that if the system of education were to change, then NGOs may lose a program for donors to fund. This could threaten the work of the NGO.

The government too has vested interests that sustain the system of private tutoring. The Cambodian government is dependent on donors (e.g., 32 percent of the 2013 budget came from donors; MoEYS 2014). As such, the government is under pressure to comply with international standards advocated by donors like the World Bank. One example related to the discussion here is that the World Bank views private tutoring as mainly a positive feature of educational systems. A report by Dang and Rogers (2008) for the World Bank highlights the different benefits of private tutoring. They believe private tutoring can “provide more individualized instruction than is possible in public schools, using a more flexible delivery mechanism” (p. 163). As such, the Cambodian government has had to balance the interests of the donor community, which, at least in part, views private tutoring positively, with the negative consequences experienced by teachers, students, and parents in order to maintain donation levels.

Opportunity costs relate to the cost or benefit of acting on a vested interest. In Cambodia, educational corruption derives from the need to supplement teacher salaries in a system with limited accountability. Many teachers must work a second job to supplement their income. The choice as to which job is most valuable presents different opportunity costs to teachers. In urban settings, since teachers cannot farm, they may see their best option for a second job as a tutor. Indeed, in most studies in Cambodia, there is a greater rate of tutoring in urban areas than rural. In rural settings by contrast, teachers may be able to farm and therefore be able to forego tutoring as a second job. There are noneconomic opportunity costs as well. Teachers in rural areas likely live in and know the entire community where the school is located. This makes tutoring for a fee undesirable by some teachers because extracting money from relatively poor households may cause bad relations between the teacher and community. These social opportunity costs play out differently in urban settings where teachers often do not interact with students' parents on a regular basis.

Students also have opportunity costs that may reproduce structures enabling corruption. These include the realization that attending private tutoring is a valuable opportunity for future prospects like university enrollment or employment. Therefore, foregoing private tutoring to help on the farm or work a job may be a bad choice when compared to potential future earnings. These students would therefore be reproducing the structures of the education system that produces the necessary conditions to activate educational corruption.

Vested interests, opportunity costs, and situational logics of action are features of a social structure that condition human agency. The structures are, in other words, sustained by human action. These features do not always dictate action, however. Human agents have the potential to transform structures by their actions and interactions. There is a degree of freedom to act in ways other than the spatial-temporal specific vested interests, opportunity costs, and situational logics would suggest.

Agents have properties and powers that create degrees of freedom. These degrees of freedom range from "agentive...to, more deeply, freedom as emancipation" (Bhaskar and Norrie 1998, 570). Agentive freedom is the capacity by an actor to do otherwise while emancipatory freedom is the ability of an agent to radically transform society.

Agency is mediated by reflexivity. Archer (2007) defined reflexivity as "the regular exercise of the mental ability, shared by all normal people, to consider themselves in relation to their (social) context and vice versa" (p. 4). Reflexivity is the basis for action, but not all reflexivity is the same.

Some enables degrees of freedom while others sustain and reproduce the very structures in which the agent exists. Archer (2007, 93) classifies four types of reflexivity:

Communicative reflexives: Those whose internal conversation requires completion and confirmation by others before resulting in courses of action.

Autonomous reflexives: Those who sustain self-contained internal conversations, leading directly to action.

Meta reflexives: Those who are critically reflexive about the impact of structure on their actions.

Fractured reflexives: Those whose internal conversations intensify their distress and disorientation rather than leading to purposeful courses of action.

Notwithstanding the problem that these categories imply that people occupy static positions instead of emphasizing the ability of people to occupy different reflexivity positions in different situations and times (Dyke, Johnston and Fuller 2012), they do nevertheless shed light on the ways that actors engage in educational corruption. "Robin Hood" teachers found in Kobakhidze's (2014) study on teachers-*cum*-tutors in Georgia could be classified as meta-reflexives when they allow poor students to attend extra lessons for free. Similarly, many teachers who sustain the system of private tutoring and activate educational corruption may do so because they are communicative reflexives; there is a community of agents acting in similar ways because they have discussed their circumstances, situations, and responses to it. An instance of autonomous reflexivity can be located in rural areas during the food/financial crises. Although the situational logic of rural areas encouraged less tutoring by teachers for both economic and extra-economic reasons, the global crises may have created the situation where both students/parents and teachers decided to act in ways other than would be logical within the historical situation of rural tutoring. As circumstances changed, human agents acted in different ways and likely transformed the situational logic as such.

Conclusion

Educational corruption cannot be reduced to individual behavior or social determinism. It requires a complex understanding of the social mechanisms that produce the possibility of corruption within certain spaces and at specific times. This chapter has argued that the explanation for

educational corruption comes from the interplay between structures and agents. As such, a particular language of situational logics and reflexivity was detailed as a way to explain the activation of educational corruption, which transfactually exists in all systems of education.

In Cambodia, the system of private tutoring is one site where educational corruption is activated. Educational corruption in these cases is neither the fault of individual teachers nor the system itself. Rather, the phenomenon can be better explained through an understanding of the structures that produce particular vested interests, opportunity costs, and situational logics, and the multiple forms agency can take, which are mediated through different modes of reflexivity.

Policymakers would therefore do well to understand that combating educational corruption does not happen in closed systems where all effects derive from the same cause. Teachers are not the problem because they are conditioned to act, just like students, parents, government officials, and donors, in particular ways. Moreover, the space through which educational corruption is activated is an open system subject to exogenous (and endogenous) forces that can cause unintended outcomes. The question policymakers must struggle with is this: Under what circumstances does the transfactual property of educational corruption remain dormant more often than it is activated?

NOTES

1. Quote from Channyda, 2014a.
2. Quote from author's research on shadow education (Brehm forthcoming).
3. There are multiple types of extra classes in the Cambodian context (see Brehm forthcoming).
4. Examination preparation can happen outside of private tutoring. Preparation can happen in tutoring centers like Chey Thay, which is located in Phnom Penh and caters to students preparing for the national high school exit and university entrance examinations.
5. This was the case for one teacher who provided data to Brehm and colleagues (2012).
6. This practice has existed since the 1950s–1960s. During classroom observations of an examination, I witnessed students throwing pieces of paper through windows. This practice is so common that it is the reason police officers surround school buildings during national examinations.
7. I met a student who had his smart phone broken by a teacher after he was caught looking at pictures of examination answers on Facebook.

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