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Some socio-cultural correlates of recruitment to the teaching profession

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have been made to compare different ethnic groups in respect of performance at certain education-oriented tasks, and the like. Comparatively little research, however, has been carried out on an intra-ethnic group basis, with a view to enabling some fairly firm generalisations to be made about the group in question.

The present research is concerned with student teachers of the White group. What material is available? The answer is that very little is available. Some studies have compared student teachers with student lawyers and doctors in respect of academic ability and performance. One study has examined selection procedures at a College of Education. Another study tried to assess the motivation of school-leavers who might want to become teachers. Another study, carried out in Natal, concerned itself with the performance of student teachers in terms of a number of selected criteria. Other limited studies of the problem of 'drop-out' have been done. The sum total of published reports, however, is fewer than twenty (2).

In other countries substantial research has been carried out, for example, into the social origins of teachers, into the nature of their private relationships, into their attitudes to their work and to their employers, and the like. The result is that a fairly broad picture of teachers has been built up - in some cases serving to support existing prejudices, in others supplying a factual basis from which prejudice might be dispelled.

In the Transvaal no such work has been carried out at all. The absence of such research may have been a contributory cause in the establishment of some of the popular prejudices which can now be seen to exist. The English and the Afrikaans groups of teachers are often compared with each other, and popular prejudices spring up. It is argued, for example, that teaching for the Afrikaner constitutes a 'step-up'

socially; that the Afrikaner values education more than does the speaker of English (3) and that he sees teaching as a kind of apotheosis of all that he holds dear. It is argued that the Afrikaner becomes a teacher because he sees this as an avenue through which he can be of service to his country and his God; there are even those who see political motives for taking teaching as a career among this group.

It is also argued that the outlook of the English and Afrikaans speaking members of the profession is essentially different and that their view of life and of the world is not the same. It has been argued that the activities of the 'Reddingsdaadbond' after the Depression have produced a kind of sheeplike submissiveness in the Afrikaans members of the teaching group - the immense gratitude of those whose situation was alleviated in those years led, it is argued, to a desire to avoid confrontation at all costs: particularly confrontation with those politicians who had been the means of their salvation (4).

The English speaking section of the teaching group is, it has been argued, more militant, more awake to the educational issues of the day, more open to ideas from other countries, more willing to experiment with new techniques and subject matter. Some characterise this group as being materialistic, rather than idealistic, in their approach to their work. The Afrikaans group tends to feel that the English should be doing more to supply teachers for their own schools, while some English teachers are claimed to feel that there is no future for the speaker of English in teaching 'because he has the wrong name' (5).

All the prejudices mentioned above do exist. Documentation for them will be found at the end of this chapter. The question arises, however, as to what factual basis for these prejudices actually does exist. The answer is: as virtually no research has been done in these areas, it is

impossible to know what the facts are.

1.3 Aims of the present study

In the absence of factual information about the kinds of areas outlined above, some sort of start clearly has to be made. The following areas should provide information which could form a platform on which to mount a more ambitious research programme. At the moment little is known about teachers in respect of

1.3.1 their religious affiliation
1.3.2 the size and composition of their families, or their own birth position in them
1.3.3 the level of education of their parents and grandparents
1.3.4 the occupation of their parents and grandparents
1.3.5 their attitudes to teaching and their expectations of it
1.3.6 their personal reactions to certain facts of teaching as an occupation.

Much of the information required is purely demographic in character - but it nevertheless serves as a useful basis from which to examine some of the prejudiced statements which have been made about the comparative social standing of the English and Afrikaans speaking groups of teachers.

This study aims to investigate certain aspects of the background, both social and academic, attitudes to teaching and reasons for becoming teachers of selected groups of English and Afrikaans speaking students at two teacher training institutions in Johannesburg. The study aims to compare not only the broad groups 'English' and 'Afrikaans', but also men and women, first-year and third-year students, urban and rural dwellers, and senior primary and junior primary students, on the grounds that these important sub-groups within the sample could materially differ from one another.

In the statement of aims of the study which follows, therefore, the term 'group' is understood to mean any one of the sub-divisions outlined at the end of the previous paragraph.

The aims of the study are these:

- to determine and compare the social class status of all groups
- to establish the proportion of English students in the Afrikaans college in the groups studied and *vice versa* to establish the proportions of other groups, e.g. Continentals, in the groups studied
- to determine the male/female ratio in the groups studied
- to compare motivation, attitudes towards and expectations of teaching for all groups
- to establish the proportion of teachers in both language groups to the total population of the Province
- to establish the size of families from which teachers are drawn
- to establish the religious affiliation of all students
- to establish the school-leaving qualifications for all groups and to compare performance in the school-leaving examination
- to establish the occupational mobility of the families of all groups over two generations
- to compare the products of private schools with those of state schools
- to establish to what extent teaching is a first choice of occupation for all groups.

The acquisition of the factual information outlined above should render possible certain generalisations about the groups under consideration, and should in addition provide a framework within which later research might be prosecuted.

NOTES TO CHAPTER ONE

1. An interesting example of the type of research referred to here is the 'Jeugondersoek' carried out by the Department of Sociology at the University of Pretoria. This comprehensive and extensive piece of research appeared in five volumes, each of them devoted to a different aspect of youth relationships. 'Jeug en Arbeid' is that section of the report which has most relevance for educational sociologists. The presentation and treatment of the data is such, however, that its value is not immediately apparent.

2. The studies referred to specifically are those of Van Zyl, Weaver, Haasbroek, MacMillan and Grieve, and those of Holmes. These studies are identified more fully in the Bibliography at the end, or in Chapter Three, where they are dealt with in the review of literature in the field.

3. The work of Lever (1966) in which he postulated the 'scarcity principle' with regard to education for speakers of Afrikaans has led some support for this view. Some distinction possibly needs to be drawn between conscious attitudes and unconscious ones.

4. The work of Vorster, F *'The Poor White Problem in South Africa'* casts some interesting light on the way in which the church and the education system, as well as most branches of the Government service, were used as avenues for the indigent intelligent.

5. Recent editorials in the 'Transvaal Educational News', official mouthpiece of the Transvaal Teachers' Association, and in 'Mondstuk', official organ of Die Transvaalse Onderwysersvereniging, the teachers' organisations for the English and Afrikaans groups respectively, have tended to stress these views of the situation.

C H A P T E R T W O

2.1 Introduction

This chapter is concerned with some of the terms of reference of this dissertation. In the social sciences at present it is clear that the same refinement of definition as has been attained in the natural and physical sciences has yet to be achieved. This chapter constitutes an attempt to define reasonably precisely some of the terms which will be used. Attention will be devoted primarily to main concepts used in the title of the dissertation and any major thinking in the relevant area will be outlined.

2.2 Definition of the term 'Teaching Profession'

The question as to whether or not teaching is, in fact, a profession, is one which is still open to some debate. Waller has provided what is considered by some to be the major text on the sociology of teaching (1), but this work, written in 1932, deals mainly with the American situation, and in any case with conditions which have materially altered in the past forty years. Nevertheless, Waller's statements about the professional standing of teachers have had repercussions down the years, and have initiated debates which continue to the present day.

Waller considers the problem of the 'professional' in the following terms:

> "It is sometimes proposed to remedy the low social standing of teachers by making teaching a real profession... It is partly the failure of teachers to register as human beings which accounts for the low opinion which their fellows have of them, and this failure to make an impression as human beings is partly due to the fact that the narrow

> social and intellectual training of teachers has destroyed some of their essential qualities as human beings..." (2)

One of the phrases which catches the eye is the phrase 'real profession'.
Waller is contending that teaching is not a profession in the same sense as other professions are considered to be professions. In this contention he is not alone. Etzioni has maintained that

> "Such professions as teaching, nursing and social work do not have the same status that medicine and law have. Their training periods are shorter, their claim to authority is less legitimised, they are based on a less specialised body of knowledge and they have less autonomy from supervision and social control. In short, they are only semi-professions" (3).

On the other hand, there are those writers who argue that teaching can be considered to be a profession, among them Musgrave, who maintains that

> "... there are grounds for calling teaching a profession. ...there is a range of status among teachers. There is a similar range among the legal and medical professions. We may compare the surgeon or specialist with the general medical practitioner, and notice that there is a difference in status. Despite this both are members of the medical profession. Teaching is not then disqualified on these grounds. There are differences in status, but teachers are sufficiently near in status to be grouped as a profession ... We may finally speak of 'the teaching profession'" (4).

From the preceding statements it is clear that there is not necessarily agreement amongst sociologists on

the status of teaching as an occupation. An examination of what are considered to be the characteristics of a profession is therefore required at this point.

The problem of definition is intensified by the fact that, during the past hundred years or so, more and more occupations have been called 'professional' by the general public. An example of this might be the 'professional' golfer or football player: such persons might be more accurately described as persons who play a particular game in order to make a living.

There are a number of surveys of the development of 'professionalism', not all of which can be considered at this point (5). It has been argued by Marshall, among others, that the traditional 'professions' in the last century were characterised by a specific set of relationships between the practitioner and his client. The practitioner was an expert in a particular field, and the client was not expert in that field. Because of this lack of expert knowledge, the layman was obliged to consult his doctor, or his lawyer, or his priest. The contention is that the knowledge of the expert was specialist, and was not freely available to all.

Musgrave (6) has argued that the basic yardstick by which professionalism is to be measured must remain that of a layman seeking aid from a specialist in a given field. He further contends that this basic relationship gives rise to certain other factors, which may also be considered to be characteristic of professionalism as a whole.

It seems logical to suppose, therefore, that an answer to the whole problem of the professional status of teaching may be gained first by examining what are considered to be the criteria which are characteristic of an ideal profession, and second by attempting to

establish to what extent teaching exhibits those characteristics (7).

2.2.1 Characteristics of a profession

2.2.1.1 Knowledge

> A client would feel no need to consult an expert in a given field unless he, the client, were himself ignorant, or nearly so, in the field in which the practitioner is expert. It is clear, then, that any body which wishes to be called a profession must have a very definite body of knowledge in which practitioners in that field are required to be expert. If there is to be specialisation within the field, the area of knowledge must be a comparatively small one. If the knowledge required is too broad, then it is to be expected that there will be a splitting up of the field of knowledge and new categories will be created. On the other hand, if the field of knowledge becomes too narrow, the layman will easily be able to acquire the knowledge, and the professional nature of the knowledge will disappear. It has been argued that a high level of intelligence and some training are required for the professions, because of the demands made by the specialist field of knowledge. Etzioni has suggested that the ways in which knowledge is gained and used may also be important characteristics of a profession (8).

In short, then, the professional must be master of a special body of knowledge which is usually more or less inaccessible to the layman. This knowledge should be intellectually demanding, and should be the product of a specific training.

2.2.1.2 Control of entry

The control of entry to a profession may be regulated on the basis of the knowledge and training which are considered essential to that profession (9). Medical practitioners in South Africa, for example, are required to be registered with the Medical and Dental Council, which lays down the entrance requirements, and also takes disciplinary action against members of the profession when necessary. Such a professional council consists of persons who are themselves members of the profession in question, and who are in a position to decide what the requirements shall be, and which persons may and may not practise. Objections to the activities of some professional councils have been raised on a number of occasions (10) when it has been felt that the council in question has been restricting entry to the profession it controls in order to place a scarcity value on its services. It is imperative, however, that a true profession be responsible for setting up its own requirements. Du Toit has maintained that

"die organisasie moet selfregerend wees" (11).

2.2.1.3 Code of professional conduct

Most writers seem to be agreed that the client, in the professional relationship, expects the practitioner to be a trustworthy person, as well as a competent person.

> "The client assumes that his ignorance will not be exploited and that the practitioner is of good character" (12).

The client trusts the practitioner to behave in a way which has been clearly laid down. The Hippocratic Oath for doctors; the secrecy of the confessional for the priest - these and other codes of conduct ensure the safety of the client within the professional relationship. As the relationship is almost always a personal one, the interests of the individual must be protected. In addition to protecting the interests of the client, a code of conduct invariably affects the interests of the practitioner as well.

2.2.1.4 Freedom to practise the profession

It has already been seen that there are certain restraints in any profession. The practitioner may practise only if he can satisfy the requirements for entry, and only if he is prepared to subject himself to the code of conduct laid down by the profession. But in exchange for these restraints, and

within the framework of them, the practitioner has the right to practise as he sees fit. Such freedom is not licence, and the professional is continually reminded of his responsibilities to his peers and to his clients.

> "It is the practitioner who decides upon the client's needs, and the occupation will be classified as less professional if the client imposes his own judgment" (13).

Etzioni has contended that

> "Students of the professions have pointed out that the autonomy granted to professionals who are basically responsible to their consciences (though they may be censured by their peers and, in extreme cases, by the courts) is necessary for effective professional work" (14).

2.2.1.5 Professional organisations

All true professions have professional organisations whose responsibility relates to the oversight and administration of the profession as a whole. Normally, the professional organisation administers the register of practitioners, engages in disciplinary action against members when necessary, and acts as spokesman for the profession when any public statement from the professional group is called for. As was implied in the previous paragraph, members are free to practise the profession

without interference by the professional body, subject to the restraints already mentioned.

2.2.1.6 Conditions of service

Musgrave (15) lays stress on the fact that a profession is normally characterised by specific conditions of service. These conditions include factors such as remuneration, hours of employment and fringe benefits. Musgrave maintains that professional associations concern themselves amongst other things with factors of this sort, and that such concern is most likely to be found in those professions where many of the members are state-employed. The BMA (British Medical Association) in Britain constitutes a good example of such an organisation.

2.2.1.7 Recognition by the public

Goode has made the important point that

> "members of an occupation give a higher prestige ranking to it than do other members of the society; thus, they try to get more deference than others will concede" (16).

To a degree, it seems inevitable that recognition of the worth of a given occupational group must come from the specific society in which the group functions. It is clear that recognition by society is not the only factor involved; nevertheless, as long as the

man in the street is convinced that he could do a specific job 'if he put his mind to it', the possibility of that occupation's ranking as a profession seems slight.

2.2.2 Other Classifications of Professional Criteria

The criteria outlined in the preceding paragraphs constitute a by no means exhaustive list of the possibilities. Wilensky (17) for example, has analysed the development of professionalism in the United States of America, and has concluded that any profession must pass through certain well-defined stages has suggested the following steps:

- Full-time activity at the task
- Establishment of University training
- National professional association
- Redefinition of the 'core task', so as to hand the less refined work over to subordinates (e.g. nurses rather than doctors, change dressings)
- Conflict between the 'old-timers' and new men who seek to upgrade the job
- Competition between the new occupation and neighbouring ones
- Political agitation in order to gain legal protection
- Code of ethics

Wilensky's view is that any group which claims to be professional must have passed through the stages outlined above.

Du Toit (18) has listed the following criteria as characteristics of a profession, and has attempted to establish to what extent teaching as an occupation satisfies them:

- Die onderwys is uniek, definitief en 'n essensiële diens
- Dit vereis, vir die uitvoering van die diens, dat die beoefenaars oor besondere intellektuele vermoëns moet beskik en dat hulle besondere intellektuele tegnieke moet kan toepas
- Die onderwys vereis 'n lang tydperk van gespesialiseerde opleiding
- Die indiwidu sowel as die groep moet redelik outonoom wees
- Elke lid van 'n professie is vir al sy besluite en dade ten volle verantwoordelik
- Die klem moet val op die diens wat gelewer word en nie op geldelike beloning nie
- Die organisasie moet selfregerend wees
- 'n Etiese kode moet geïmplementeer word

Two categories which Du Toit has added to those considered earlier in this chapter are those that the service performed be essential, and that financial gain not be an important consideration. The first of these categories, however, is hardly an exclusive characteristic of a profession and the second, however idealistic, seems to be unrealistic as well. The professions are usually well paid.

Literature from Britain, Germany and the United States of America conveys the impression that there is, as yet, incomplete agreement amongst authorities as to the extent to which teaching may be considered to be a profession in those countries. It is proposed, therefore, to examine the situation in South Africa, and more specifically in the Transvaal, to try to establish to what extent teaching may be called a profession in this country.

2.2.3 A Description of the Teaching Occupational Group in South Africa

Teachers in South Africa fall, generally speaking, into three broad groups (the third group is considered by some to be a sub-section of the second) as follows (19):

2.2.3.1 Teachers who have been trained in Colleges of Education only

2.2.3.2 Teachers who have graduated from Universities and have been trained professionally in a College of Education or a University Education Department

2.2.3.3 Graduates who have received no professional training at all.

These three categories of teachers are spread out over various types of schools, both state and private. The main types of schools are:

2.2.3.4 Nursery schools

2.2.3.5 Primary schools, with Junior and Senior Primary Departments

2.2.3.6 Secondary schools, with Junior and Senior Secondary Departments.

The teaching force is predominantly female, and there is a greater proportion of Afrikaans-speaking teachers than of English-speaking teachers. Obviously the actual numbers of Afrikaans teachers should be higher than the number of English teachers, as there are more Afrikaans than English members of the overall population. But in addition to this, a higher proportion of the Afrikaans population group enters teaching than is the case with the English group (20).

More teachers are to be found in Primary than in Secondary schools, while there is a relatively small number of teachers engaged in nursery school teaching. Obviously these figures are related to the nature of the school structure and the type of schooling provided.

Graduate teachers are in a minority when the occupational group is viewed as a whole; most graduates are to be found in secondary schools, although the head teachers in primary schools are very often graduates.

University teachers constitute the smallest percentage of teachers in the country. Many of them, unlike school teachers - and particularly in the English universities - have no professional training as teachers at all. The group as a whole is characterised by exceptionally high academic qualifications when compared with the national average. Qualifications in this group are usually superior to those of the average teacher in the average school.

The teaching body in the Transvaal is thus a diverse one. Predominantly female and predominantly Afrikaans-speaking, its members range from those who teach children in nursery schools to professors in universities; from those who have a one-year post-school diploma to their credit to those who have post-doctoral qualifications. It is to be expected that there will be some difficulty in assessing a group so diverse in terms of the criteria which have been mentioned.

2.2.4 Characteristics of a profession related to teaching

The characteristics mentioned in sections 2.1. and 2.2 above are not prescriptive but are, rather, descriptive. This means in effect that the sociologist is not saying what a profession *should* be like - he is attempting to isolate those factors which seem to be characteristic of professions, and is saying that these seem tc be factors which are significant in making possible the identification of a profession. In this section, therefore, the characteristics outlined in sections 2.1 and 2.2 above will be applied specifically to teaching, with a view to establishing to what extent teaching exhibits these generally accepted characteristics of a profession.

2.2.4.1 Knowledge

As pointed out in 2.2.1.1 above, there must be a specific core of knowledge in terms of which a profession functions. It has also been stated that the knowledge in question must be of such a nature that it becomes essential for the uninitiated layman to consult the practitioner.

In considering whether or not the knowledge of the teacher is specialist, there are a number of problems which arise. University teachers can immediately be described as experts, and it can with some certainty be asserted that they satisfy the 'knowledge' criterion.

In considering the nature of the knowledge of school teachers, however, a two-fold difficulty emerges. The first aspect of the problem is this: from whose point of view is the knowledge to

be considered as 'expert'? If one considers the pupils who are taught, there can be little doubt that in most cases, as far as the pupils are concerned, the teacher is the expert. On the other hand, at many levels of teaching, the knowledge of the teacher is not 'expert' in the sense that many persons who are not teachers know as much as - if not more than - the teacher in question.

It has been argued that it is not *what* the teacher teaches, as much as knowing *how* to teach it, that constitutes the specialist knowledge that he has. Some authorities therefore believe that the teacher is an expert, insofar as his training has been underpinned by certain theoretical instruction related to the pedagogical enterprise. There are others who take a less charitable view.

Goode has considered the problem in the following terms (21):

"The school teacher in the primary school has a similar relation to her knowledge base, which is not so much the curriculum content - most adults believe that they could master that after a short period of study - but the technique and principles of pedagogy. This content is, however, relatively small in amount and shallow intellectually"

Whether the teacher's knowledge of pedagogy is shallow must to some extent be related to the course of study being

followed. There is ongoing debate, nevertheless, as to the comparative worth of studies in pedagogy and, say, the classics or theoretical physics.

In the Transvaal, at least, student teachers are required, whether their training is taking place in a College of Education or a University Education Department, to study certain prescribed pedagogical subjects. The fact that the student who has studied Educational Psychology for three years may know less about the subject than the Professor of Psychology in the University is not really relevant - many a medical practitioner in general practice knows less about dietetics than the average dietitian. That does not make him any less a professional person, however.

The second aspect of the problem centres in the relationship between the teacher - the 'practitioner' - and his pupils - the 'clients'. It is clear that the teacher's pupils meet him in what is not, by and large, a voluntary situation. Many pupils, especially in State schools, attend lessons in certain subjects not because they want to, but because they have to. This means that the relationship which obtains in the classroom is by no means the same as that which obtains, say, between the doctor and his patients. The patient consults the doctor because he wants to, and if he is not satisfied, he is free to consult someone else. The

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