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Some socio-cultural correlates of recruitment to the teaching profession

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pupil at school does not usually have such freedom of choice. The ways in which some of the essentially coercive components of the classroom situation influence the relationship are not clear, but it would be futile to suppose that they have no influence at all (22).

The fact that teaching embraces a wide variety of subjects is also a source of some difficulty when one is considering the criterion of specialist knowledge. The teacher in the primary school has very often to be proficient in virtually every subject in the primary school curriculum. Such diversification means that the teacher's knowledge of a given area is neither specialist nor deep (23). In addition, it may mean that his pedagogical knowledge can be spread too thin.

The consideration of the knowledge of the teacher is incomplete, however, without a consideration of the way in which that knowledge is acquired - or, more correctly, without a consideration of the institution within which the knowledge has been acquired.

Fragmentation of teacher training, as outlined in 2.2.3 above, has as one of its concomitants a situation in which there is no way of knowing to what extent training can be considered to be equivalent. Some have argued that students who read subjects for three years at Colleges of Education are not as well informed as their counterparts at

Universities who have read the same subjects for a similar period (24). The profession *par excellence*, medicine, demands the same basic training of all who aspire to be doctors. Not even law and engineering do that. Doctors have an identical training for the initial six and a half years - thereafter they specialise if they wish. This means that the general practitioner, at the foot of the scale, and the specialist surgeon at the top have the same basic training; they are bound by the same Hippocratic Oath and code of ethics.
Teachers do not have a common basic training, nor yet do they have a common code of ethics.

Goode feels that there are only four real professions, which he calls the four great *person* professions: law, medicine, the ministry and university teaching. For him, in terms of the knowledge criterion, school teaching is by no means a profession (25). For Musgrave, on the other hand, teaching is a profession on the grounds that the inexpert child has to consult the expert adult in the classroom - the teacher.
The question as to whether or not school teaching satisfies the knowledge criterion is as yet unsettled, with some evidence adduced both in favour of and in rejection of the view that teaching satisfies this criterion. The answer may be found when the role of professional training

has been more clearly defined.

2.2.4.2 Control of entry

At present in the Transvaal no teachers' association has any direct voice in controlling who shall and who shall not practise as a teacher. All teachers at state schools in the province are employed by the Provincial Government and as such are servants of the State. The result has been that the Administration lays down the requiremerts for entry to the teaching body, although it must be pointed out that in the Transvaal, at least, machinery does exist for consultation between the Administration and the teachers' associations. Graduates with no professional training are permitted to teach in state schools as long as they can offer subjects which are taught in the schools. They are paid somewhat less than their colleagues with professional qualifications, but the difference in remuneration is so slight as to be almost negligible.

The need for control of entry has long been felt, and the proposed South African Teachers' Council, which would administer a register of practitioners, is something towards which the teachers' associations are working. Du Toit (26) has stated the case in the following terms:

"Tans beskik die onderwyser nie oor 'n werklike eie selfregerende en verteen=woordigende organisasie nie. Die Suid-Afrikaanse Onderwysersraad wat in die

vooruitsig gestel word, is daarom seker een van die grootste verwagtinge van die onderwysberoep."

The official organ of the Transvaal Teachers' Association has painted the other side of the picture, however (27):

"We cannot be said to be progressing towards a Teachers' Council and Register with a gay abandon or with undue haste. Many members of the TTA today are concerned about who should be allowed on to the Register; what minimum qualifications should be laid down."

There is a movement towards control of entry to the profession by teachers themselves, but that control is by no means yet a reality. Teaching does not satisfy this particular criterion for a profession.

2.2.4.3 Code of Professional Conduct

There is no professional code of conduct by which teachers are bound formally. Despite the fact that no such code exists, teachers are expected to behave professionally, both by the public and by the administration which employs them. A teacher may be required to resign if he is found guilty of gross incompetence or misconduct or both (28), conditions which seem to imply some standard in terms of which the behaviour of the teacher may be judged. Research has shown that parental attitudes to teachers seem in the main to expect teachers to be exemplary in their conduct (29), which

gives force to the contention that society at large seems to have some kind of expectations of teachers.
Although no written code of ethics at present exists, such a code does exist, both in the Education Ordinance of 1952 and in the minds and attitudes of those who are engaged in the teaching enterprise.

It would be fair to contend that there is a code of ethics for teachers - as yet not formally adhered to by them, but honoured nevertheless in the daily practice of the profession.

2.2.4.4 Freedom to practise the Profession

Obviously teachers are not free to practise in quite the same way as are medical men. In any bureaucratic system such as a state-controlled education system an elaborate system of checks and counter-checks is to be found, and teaching is no exception. Teachers in schools in the Transvaal are subject to the demands of a hierarchy of individuals, who make demands not only of an organisational kind, but of a pedagogical kind as well.
The assistant teacher, in addition to being subject to checks from the hierarchy of individuals above him, is also to a large extent controlled by the syllabus for the subject he is teaching. He is not as a rule personally empowered to decide what he will teach. Nevertheless, syllabuses are drawn up by committees of competent teachers, with the result that

although each individual teacher may not decide what he shall teach, the decision as to what should be taught is normally reached by teachers, rather than by bureaucrats.
Whether this constitutes 'freedom to practise the profession' is somewhat doubtful. Etzioni has distinguished between what he calls administrative acts and professional acts, making that distinction in the following terms:

"The ultimate justification of an administrative act ... is that it is in line with the organisation's rules and regulations, and that it has been approved, directly or by implication, by a superior rank" (30).

It might justifiably be concluded that, whatever the extent to which teachers may be consulted with regard to certain matters, there is very little scope for personal initiative on the part of the individual teacher. The teacher does, in many cases, act administratively rather than professionally in the sense that what he does has to have the sanction of those in authority over him. Insofar as this is the case, the teacher cannot be said to be a professional person.

2.2.4.5 Professional Organisations

A number of professional teachers' organisations exist in the Transvaal. Such organisations exist for teachers both in State and in private schools. Only those

organisations for teachers in State schools will be considered here, as they represent by far the largest body of teachers. There are the Transvaal Teachers' Association (TTA), which represents mainly the interests of English-speaking teachers in the province; the Transvaalse Onderwysersvereniging (TO), which represents the interests of the Afrikaans-speaking teachers in the province; and the Transvaal High School Teachers' Association (THSTA), also known as Die Vereniging van Onderwysers in Transvaalse Middelbare Skole (VOTMS), which is a bilingual organisation.
The first two organisations mentioned above represent the interests of the teacher at the State school, irrespective of the type of school at which he teaches. Although separate organisations exist for the two language groups, many teachers in the province belong to both of the organisations. The THSTA, as its name implies, represents the interests of the secondary school teacher only.
None of the organisations at present is a truly professional organisation in the sense that was outlined in 2.2.1.5 above. They concern themselves mainly with matters relating to conditions of service, a point which will be elaborated upon in 2.2.4.6 below. The creation and maintenance of a professional register is a matter which has enjoyed high priority in the proceedings of these associations in recent years, and there

is reason to suppose that the establishment of a National Education Council and a Professional Register will be forthcoming in the not too distant future.

2.2.4.6 The teachers' organisations mentioned under 2.2.4.5 above concern themselves to a substantial degree with matters relating to conditions of service for teachers. This includes aspects such as holidays, salaries, leave conditions, syllabus content and the like. The teachers' associations are almost always the spokesmen for teachers who are dissatisfied with aspects of service and, on occasion, the association can be called upon to come to the aid of a teacher who for some reason or other is unable to get satisfaction on a given point from the bureaucratic administrative system which regulates State education.

The teachers' associations have benevolent funds to aid deserving cases, legal aid funds for the defence of teachers in certain cases, official organs such as the *Transvaal Educational News* and the *Transvaalse Onderwysblad*, standing committees on a number of vital educational issues, and the like. They are an important facet of educational life in the province at present (32). They have by no means the same degree of influence as an organisation like the National Union of Teachers in England, however.

2.2.4.7 Recognition by the Public

The extent to which teaching is recognised as a profession by the public is not clear. One researcher in South Africa has maintained that

"The fact that 69.8% of the Standard 10 pupils' parents would approve if they became teachers indicates that they are well-disposed to the teaching profession ..." (33).

Some writers contend that the Afrikaans-speaking sector of the community see teaching as a profession (34), while others hold to the opposite view (35). Certainly the view of officialdom in the Transvaal seems to be that teaching is a profession (36, 37). The current crisis prevailing in teaching, however, and the failure of young people to come forward seems to indicate that more definite efforts need to be made to find out what the attitudes to teaching of the public really are (38).

2.2.4.8 Conclusions

In the light of the criteria which have been outlined above, the question to which an answer must be sought is quite simple: Is teaching a profession? The answer to the question is not so simple. Musgrave contends that teaching is a profession (39). Etzioni and Goode, among others, contend that it is not (40).

It is clear that the teacher occupies an ambiguous position in modern society, a position which has been called 'multi-dimensional' by Hodgkinson (41). The multidimensionality of this position is in no small measure attributable to the fact that there is such diversity and complexity to be found among teachers as a group - not only amongst them as persons, but also in terms of the roles that they are called upon to fill. It is because of these differences within the group that generalisations about 'professionalism' are almost impossible to make.

If the criteria laid down in 2.2.4 above were to be applied sufficiently stringently, it would be impossible to reach any conclusion other than that teaching is not a profession. However, Du Toit has made the point (42) that if the criteria are sufficiently rigid, no single occupational category in the world can clearly be called 'professional'. Lieberman has denied that teachers in America are a professional group (43), as has Etzioni, among others (44). Musgrave has contended that 'there is a reasonable case for saying that there is a teaching profession' (45). Tropp (46) has maintained that teachers in England have attained professional status, in spite of the fact that they are not self-governing.

These very different conclusions stem

from the different emphases which have been laid on the characteristics of a profession, as well as from the broad spectrum of educational qualifications, type of teaching and types of institutions which form a part of the experience of teachers as a body.

It does not seem unreasonable to argue that the definition of a 'profession' depends to a greater or lesser extent on the degree to which the category being studied satisfies the criteria which are adduced as being applicable. One might with some justification, therefore, support the view of Musgrave (45) that teaching may reasonably be called a profession - the basic requirement in the Transvaal of a Standard 10 Certificate at least, followed by at least three years of post-school training, which is both academic and professional, as a requirement for entry to teaching, sets a standard of attainment which is higher than that which applies in a number of other countries (47). In addition, there can be no doubt that there is, at least in the Transvaal, a continual, if cautious movement towards greater participation by teachers in the affairs of the profession.

For purposes of this dissertation, therefore, it is accepted that teaching is a profession; albeit not in so rigorous a sense as that which may be applied

to other professions such as law and medicine.

2.3 Definition of the term 'Socio-Cultural'

2.3.1 Definition of the term 'Culture'

This research will make no pretensions to being anthropological in nature, but there can be no doubt that information which is of interest to the social anthropologist will be obtained from it. It is for this reason that the term 'culture' as it will be understood in this work must be clearly defined.

There are virtually as many definitions of culture as there are definers of the term, and it is proposed in this section to examine some of the definitions which have been offered, and to see to what extent a common statement about the meaning of the term 'culture' can be derived from them.

Winick (48) has offered the following definition of the term:

> "(Culture is) all that which is non-biological and socially transmitted in the society, including artistic, social, ideological and religious patterns of behaviour, and the techniques for mastering the environment. The term culture is often used to indicate a social grouping that is smaller than a civilisation but larger than an industry".

Linton (49) has defined the term 'culture' as follows:

> "A culture is the configuration of learned behaviour, and the results of behaviour, whose component elements are shared and transmitted

by the members of a particular society".

Tyler (50) has contended that

"culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, law, custom, and other capabilities acquired by man as a member of society".

Kroeber (51) prefers to avoid any attempt at definition of what the term means, maintaining that what culture means can more adequately be understood by understanding how it works and what forms it takes, than by means of a definition or definitions. He argues that

"culture is in this respect like life or matter: it is the total of their varied phenomena that is more significant than a concentrated phrase about them" (52).

The definitions which have thus far been cited all demonstrate a common factor - an acknowledgement that culture is in some way related to society. Winick has spoken about that which is non-biologically transmitted in the society; Linton has used the term 'transmitted by the members of a particular society'; Tylor has used the term 'a member of society'.

If what these writers say can be accepted, it is clear that there is no slight relationship between the concepts 'society' and 'culture'. It is plain that there can be no culture without a society; Kroeber argues that "no cultureless human society is known" (53). This indicates that the two concepts are inextricably intertwined in human experience, although some artificial separation may take place for purposes of

scientific discussion. It has been argued that, while animals by definition may live in a 'society', they do not have a culture:

> "beyond the range of man there are societies, but no cultures" (54).

'Culture' is therefore something which is unique to man - possibly it could be contended that it is what man has, but what other social species lack. Johnson (55) has maintained that culture is 'abstract', and that it consists of patterns for living and dying; that such patterns are cultural to the extent that they are learned directly or indirectly in social interaction and to the extent that they are part of the common orientation of two or more people (56).

It is also clear that culture manifests itself in behaviour and in the results of specific behaviour; but it may be argued that culture is not simply the behaviour observed any more than it is the results of that behaviour. An example might be the ant, who may be observed to be engaged in active behaviour, and the result of whose labours may be observed in, say, the form of an antheap. But the ant is not because of this 'cultured'. The human being, on the other hand, may be observed to be indulging in similar behaviour: men may be observed to be constructing a building, and the result of their labours, the building itself, may be seen. Both the behaviour and the result of the behaviour are not in themselves culture: they are, rather, the result of certain cultural factors.

Thus far, therefore, it has been observed that:

- those definitions of the term 'culture' which have been cited all acknowledge the interdependence of the concepts of 'society' and 'culture'

- culture is characteristic of human societies alone
- the patterns which constitute culture are learned
- culture gives rise to certain behaviour, and the results of behaviour, both of which may be observed, but neither of which constitutes culture in itself

2.3.2 Some characteristics of Culture

Since the work of Benedict (57) the term 'culture pattern' has enjoyed some vogue. Ottaway (58) has suggested that the term may be taken to mean

> "the ways of behaviour associated with any permanent need or function in the social life" (59).

The same writer has suggested that the following would serve as some examples of what culture patterns could be considered to be:

- the way in which children are brought up
- religious practices
- methods of doing business and trade
- ways of eating and drinking
- ideals of life.

It is plain that within a society sufficiently large, different groups could exist which might have radically different ways of behaving in the areas outlined above. In such a case, the term 'sub-culture' would be used (60).

A number of sociologists and anthropologists distinguish between what they call "material" and "non-material" culture (61). Material culture, in terms of this distinction, comprises those tangible objects which have been devised by man -

things like, for example, houses, house furnishings, tools and works of art. These tangible things are also referred to as "artifacts" or "culture objects" (62).

The point should be stressed, however, that a concrete object *in itself* is not a part of culture. Johnson (63) has made the point that it is not possible to learn an artifact; as has been stressed in the previous section, culture involves learned *behaviour*. A refrigerator, for example, is an artifact. But its cultural aspect, which is intangible, exists not in the refrigerator itself, but in the minds of those who make use of it. Such knowledge includes things like what it is used for, how to make it work and so on. If a refrigerator were to be transported to the Antarctic and left there, it would remain an artifact and not a cultural object (63a).

An additional reason why artifacts cannot be regarded as a part of culture is that they cannot be transmitted socially without some loss to the original possessor. From the previous section it is clear that if culture is learned behaviour, there must be those in the group or tribe who are involved in passing on elements of culture to the rising generation. This transmission of culture (64) does not in any way deprive the transmitter of his own cultural heritage or values. Many social anthropologists seem to argue that tranmission of an artifact would clearly do so.

Non-material culture, on the other hand, is far more that aspect of culture which is concerned with the affective area of human experience. Some have called this area 'common orientation'.

The debate which continues in the realm of culture transmission and pluralism need not concern us at this point (65).

Kroeber (66) has pointed out that there is also a distinction between what one might call 'implicit' culture and 'explicit' culture. Such a distinction takes cognisance of the fact that a specific individual, or even a number of individuals who share a specific cultural complex, are not necessarily aware of all the aspects of the complex. Johnson (67) uses language as an example. The young child is able to speak the language of his group and to make himself understood to them. But he knows nothing of the patterns of grammar and syntax which underlie the language that he is speaking. In this sense, the language patterns he is using constitute implicit culture to the child. He must *know* the language in order to communicate; it is unnecessary for him to *know about* it. It has been maintained that

> "implicit culture ... consists of those aspects of culture which its bearers (or possessors) are not able to describe very accurately, if at all. Explicit culture consists of those aspects of which the bearers are fully conscious" (68).

There are obviously a great many elements involved in culture, and it may be expedient to list some of them here (69):

2.3.2.1 Cognitive elements

The cultural life of all peoples includes a great deal of knowledge about the physical world, as well as about the social world. In the West, for example,

elaborate social codes exist, and the child is initiated into these at an early stage. Extensive systems exist for imparting to the child something of the corpus of knowledge which has been collected in various subject disciplines. It would be futile to suppose that any one person could hope to master more than a very small part of such systematised knowledge in even one subject, but a broad educational base provides what one might call a 'cultural knowledge' about the world of learning. In primitive societies (70) much the same sort of thing happens, albeit on a different level and for apparently different reasons.

2.3.2.2 Beliefs

In any society there exists a system of metaphysical beliefs, none of which are demonstrable in terms of normal empirical procedures. A good many writers have used religion as an example of what can be conceived of as an empirically untestable system. The witch-doctor in Africa has an elaborate ritual in which he indulges, and if it fails to bring about the required results he has an explanation - also in terms of beliefs - as to why the ritual failed to work in the given instance. In similar fashion it has been argued that the Jew, the Christian, the Moslem, the atheist and others, all have their system of beliefs which remains untestable. Perhaps the

most significant thing about such beliefs is that they are, *per se*, neither right nor wrong.

2.3.2.3 Values and Norms

Values are almost impossible to categorise, although many attempts have been made (71). It is not proposed here to enter into an account of the ongoing debate in this area, as it seems not to be relevant to our subject. It can be noted, however, that a number of systems do exist; the most promising of these are described briefly in the notes at the end of the chapter.

2.3.2.4 Signs

Signs are an important part of culture, and include signals and symbols. Langer (72) has expressed the position as follows:

"A signal indicates the existence - past, present or future - of a thing, event or condition. Wet streets are a signal that it has rained. A patter on the roof is a signal that it is raining."

Johnson (73) contends that it is important to realise that a signal does not stand alone; that both the signal and its object are part of a more complete event or unit. The ability to recognise one part of a unit and to interrelate it to the other parts of the unit is obviously a complex process that is also very much a part of the cultural corpus

that is handed down to the young. In addition to the signals which are given in nature (such as the rain, for example, used in the analogy given above) man has invented a number of signals. A whistle blowing, for example, may herald the start of a race, the departure of a train, a pursuing policeman, a call for help, and so on. Langer (74) has suggested that the world is 'mad' with the messeges that bells bring.

Possibly the most important of all the cultural symbols that can be discerned is that class of symbols which we call words or language. Like a signal, words bring something to the mind of the person interpreting them, but they are more likely to bring to the mind of the hearer the *concept* involved than the *object* involved, which is normally the case with signals.

While signals are important in all kinds of practical activity, symbols are vital as a means of communication in many modes of expression, including religion and art. The story is told of a missionary who was attempting to translate a portion of the New Testament into the language of a remote tribe. The fact that the word 'love' did not exist in their vocabulary created grave problems of communication when certain concepts of Christianity had to be translated (74a).

A substantial body of writing on the

nature of language in culture has been developed (75), and its value lies in its stress on the importance of language as a vital factor in symbolic activity. For our purposes, it is important to note that language differences may represent important cultural differences as well, a point which will be developed later in the context of the South African situation.

2.3.2.5 Non-normative ways of behaving

It is plain that any culture has within it many individuals whose way of behaving is neither mandatory nor conscious. The ongoing debate in Sociology and Anthropology (76) need not be described here, but it may be stated that there can be no doubt that non-normative behaviour constitutes an important part of the observable behaviour in any group, and that its significance ought not to be underrated.

2.3.3 Summary of points emerging

Every effort has been made in the above outline to steer clear of those controversies which exist concerning virtually every statement which has been made in the above sections. The reason for this is primarily that the debate about certain issues is less vital for purposes of this research than is the consensus which is to be found among various writers on given topics which are related to the culture concept (77).

It has been noted, therefore, that culture is

learned; that it is often described in both material and non-material terms; that it involves the orientations of an entire group of people, at least; that it is distinguished by certain specific elements, and that it is unique to human beings.
These points will need to be further debated when the specifically South African situation is considered.

2.3.4 Definition of the term 'Society'

The same comment as was made in 2.3.1 with regard to the number of definitions of the term 'culture' seems to be apt in this section on the meaning of the term 'society' as well. Nevertheless, while the plethora of definitions of the term 'society' reveals superficial differences, it would be true to say that there is broad agreement amongst sociologists as to the meaning of the term.
It has been contended, for example, that a society is a group with certain characteristics which may be distinguished under the broad headings of definite territory, sexual reproduction, comprehensive culture, and independence (78).
A society may be considered to be a territorial group. This statement does not necessarily exclude nomads, who move about at will, and over a much larger area than they occupy at any one time. The point is that they consider the whole area through which they move to be 'their' area.
Neither are smaller territorial groups to be considered as a 'society' necessarily. In societies it is quite possible to find territorial groupings within the society - clans, neighbourhoods, cities and provinces would constitute smaller territorial groupings within a specific

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