



Teacher Movements
and the
Education Professoriate

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Whorever I found a living
creature, there I found
the will to power.

Thus Spake Zarathustra

The education professoriate shows certain symptoms of victim-proneness in the ways in which it attracts and accepts steady criticism of teacher competence and educational quality. Before moving to the litany of descriptive characteristics thought to be related to a somewhat confused and negative collective self-concept, however, it should be pointed out that training for professional service was the matrix within which the modern university took shape.¹

In their defensive moods, members of professional departments, schools or colleges tend to forget this fact

of historical distinction. Furthermore, in America, there are literally no distinguished schools of professional training without University (college) connections, and professional school faculties are unquestionably a part of the general faculty. The post-industrial society, according to Daniel Bell, has become evermore dependent on *theoretical* knowledge and the university has been the locus of such development.² The capacity to use this competence has a special significance for the applied professions; for professionals must achieve a degree of competence which is grounded in bodies of theoretical

knowledge sometimes mobilized from a number of different disciplines. In comparison with Medicine, the classic example of a well-established profession, the profession of education has been longer at gaining academic recognition. This may largely be due to the relative weakness of the cognitive base for professional competence in education. Strengthening of the base is promised by developments in psychology and the social sciences, but it takes time and conscious attention. It is well to remind ourselves that the problem of relations between the core academic complex, the professional complex and a host of external public-client complexes is also faced by other professional schools. (Incidentally, it might be noted that the relations between interdependent sub-systems comprise an interesting sociological problem area.)

On the question of the characteristics of the education professoriate, its role dimensions and its academic behavior, there has been surprisingly little inquiry and much stereotyping. Probably the best available total picture, though one now slightly dated, is presented by the Phi Delta Kappa Commission on Higher Education in its little-known collection of essays, *To Be a Phoenix: The Education Professoriate*, edited by Stephen Counelis, 1969. Occasionally other studies appear shedding light on specific characteristics of limited samples of education professors, e.g., Prichard et al. It is clearly time to call for a sociology of the professoriate, much as has been done in other fields. Typical findings will be presented here; for what is known of the recent past will help in the exploration of certain current dilemmas.

The configuration that emerges from available data on the education professoriate is of a male professor who is slightly older than his

counterparts in other fields, partially accounted for by his "apprenticeship" in the public schools prior to embarking on doctoral study. Fewer professors in education are holders of the doctorate, and many of these hold the Ed.D., which usually implies a lesser emphasis on research methodology or language competency or knowledge of broad cultural areas during advanced study. The ability level of education doctorate holders, as measured by intelligence test scores, was below the mean of the all doctorate fields average. Productivity, as measured by organized research participation and in writing/editing was somewhat lower, although direct student contacts were more extensive. The education professor, according to a synthesizer of his roles and characteristics, might be thought of as a rather undistinguished "brilliant grey."³

The history of public education and the occupation of school-teaching has also had an effect, however distorting, on the image of the education professor. This is not the occasion to review the reasons for the relatively low prestige that teaching was accorded by our forebears, or the reluctance with which American communities extended universal education through the high school--all the while paying teachers as little as possible, so that teaching became a feminized occupation. The point is that these practices have impacted on our subject, the education professor. This inglorious background, and the paradoxes of the incomplete professionalism of contemporary teachers, and the inability of schools to solve massive social problems have somewhat stigmatized the education professoriate. The school of education, as compared with the school of medicine or school of law, frequently has to contend

with a slightly "outcast" label on campus. "Just as the average citizen erroneously takes for granted that school teaching is an activity appropriate for persons of less than first-rate ability, so many college or university faculty and administrators view those engaged primarily in the preparation of school teachers as less than first-rate colleagues."⁴

Within the education professoriate there is a dichotomy and an element of confusion over the definition of the education professoriate as a profession and the definition of education as a field of study. For example, on any education faculty, there are those whose doctoral training is in education and those who have not majored in education and who may not have had any experience in roles in the public schools, whether as teacher, counselor, or administrator. There are those whose courses involve them directly in teacher preparation: what to do, and how to do it, and those social scientists and humanists teaching foundational studies. The mix is not altogether complementary. In some situations the parts are as oil and water, with serious attention needed toward developing productive and harmonious arrangements. An example may be given involving the sociologist and the educator. Sociology (or psychology for that matter) has an empirical orientation, education a normative one, i.e., sociology is by nature an abstracting and generalizing discipline while education is oriented toward predictive statements required in diagnosis and planning.⁵ The sociologist's finding may have little utility, and the educator may be frustrated by its lack of applicability. But a rapprochement is in sight after decades of an "uncomfortable relationship."⁶ Sanctions and snobbery are diminishing; the sociologist in education is

developing more of an awareness of educational realities and is actually engaging in research that promises both application to educational issues and problems and contributions to sociological theory. The educational studies of sociologist James S. Coleman may be the best available examples of rigorous social research of interest to both empiricists and practitioners.

To some students of professions, Etzioni for one, school teachers might be considered as semi-professional.⁷ Perhaps they might be viewed in more generous terms as incomplete professionals, or as on a continuum well along toward emergent professionalism. The same might be said of the education professoriate, which is particularly vulnerable on the aspect of progress toward the discovery and application of theoretically and empirically based knowledge to the process and problems of educational institutions. For the main contribution of the set of roles called the education professoriate is this development of knowledge, and at the other end is the utilization of this knowledge, with translation and transmission roles as the bridges between the two. Stated another way, these are the stages of research, development, diffusion and adoption, each with its own set of appropriate activities.

Wilensky reminds us that while many occupational groups engage in heroic struggles for professional identification, few make the grade.⁸ There appears to be a "natural history" of professionalization, although the sequence is by no means invariant.⁹ In applying this sequence to school teaching we may be able to determine where teacher movements are heading, since professionalization is necessarily a militant process as well as a developmental one. Several steps have been completed:

first, the activity that needs doing is done on a full-time basis; second, a training school is established and associates itself with a university--a corps of people who teach rather than practice associate with the university.

The education professoriate must continue to devote attention to the cultivation of the knowledge base, for teaching is not yet the application of scientifically validated theories. Professor Broudy likens it to preparation of meals in a restaurant where the menu is prescribed as are the recipes, with neither grounded in a coherent theory of nutrition or food science.¹⁰ The theory available to the teacher is less "applicational," than "contextual" as taught in foundational studies courses, each of which varies in theoretical pertinence according to the stage of development of the field. (As a social scientist, I would admit that the social sciences are in their infancy insofar as applicability of theory to educational process and problems is concerned). In what I guess to have been a moment of great frustration and, simultaneously, creation, Robert Dreeban suggested that since formalized disciplines have been able to offer so little applicative knowledge to teachers, teachers should write up the results of their own systematic practices and share their own results, thereby building relevant knowledge.¹¹

The current wave of criticism of teacher training settings has brought the serious suggestion that the focus of such professional preparation move from the colleges to the schools, toward an apprentice mode.¹² Now it may be that teachers can function well enough at the didactic level, if their training proceeds along the lines of an apprenticeship. But the possibility looms even more strongly than now, that identification by the trainees

with the practitioner in the field might crystallize too early, thereby negating the socialization attempted by the professoriate. The few available studies of teacher socialization suggest that neophyte teachers are too easily absorbed into a custodial pupil control ideology in their first year(s) of teaching.^{13,14} The "significant other" who wields this monumental power is the one (usually the principal) who evaluates, for personnel retention, the beginning teacher's performance.

These observations are not intended to discourage the development of cooperative ventures in school-university collaboration which are much overdue. While cooperative roles require extraordinary skills and patience, most universities and schools have given low priority and junior or marginal staff members to the efforts. The activity styles of the two institutions are so different that linkages are not easily devised. One writer has contrasted the "intense" style of the school, with the "cool" style of the university.¹⁵ The high rates of interaction, organizational maintenance activities, the absence of private space and reflective time of the teacher contrast with the greater autonomy afforded the professor. To achieve an element of reciprocity in the relationship, the university must not be guilty of simply loading more activities and pressures upon the teacher.

Third in the emergence of occupational professionalization is the formation of a professional association with various functions, notably separating the competent from the incompetent and developing a further self-conscious definition of core tasks. Teachers are attempting to slough-off their less-technical and less-rewarding tasks (their house-keeping chores) to para-professionals and aides. This process

is relatively well along in some systems but continuously threatened and thwarted by financial exigency associated with curtailed federal funding. Teachers have had professional associations since the late seventeenth hundreds. There is no question that teacher associations have acted as labor unions in the past decade.

Now with respect to steps 4 and 5 in the course of professionalization: There will be persistent political agitation to obtain legal protection of the job territory and its sustaining code of ethics. There has been a steady rise in standards of preparation required for initial certification, and we have finally reached a point where all states require at least a bachelor's degree as a minimum. The trend toward centralizing teacher certification in one legal agency (the state department of education) has been accompanied by an increasing trend toward the "approved programs approach," wherein certification is recommended by the education professoriate upon completion of prescribed programs.¹⁶ The question of which agency or entities shall determine the qualifications for those entering teaching is still at issue, however. For the past several years, the NEA has promoted a drive aimed at the introduction of actions in every state legislature which would effectively transfer authority over teacher certification from the state agency to the professional association.¹⁷ The rationale is, of course, that control of entrance into and retention in the profession should be in the hands of the organized professional teachers as represented by NEA. In a related move, NEA withdrew its financial support from N.C.A.T.E., the teacher education accrediting agency.

Two consequences of this thrust are readily conceivable. The profession, by controlling the accrediting process, would determine the kinds of qualifications of people available for boards to hire as teachers and, hence, would exert a control over what is taught in the schools. A second effect would be to reduce the influence of the education professoriate on standards for the teaching profession.

Finally, coming to step six, a professional culture or subculture will develop. This is not so much a stage in sequence as an outcome. It is a condition of collegueship which flourishes in the schools or other institutions wherein preparation takes place, and in the setting where service is performed. Professional subcultures are built-up from shared values, norms and symbols. The values are the foundations upon which the profession rests; the norms are systems of etiquette which govern interactions with clients and colleagues; the symbols are the meaning-laden items of a profession: distinctive dress, argot, folklore, etc. At the heart of the professional culture is the career concept: a career is not simply a means to an end, it is an end in itself, a way of life.

The professional culture or subculture of the teacher is thought to be quite incomplete. For one thing, members of a profession are supposed to internalize the standards of their profession, to develop a professional conscience. But, to accomplish this end, a protracted period of socialization is necessary: candidates for the professional title will have "shared the trial with others" and will have been subjected to years of scrutiny and indoctrination.¹⁸ Further, teachers, even those in their first-year, typically work in isolation from each other and have not tended to share the

technical aspects of their work in the teachers' lounge. Occupational cultures grow through extensive communication and interaction among members of a group. Yet teachers' days and the structure of their work has not accommodated to the need for professional interchange and the support of a network of significant others who are coping with similar problems.

The education professoriate mobilizes few of the resources apparently necessary to form an occupational community among teachers.¹⁹ It typically allows the two components, principles and practice, to fall under two jurisdictions with no linkage forged between them. The effect is pernicious: the brief academic component is condemned by the student as impractical and irrelevant: the practice teaching component seals off one student teacher with one classroom teacher, leaving the student to grope for "what works." It would appear that the resources of the education professoriate for leverage on teacher training are very weak indeed, although improvements could be made if the critical importance of professional socialization were recognized.

In discussing the stages of professionalization as a general process applicable to a number of changing occupations and to teaching in particular, I must note an additional barrier to professionalization. The nature and structure of the bases of knowledge which threaten exclusive jurisdiction are a formidable barrier to the full professionalization of teaching. But, beyond this fundamental problem is that of the organizational context of the schools which is described as highly bureaucratized even though governed by a lay policy board. Salaried professionals

are employees, and it is largely in response to employee associated problems that militant teacher movements have developed.

The sociologist Ronald Corwin in his *Militant Professionalism* reminds us that teacher militancy is clearly not the reaction of despairing downtrodden groups; rather it reflects the hope of an increasingly important segment of our society.²⁰ Professionalism is a militant process representing the efforts of individuals to control and to monopolize their work. In doing so, they will have to wrest the power from those groups that traditionally have controlled the vocation: the school boards, the state departments, and the education professoriate.

A variety of plausible factors seems to account for current developments in the teacher movement, not the least of which is legislation on a state by state basis which permits, even facilitates, collective negotiations on the part of teachers and other public employees. Probably the group actions of the early sixties were triggered by perceptions of comparative economic injustice, but took shape by imitating the successful civil rights activities of blacks, of students and, more recently, of women, i.e., the social milieu "permitted" teachers to conduct themselves in previously illegal and unthinkable ways.

The teacher of the early sixties was a relatively impoverished, if well educated person, in an affluent society which was responding to the economic demands of skilled laborers and organized civil servants. Traditional modes of administrative authority were eroding as schools became much larger and more complex organizations. More men were entering teaching and they had traditionally demanded more autonomy, decision-making power and fewer rules; women

were the more easily bureaucratized. Finally, an essential ingredient in the rise of collective action has been the heated rivalry between the NEA and the AFT and their state and local affiliates. The lesson which teachers have learned through a decade of collective activity is that strong, aggressive organizations can generate economic and political power. As education costs rise, and districts reject annual budgets, and probationary teachers are terminated, teachers are progressively alienated from school and community and increasingly turn to their unions or associations for security and support.

The negotiation of individual items of a contract apparently follows an evolutionary process.²¹ The first stage features the salary issue; the second stage emphasizes the power of the teacher organization in relation to the school board and any rival organizations; and the third stage asserts demands that relate to the nature and organization of work. Analysis of large city affiliates of NEA and AFT contracts in 1972 showed that "working condition" components of curriculum and instruction were of greatest importance in both categories of contracts; "teaching procedure" components were ranked as virtually least in importance.²²

The enormous costs of collective negotiations have generated important reallocations of teacher organization budgets. Whereas in 1963, legislative and negotiating services comprised a miniscule portion of the NEA budget, they dominated the 1973 budget.²³ The same situation undoubtedly prevailed at the level of local and state associations. It is reasonable to hypothesize that as NEA and AFT move toward merger, the leadership of NEA will become increasingly politicized and that this in turn will lead

to more control by elected leaders over the NEA professional staff, which currently dominates organizational policy. This portends the continuing transformation of a professional association into a union organization, with ties to organized labor.

Possibly the most recent and significant development in teacher movement activity has been the involvement of organized teachers in politics.²⁴ The movement leaders, Shanker of the AFT and Herndon of the NEA, hope that these efforts in massive financial contributions to campaigns, and in vote-getting effectiveness, will pay off in Congressional passage of a bill providing teachers the same rights to unionize and to strike that workers in private industry have had for forty years. The ever-mounting dependency of all levels of public education on Federal financing and the intensified competition for scarce resources were the chief spurs to teacher political activity in 1974. Even the A.A.U.P., long considered the most cloistered of the academic professional associations, is laying plans to move into the political realm; it began to take a serious interest in collective bargaining in 1972, a full decade after public school teachers earnestly began to embrace collective activity.

Teacher unions have clearly become one of the major centers of power and influence in the country, along with the U.S. Office of Education, the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, state departments of education, foundations, some university centers for the study of higher education and, of course, the educational establishment. Of these, the education professoriate probably exercises its influence through the several centers for

higher education and through the national educational establishment, composed of the associations and agencies that are the constituent and associated organization members of the American Council on Education, plus at least another group of associations or agencies of national scope with considerable interest in post-secondary education.²⁵ While this collection of organizations rarely acts in concert, certainly constituent numbers of this group have had considerable success concerning legislation passed in recent years.

Unions and educational bureaucracies predictably will continue to seek dominant roles by extending their spheres of influence. The possibility of increased power of teacher unions due to a massive increase in membership or merger could create an imbalance among the competing centers, causing serious social dislocation.

The education professoriate, through the educational establishment, has a critical role to play in providing a balance among the centers of power.

Summary and implications

The burden of this presentation has been to locate the education professoriate within the professional schools of the contemporary university, to describe its characteristics, its image management problem and the inherent theory/practice strain which besets it. A classic theory of sequential development of professions was applied to the occupation of teaching, with comment regarding the contributions of the education professoriate to the enhancement of teacher professionalism. The professoriate continues to be faulted, from within and without,

on its progress toward the discovery and application of theoretically and empirically-based knowledge relevant to the process and problems of teaching and learning. Criticisms denying the pertinence of preparation for occupational roles in schools have led to a demand to teacher participation in the pre-service experience. Participation will lead to the development of such innovative structures as teacher education centers which may supplant college clinical supervisors by establishing new sets of role relationships. It may lead to experimentation with an apprentice mode of teacher education in which the university's unilateral posture concerning such matters will be challenged. It is likely that dissatisfactions with the typical university delivery of continuing education for professional development of in-service teachers will lead to the relinquishment of traditional prerogatives as teacher associations move to conduct some of their own in-service training and thereby increase their legitimacy and credibility in this area.

Teacher associations have been transformed into militant labor unions as conditions favorable to collective bargaining have increased. The professoriate itself is rather warily embracing the collective bargaining strategy in order to improve salaries and increase job security, but reservations persist concerning the transferral of the industrial model to academia, where shared authority between faculty and administrators has been widely valued. It does not seem likely that the professoriate in the four year colleges and universities will move wholesale into faculty unions unless economic conditions worsen considerably, professorial prestige declines, and occupational

satisfaction lessens.

So successfully have teacher unions realized their welfare capability in the last decade, and so sophisticated have such organizations become in the negotiations process and, more recently, in extending political influence, that teachers may be more anxious than ever to make decisions, or participate in decisions about teacher certification, instructional process and content, and professional development activities. Whether collective negotiation strategies work in these new areas, as they have in the welfare area, remains to be seen. Bargaining may indeed achieve the control over work which teachers are seeking, but it would not seem an appropriate tactic for completing other steps in the professionalization

process. Ultimately, professional status is conferred by the public which must be convinced that the service ideal--devotion to a client's interest more than to personal or commercial profit--is met, and that professional norms of conduct are scrupulously followed.

The education professoriate can best assist teachers to achieve their professionalism by improving the technical base on which teaching draws, and by helping to make the occupational socialization process more effective so that the bureaucratic settings in which teachers work will become more suffused with professional norms. The rhetoric of professionalism is easily mistaken for its substance. Analysis of a profession, including its training process, is indispensable to its fullest development.

NOTES

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