TEACHERS AND THE IDEOLOGY OF
PROFESSIONALISM IN INDIA AND ENGLAND:
A COMPARISON OF CASES IN COLONIAL/
PERIPHERAL AND METROPOLITAN/CENTRAL
SOCIETIES*

Monograph 86-2

Mark B. Ginsburg
(IHELG Research Affiliate)
Dept. of Educational Leadership
and Cultural Studies
College of Education
University of Houston
Houston, TX

Vipula Chaturvedi
(IHELG Visiting Fellow)
Kurukshetra University
New Delhi, India

with the assistance of

Mamta Agrawal
Dept. of Measurement and
Evaluation,
National Council of Education
Research and Training
New Delhi, India

Amaury Nora
(IHELG Research Assistant)
Dept. of Educational
Leadership and Cultural
Studies
College of Education
University of Houston
Houston, TX

*A revised version of this paper was presented at the annual
meeting of the Comparative and International Education Society,
Stanford University, Stanford, CA, April 16-20, 1985.
University of Houston Law Center/Institute for Higher Education Law and Governance (IHELG)

The University of Houston Institute for Higher Education Law and Governance (IHELG) provides a unique service to colleges and universities worldwide. It has as its primary aim providing information and publications to colleges and universities related to the field of higher education law, and also has a broader mission to be a focal point for discussion and thoughtful analysis of higher education legal issues. IHELG provides information, research, and analysis for those involved in managing the higher education enterprise internationally through publications, conferences, and the maintenance of a database of individuals and institutions. IHELG is especially concerned with creating dialogue and cooperation among academic institutions in the United States, and also has interests in higher education in industrialized nations and those in the developing countries of the Third World.

The UHLC/IHELG works in a series of concentric circles. At the core of the enterprise is the analytic study of postsecondary institutions—with special emphasis on the legal issues that affect colleges and universities. The next ring of the circle is made up of affiliated scholars whose research is in law and higher education as a field of study. Many scholars from all over the world have either spent time in residence, or have participated in Institute activities. Finally, many others from governmental agencies and legislative staff concerned with higher education participate in the activities of the Center. All IHELG monographs are available to a wide audience, at low cost.

Programs and Resources

IHELG has as its purpose the stimulation of an international consciousness among higher education institutions concerning issues of higher education law and the provision of documentation and analysis relating to higher education development. The following activities form the core of the Institute’s activities:

Higher Education Law Library

Houston Roundtable on Higher Education Law

Houston Roundtable on Higher Education Finance

Publication series

Study opportunities

Conferences

Bibliographical and document service

Networking and commentary

Research projects funded internally or externally
TEACHERS AND THE IDEOLOGY OF PROFESSIONALISM IN INDIA AND ENGLAND: A COMPARISON OF CASES IN COLONIAL/PERIPHERAL AND METROPOLITAN/CENTRAL SOCIETIES

Abstract

Interview data from teachers in India and England are used to examine similarities and differences between the ideology of professionalism available in the two contexts. The major difference found involved power/autonomy being conceived of as a central element of professionalism in England but not in India. This finding provides support for Johnson's (1973) historical analysis of "Imperialism and the Professions" in which he documents how third world "professions" experienced patronage (rather than collegial) forms of occupational control by the colonial administration and the "new states."

Introduction

This paper represents a modest beginning of a project, which at one level parallels Kale's (1970):

attempt to analyze the contradictions and dilemmas of status and role as projected by . . . secondary teachers in . . . India, and teachers' ideological adaptation to structural reality.

At another level, however, this project is focused on exploring not only how ideology is drawn upon and reproduced in the consciousness and action of human beings, but also how ideology is dialectically related to structural features of domination and subordination.

The paper sketches the rise of professionalism as an ideology in the metropolitan context of England (and the United States), tracing its connections with different phases of capitalist mode and relations of production. Then attention is directed toward an analysis of the ideology of professionalism during colonial and neo-colonial (post-political independence) periods in societies in the "periphery." The concern here is to contrast
the nature of the ideology of professionalism as it was constructed and operated in these different locations in the world system. Finally, data collected by interviews with secondary teachers in Delhi and Haryana State in India are analyzed and compared with previous findings from teachers in England (Ginsburg, Kharna, Meyenn, Miller, & Spatig, 1980 and Ginsburg, Meyenn, & Miller, 1980) in order to explore how historically structured ideological differences are evidenced in the thoughts and practices of educational workers.

A focus on teachers seems particularly appropriate given that the ambiguous and contradictory class position of teachers (Crompton, 1977; Johnson, 1977; Nadel, 1982; Walker, 1979; Wright, 1979) renders them more subject to ideological influence than those whose economic functions are more clearly related to either the "global functions of capital" or the functions of the "collective laborer" (Carchedi, 1975). This plus the fact that teachers as intellectuals working in what have been termed part of the "ideological state apparatus (Althusser, 1971) means that our understanding of teachers' conceptions of the ideology of professionalism is likely to shed light on the ideology generally available in the respective cultures. That is, teachers can be considered a good source of ideology and culture of a particular society because they are more likely to be exposed to them and because they devote their time to introduce or transmit them to others.

The Rise of Professionalism in the Metropolitan Context

According to Larson (1977: xviii), the modern "model of profession emerged during the 'great transformation' and was originally shaped by the historical matrix of competitive capitalism." She explains that:
The "great transformation"... changed the structure and character of European societies and their overseas offshoots. This transformation was dominated by the reorganization of economy and society around the market... The constitution of professional markets which began in the nineteenth century inaugurated a new form of structured inequality... the "backbone" of which is the occupational hierarchy, that is, a differential system of competences and rewards; the central principle of legitimacy is founded on the achievement of socially recognized expertise, or, more simply, on a system of education and credentialing. (Larson, 1977: xvi-xvii)

Moreover, since the "great transformation,"

the conditions of professional work have changed, so that the predominant pattern is no longer that of a free practitioner in a market of services but that of a salaried specialist in a large organization. In this age of corporate capitalism, the model of profession retains its vigor... The persistence of profession as a category of social practice suggests that the model constituted by its first movements of professionalism has become an ideology. (Larson, 1977: xviii)

The notion of professionalism as ideology has been discussed by various scholars (e.g., Dingwall, 1976; Finn et al., 1977; Friedson, 1970; Ginsburg, 1984 and 1985; Ginsburg et al., 1980a and 1980b; Hughes, 1966; Johnson, 1972; Roth, 1974; Vollmer and Mills, 1966). As an ideology, professionalism both distorts or only partially reflects social reality -- it provides structural limits to people's thought (Jameson, 1981:52) -- and serves to mobilize or immobilize individual and collective action in ways that support the interests of certain groups in society or the world system.

But Larson's (1977) work is so important because she indicates how the ideology of professionalism available today, at least in metropolitan contexts, derives its elements from practice characteristic of three different historical periods and social formations. The work ethic and service ideal elements of the ideology have their roots in the precapitalist period. The idea of autonomous, educated or credentialed, individual practitioners providing services in a market situation has its origin in the period of liberal, competitive capitalism. And during the more contemporary period characterized by corporate or monopoly capitalism, the emphasis has been on the organization as the source of legitimate power and on the modern concept of expertise to reinforce the exercise of such power.
In England the modern concept or ideology of professionalism seems to have been significantly shaped by an aristocratic model, even though professionalization efforts were connected with reform movements which challenged the aristocratic tradition that industrial elites -- capitalists -- had "inherited" from the landed gentry in the pre-capitalist era. Larson (1977:80-81) observes:

In theory ... England should offer a clear example of the reformist version of the professionalization movement... The specific aim of the professional project were, however, income, security, and social respectability. These aims were sought in a context where aristocratic status models and ideologies were available and never entirely defeated by attacks of the rising bourgeoisie against idle property and the system of patronage.

In the 19th century professionalization efforts, which were styled as reform movements against industrial elites, challenged the aristocratic model, at least ideologically, by proposing "merit" and a "service-orientation" as the basis for leadership and status positions in society. The "professionals," however, operationalized the rewards of leadership and status in much the same terms as the aristocratic model. For example, purely economic acquisition (as opposed to lifestyle) was devalued. More importantly, "professionals" sought legitimacy through the same means and with the symbols as the aristocracy: notably, the classical education of Oxbridge. Larson (1977: 102-103) contends:

On the professional side, the reform movement of the nineteenth century ultimately contributed to preserve the norm of sponsored mobility and an ideology of stratification that was at variance with the characteristic legitimations of market-oriented professionalization. The logic of this latter movement leads, in effect, to the development of a nominally, open, standardized and competitive educational system... The reformers within the older professions could gradually fit their original drive for status into pre-existing structures and thus keep their distance, in turn, from less successful colleagues and less "gentle" professions.

Although merit was, in a sense, substituted for wealth inheritance as the basis for privilege, merit was defined in terms of "sponsorship," and, therefore, given the nature of the education system, more in terms of ascription than achievement (cf. Turner, 1960).
One final aspect of the rise of professionalism, perhaps even more salient in the United States than in England (Ginsburg et al., 1980a), should be mentioned. This involves the mutually supportive connection between bureaucracy and professionalism. Bureaucratization serves as the "structural context of successful professionalization" (Larson, 1977: 145), and professionalism may serve to reinforce and legitimate the hierarchical lines of authority in bureaucratic organizations. Larson suggests that top management in bureaucracies often encourage professionalism and professional careers among subordinate experts as an alternative to union or collective bargaining approaches, especially when there is blocked mobility into management positions. She explains that:

... historically, the core units of monopoly capital show strong affinities with experts, on whom their management depends, and with professionalism, which tends to be substituted for bureaucratic control in multi-divisional structure. ... Expertise is implicitly proposed as a legitimation for the hierarchical structure of authority of the modern organization; professionalism, in turn, functions as an internalized mechanism for the control of the subordinate expert. (Larson, 1977: 193)

As we turn to a discussion of the construction of professionalism in colonial and peripheral contexts we should keep in mind this contradiction within the ideology of professionalism -- that professionalism is both a basis for claims to individual practitioner or occupational group autonomy and a foundation for legitimating their subordination in organizations. This is especially important given that "the model of profession developed its most distinctive characteristics and most clear cut emphasis on autonomy in the two paramount examples of laissez-faire capitalist industrialization: England and the United States" (Larson, 1977: xvii). (See also Fores and Glover, 1978.) If the modern ideology of professionalism can undermine the autonomy claim in England (or the U.S.), where the notion was relatively strongly established, then it may do so more effectively in countries, which as we shall see below do not have the historical residue of an emphasis on autonomy.
Professionalism in Colonial and Peripheral Contexts

Coincident with the rise of professionalism in England during the second half of the nineteenth century was the process of consolidating the British Empire. This coincidence might suggest that professionalism would develop similarly in metropolitan and colonial contexts. Johnson (1973: 285) argues, however:

that third world professions have undergone a process of historical development which differs fundamentally from that experienced by such occupations in the industrialized world. . . . These differences are largely to be explained by colonialism; specifically, in the relationship of the professions to the colonial administration and the post-colonial state.

In the colonial context, to a much greater extent than in England, for example, the institutionalized form of control for occupations considered professions was that of patronage. This form of control involves a powerful client, in this case the colonial administration, regulating occupational practice, that is, determining what the client's needs are and how those needs should be met. This can be sharply contrasted with the collegiate form of occupational control, that represented by "true" professionalism, where such decisions are made not by the client, nor by some third party, but by the occupational group itself (Johnson, 1972). Thus, Johnson (1973: 285) observes that in the colonies, "where corporate patronage prevails, professionalism, with all the cultural and organizational attributes we have come to associate with this form of colleague authority, never developed." (See also Gilbert, 1972: 404.)

Through links established because of the work of metropolitan professional associations in the colonies, the education in metropolitan institutions of (usually subordinate) professionals who were native to the colonies, and the migration of British professionals for work in the colonies:
the organizational form of the metropolitan associations; their codes of ethics, examinations, designations and committee structures, all found colonial expression as did other elements such as the training ideal of pupillage and the practicizing ideal of the self-employed, independent professional, the latter feeding off the image of the professional gentleman of an earlier age. (Johnson, 1973: 286)

Nevertheless, because of the dominance of patronage as a form of occupational control, what was exported to the colonies was more ideological than structural. As Johnson (1973: 286) continues:

What was transmitted to colonial territories was in many instances 'outward forms of professionalism' . . . which has masked the reality of occupational subservience to client control, particularly in those areas where the colonial administration was a major source of demand of professional services [e.g., of accountants, lawyers, doctors].

Thus, while their counterparts in England were experiencing to some degree independent, autonomous occupational roles associated with the liberal, competitive phase of capitalism, "professionals" in India were enmeshed in subordinate patronage relations. The Indian "professional" encountered some rhetoric about independent, autonomous practice, but this appears to have been overshadowed by their reality. Indeed, one can envision the rhetoric being couched in terms that made it more "reasonable" for metropolitan "professionals" (compared to colonials) to have autonomy than those in the colonies. The ideology, and certainly the practice, of professionalism transmitted to the colonial context was selective, and although containing contradictory elements, presumably generally reinforcing colonial domination.

One might envision that the advent of political independence to former colonies, such as India, would shift the dominant form of occupational control from the patronage model. This has not been the case, even though many professionals played a significant role in building (while other professionals acted to constrain) the independence movements. Patronage retained its resilience because part "of the colonial inheritance of the new states has been the centralized bureaucratic administration" and because of the limited extent of "a heterogeneous middle class providing diversified sources of demand for professional services" (Johnson, 1973: 294-95). Relevant also is the problem
of having professionals' claims for autonomy seen as anti-nationalist because of professionalism's origin in England. Johnson (1973: 296) notes that the problem is that any claim to professional autonomy is likely to be couched in the language of professionalism and consequently identified as a metropolitan-inspired ideology. Government and public hostility in the form of a nationalist backlash against "neo-colonialism" is a frequent response to professional claims.

Thus, the dominant form of occupational control merely shifted from corporate/colonial administration patronage to state patronage (cf., Johnson, 1972), and not to a collegiate form.

One should note, however, that the metropolitan/center -- colonial/periphery comparison is a relative one, not an absolute one. We should recall, for example, that the ideal of the autonomous, independent practitioner based on experience in the pre-capitalist period has for some time been an inaccurate representation of professional practice in Britain. Despite this caveat, it can be argued that, although "professionalism is a form of control from which professions in Britain are emerging and as such is a significant aspect of their present state" (Johnson, 1977: 306), this is not the case for former British colonies such as India.

**Purpose of the Study**

This small-scale study of secondary school teachers in India was designed to elicit and analyze their conceptions of professionalism, which are presumed to be constituted by and constitutive of the broader ideology of professionalism extant in this former British colony. These conceptions will then be compared with the conceptions of professionalism articulated by middle school teachers in England (reported in Ginsburg, Khanna, Meynn, Miller, & Spatig, 1980 and Ginsburg, Meyenn, & Miller, 1980). In particular, we want to test the hypothesis that there will be a less clear-cut emphasis on power and autonomy in Indian teachers' conceptions than there are in English teachers' conceptions of professionalism.
Method

Structured but open-ended interviews were conducted individually with forty secondary school teachers in Delhi and Haryana state in India during the summer of 1984. The sample was stratified disproportionately by gender and rural/urban location of the schools in which the teachers worked, such that there were ten respondents in each of the following categories: urban-female, urban-male, rural-female, and rural-male. Although schools were selected randomly, actual interviewees were selected based on recommendations from the headmasters and depending on teachers' willingness to participate.

The interviews were designed to elicit some general perceptions of teaching, i.e., problems and sources of satisfaction, as well as to identify how respondents conceived of professionalism in relation to the occupation of teaching and its organizations. Specific questions employed in the interviews are given in the next section of the paper as data collected through them are introduced.

Data were analyzed via a process adapted from Spradley (1979). Broad, themelike domains were identified using both inductive and deductive processes. These then were subjected to taxonomic and componential analysis techniques to uncover similarities and differences among elements -- words, phrases or sentences -- within each domain. Finally, the themes were reconstructed and reported.

Findings in India

When the Indian teachers interviewed were asked -- "Do you consider teaching to be a profession? -- thirty-two of the forty responded affirmatively. Thus, our data reinforce Kale's (1970:375) conclusion that "teachers in [India] . . . use the term professional to describe themselves." More important to the theoretical issues addressed above, however, is the meanings attached by teacher to "profession," whether or not they perceived teaching to be validly described by this term.
Their conceptions of professionalism were elicited under three conditions during the interview: (1) via volunteered explanations or probes for clarification ("Why do you say this?") in conjunction with the above noted question about teaching as a profession, (2) via responses to a follow-up question: "Is teaching an occupation or a profession?", and (3) via volunteered explanations or probes for clarification ("Why do you say this?") of responses to the question: "Some people suggest that a person can be a professional in their work even if their occupation is not generally considered a profession. What do you think of this idea?" Three major themes emerged in such discourse: remuneration, training, and status/prestige. A fourth theme, power/autonomy, was remarkable because of the lack of positive reference to it in the interview data.

Remuneration. Thirty-three respondents mentioned the issue of remuneration when discussing their conception of professionalism -- for example, being "paid for it," getting a "salary," earning "money," or one's "livelihood," being "money-minded," "looking for monetary benefit," and wanting "to make profits." Often this was related merely as a statement of positive fact: I consider teaching a profession because "we are paid for it" or "I earn my livelihood through teaching." Other times the level of remuneration which teachers received was criticized, both by those who did and those who did not consider teaching a profession: "salaries are not satisfactory" or teaching is "not a complete profession" because a teacher "has to engage in other jobs to make ends meet."

Some of the teachers interviewed seemed to derogate a predominantly economic focus on "professions" or "professionals." As a male teacher working in an urban area commented:
The term "professional" has a limited range these days. They associate it with economic and money-making activities. So a teacher should not be a professional in these terms. He should be more dedicated to his students than to money. (UM6)

And a female teaching in a rural area remarked:

Professional persons try to make money without doing their duty properly. Some teachers use their qualifications for tuition and fleece the students. They are business-minded people. (RM7)

More explicitly in these instances, but also implicitly in many others in which remuneration was referenced in relation to professionalism, the teachers interviewed seemed to be contrasting professionalism with another major competing image of teaching in India: the Guru (see Kale, 1970). When asked, "Some people think that teachers are more like a Guru than a professional. What do you think of this idea?", fourteen out of forty agreed; twenty-three disagreed, stating that teachers are more like professionals than Gurus; and three responded by saying that both terms are appropriate labels for teachers. Teachers in our sample, thus, were more likely to view teachers as professionals than as gurus.⁶ Importantly, both those who agreed and those who disagreed often contrasted the two images in terms of orientation to remuneration. The guru was described as "a selfless person," one who teaches "without thinking of money" and without expecting a "monetary return for their work." The professional was described in contrast as "concerned with money" and "paid for their work." A male teaching in a rural area articulated this distinction when he explained why he disagreed with the proposition that teachers are more like a Guru:

Because in the modern world a teacher is a professional and not a guru. He is more materialistic than a Guru used to be. A Guru was a religious person . . . a simple person . . . [and] a spiritual person. He was a selfless person and he imparted his knowledge without expecting material gain. (RM2)

Training and status. Twenty of the forty respondents alluded to training in clarifying their conception of professionalism. Such allusions were often made briefly, almost matter-of-factly, without clarification. For instance, a profession "requires training" or a professional is "trained." Sometimes there was some clarification offered,
e.g., needs "specialized training" or "technical training" or is "trained for using specific techniques." However, except for one reference to "requires a professional degree," there was not the explicit sense of the invidious status comparisons tied to level of educational attainment as is frequently the case in discourse on professionalism (cf., Ginsburg, 1984 and 1985; Larson, 1977).

Nevertheless, twelve of the teachers interviewed identified status or prestige as one of the dimensions they drew upon in conceptualizing professionalism. These respondents either explained why they considered teaching to be a profession -- it is a "prestigious job" or teaching has a level of "social prestige" -- or commented on why they did not consider teaching a profession -- it has "no prestige in society," it has low "social status," or teachers are not given "adequate respect."

That professionalism connotes status distinctions is also evidenced by responses to the question: "Some people say that teacher organizations are more like professional associations, while others claim they are more like trade unions. What do you think of this?" Of the thirty-six interviewees expressing an either-or view on this issue, twice as many identified teachers organizations as professional associations as compared with trade unions (24 versus 12). In explaining their answers to this question, eleven teachers, including nine not previously cited as mentioning status in their discussions of professionalism, made reference to a status hierarchy. The following quotes are illustrative: "Trade Unions can have unskilled labourers; teachers are educated" (UM9) and "[Teacher Organizations] are not trade unions because they do not deal with labourers. [They have] as its members, teachers who are professionals" (RM1).

Power and autonomy. The interview protocols are striking because of the almost total absence of allusions to power and autonomy as key elements of professionalism. Of the forty respondents there was only one who hinted that power and autonomy was an integral element of professionalism. This teacher considered teaching a profession because it had "ethics and freedom of thought." The meaning of this statement was
not further clarified (nor was it probed for clarification), and the issue was not raised again by this respondent. Moreover, four respondents took the unplanned (see endnote 4) opportunity of contrasting "occupation" with "profession" to indicate that power and autonomy were not seen to be associated with professionalism. According to two of these individuals:

An occupation is a job which keeps you busy and which is of your interest. [In a] profession you have to do the job whether you like it or not for sake of money. (RF8)

In an occupation there is autonomy and freedom. In a profession there is none. (RM3)

Further evidence of power being seen as uncharacteristic of professions is encountered when the teachers in our sample responded to the question: "Some people think that teachers are more like bureaucrats than professionals. What do you think of this idea?" None of the respondents agreed with this notion, although one respondent commented that teachers "may be" bureaucrats "to some extent." Eighteen of the teachers interviewed explained their response to this question, arguing that teachers were not bureaucrats because like other professionals, teachers do not "wield authority," "impose their will on others," or have "any powers," nor are they "concerned with administrative or policy decisions."7 As three of the teachers interviewed explained:

Bureaucrats don't do any teaching. They can do whatever they want. (RM4)

Teachers are not like a bureaucrat ... who makes others do certain jobs, has the rod of authority, and uses it to fulfill his wish. (UM4)

Teachers do not take administrative- and management-type decisions. [They] provide help to students, but have no disciplinary authority. [A bureaucrat] exercises discretion in taking decisions that can't be altered or changed. (UF3)

That the exercise of power is outside the boundaries of professionalism is also indicated by those teachers in our sample when they distinguished professional associations from trade unions. Sixteen respondents connected forceful organizational power -- making "demands," "striking," "resorting to violence, fighting for rights and welfare," and being politically oriented -- with trade unionism but not with the workings of
professional associations. This was true for those who viewed teacher organizations as professional associations: They "work for the welfare of teachers in a decent manner and [don't] take the help of strikes and threats like labour unions do" (RM8), as well as those who viewed them as trade unions: "The teacher organizations are no better than trade unions. They have adopted the policy of confrontation and strikes" (RM6).

The point is not, however, that those interviewed were unaware of the nature of power relations in educational institutions, nor that all the respondents were satisfied with the degree of their power or autonomy as teachers. This becomes clear in response to the questions: "How much autonomy/control do you have over the content you teach? (Probes: in terms of the semester or year? in terms of daily lessons?) How do you feel about this situation?" Each of the thirty-nine secondary school teachers, who responded to this question, referred to restrictions on their autonomy in curricular decision-making. The two comments below are illustrative:

Teachers have no autonomy. We are bound to teach the prescribed syllabus, though we are free to plan daily lessons. . . . I feel frustrated in not having control over the syllabus. (UF9)

Teachers have to follow the set and preplanned curriculum and have to act according to the line of authorities. I feel like a mental slave in such conditions where a teacher has no freedom and has to tow the line of those of authority. (RM3)

While not all respondents criticized their situation, even those who expressed dissatisfaction with limitations in their curricular autonomy did not invoke the ideology of professionalism to bolster their critique. The point is that for the Indian teachers interviewed, autonomy did not seem to be a central component of professionalism.

Comparisons with English Findings

Secondary school teachers in India, whom we interviewed, seem to draw upon (and, thus, also culturally reproduce) an ideology of professionalism, which in certain ways resembles that evidenced in the discourse of middle school teachers in a Midlands county in England (Ginsburg, Kharna, Meyenn, Miller, & Spatig, 1980 and Ginsburg,
Meyenn, & Miller, 1980). Although not always agreeing that teachers are fully professionalized in these respects, the Indian teachers echoed their English counterparts in highlighting issues of remuneration, training and status. Professions are perceived to be occupations that are characterized by higher levels of income, formal education, and social prestige compared to other groups of workers. The hierarchical division of labor and its attendant inequalities in wealth and status are at once described and given legitimacy.

Some England-India differences are identifiable with regard to these issues. For example, Indian respondents tended to draw upon the notion of the Guru to distinguish between materialistic or personal-gain orientations (associated with professionalism) and a more selfless ideal of service. Among members of the English sample, the same contrast was made by drawing on contradictory elements in the ideology of professionalism. Rather than going outside the ideology of professionalism to locate a notion of service ideal, English respondents drew upon an element of professionalism which Larson (1977) posits to have its roots in the pre-capitalist period in England (and the United States). That an ideal of selfless, non-materialistic service is a component of the ideology of professionalism is illustrated concisely by one member of the English sample, who responded to the question, "Do you see yourself personally as a professional?"

Yes, in fact, I feel that, because I enjoy the job. I still feel slightly strange about all this business of these scales and payments and so on. I'm even slightly surprised when my salary cheque comes in at the end of the month.

The most dramatic difference between the English and Indian teachers' discussion about professionalism, however, revolved around the issues of power, autonomy and control in work-related matters. The point is not that teachers in England (compared to colleagues in India) have more autonomy as individual practitioners or more power as an occupational group, but that members of the English sample articulated their concerns about these issues with reference to professionalism, while teachers in India did not. Some in the sample of English middle school teachers conceived of
professionalism in ways that constrained their exercise of power and limited their autonomy. For example, this member of the English sample echoes colleagues in India who viewed striking as an unprofessional use of power: "My own opinion is that I don't like strikes. I think it removes our dubious professional status even more." Nevertheless, for other teachers in the English sample, professionalism could be drawn upon as a resource in claims and struggles of autonomy and power. Two quotes from teachers in England are illustrative of this point:

I think the most important thing to me is that they treat ... you as a professional ... I strongly object about parents coming to tell me how to do my job.

Teaching just doesn't compare with any other profession. We've got no discriminating body of our own and we have no control over anything to do with ourselves at all. We're just employed to carry out certain tasks and we have no control over it.

In contrast with these teachers in England, we noted that teachers in India conceived of professionalism in ways that rendered issues of autonomy as irrelevant. Thus, autonomy/power, an element of the ideology of professionalism, which Larson (1977) describes as having roots in the liberal, competitive phase of capitalism and as having its most "clear cut emphasis" in the "two paramount examples of laissez-faire capitalist industrialization -- England and the United States" (p. vii), does not appear to occupy a prominent place in the ideology drawn upon by teachers in this former British colony, India.

That the ideology of professionalism which our sample of secondary school teachers in India drew upon (and culturally reproduced) is qualitatively different from that constituting and constituted by the sample of English middle school teachers' conceptions of professionalism provides strong, indirect support for Johnson's (1973) analysis. As he argues, professionalism, with its central feature of practitioner colleague control over defining clients' needs and how those needs are met, did not really develop in the colonial context. Instead, patronage, first by the colonial administration and later by the "new state," was more often the form of occupational control in evidence.
Assuming that the ideological residue available to teachers in India today derives selectively from the English version and also from the different experience of professions in the periphery, it would follow that the notion of autonomy would be absent in Indian teachers' discourse about professionalism. The idea of practitioner autonomy -- which was not transmitted "purposefully" to the colonial context and which had little, if any, experiential referent for Indian occupational groups before or after political independence -- is not a part of the ideology of professionalism that our sample of secondary teachers in India could draw upon when we queried them about their conceptions of professionalism.

Conclusions

The concordance of our contemporary interview data with Johnson's (1973) historical analysis raises serious questions about scholarship on teachers and other occupational groups in India in which the concept of professionalism is employed. It is not that teachers in India do not think of their occupation in terms of professionalism. In fact, more in our sample of forty secondary school teachers in India considered teachers to be professionals (32) than viewed teachers as either Gurus (17) or bureaucrats (1). The question revolves around the meaning of the term "professionalism" in the Indian context. For instance, the following excerpts from Ruhela (1970) and Kale (1970) seem to impose a conception of professionalism which is more akin to the ideology (if not the practice) of professionalism in England and the United States than to that characteristic in India; both highlight practitioner autonomy as a taken-for-granted element of professionalism in the Indian context. (For a similar emphasis on autonomy in relation to professionalism in India, in this case focusing on college teachers, see Chitnis, 1979: 60.)
There has been a great deal of controversy whether teaching is a profession or not. . . . An evaluation of teaching in India may lead to the following conclusions: . . . (vii) one can question, indeed, the range of autonomy for individual practitioners or for the group of teachers as a whole. However, there is an increased consciousness . . . for greater autonomy and the group of teachers have retaliated against the usurpation of autonomy by any authority whatsoever. (Ruhela, 1970: 284)

Teachers in Poona . . . do use the term professional to describe themselves. . . . The teachers' projected symbol is of a profession nobly dedicated to the service of society, a body of trained and qualified men [sic], confident in their knowledge of what is best for the clients, with full freedom to do what they think is best in educational matters. . . . According to the teachers, their own occupation's failure to approach this image derives . . . [from the fact that] rigid standardization of the syllabus, textbooks, examinations and inspection turn the teacher into a bureaucratic employee who cannot hope to enjoy the freedom and autonomy of the professional. (Kale, 1970: 375-76)

Although interview data reported herein also evidence Indian teachers' concerns about the relatively limited autonomy, such concerns were not articulated in reference to professionalism. Indeed, Kale's quote above is ironic in that our respondents conceived that autonomy was associated with those working (at least in the upper levels of) bureaucracies and not with those called "professionals."

It is thus important to ground analyses of teachers and other occupational groups in specific historical and contemporary, political, economic and cultural contexts, and not only because of the ironic inaccuracies that may obtain if one does not. There is also the issue of interpreting the class consciousness of Indian teachers. For example, how will they interpret or respond to trends toward their proletarianization? Will they draw upon professionalism as an ideological resource in their defensive efforts in the context of this dynamic within capitalist societies (see Larson, 1980)? Our data indicate that at least with regard to the organizational control aspect of proletarianization, teachers in India are not likely to see professionalism as a resource in this struggle.

If anything, professionalism would seem to be a resource for those instigating teachers' proletarianization, in that professionalism could be promoted as a basis for legitimating teachers' subordination. As Larson (1977) notes, professionalism may be used as a basis for subordinating educated workers in bureaucratic organizations. In
this regard, Indian teachers encounter a situation similar to that of their counterparts in England and the United States (see Ginsburg et al., 1982; Ginsburg, 1985; Ginsburg, & Spatig, 1985). However, the fact that professionalism does not represent a resource for teachers in their struggles for autonomy may encourage them to eschew this ideology, with its press toward legitimating inequalities in wealth and status, and to entertain other notions which celebrate class solidarity among all workers. This is not to assert naively that this will occur, but to indicate that the ideology of professionalism as it is drawn upon and culturally reproduced in India is different, and thus educated workers' consciousness and action in India must be understood in this (and not some other) context.
Endnotes

1. The title and much of the content of this section of the paper is derived from Larson's (1977) important contribution to the study of professions from a critical perspective.

2. The content of much of this section of the paper is based on Johnson's (1973) article, "Imperialism and the Professions," which analyzes the situation in the colonial and the peripheral contexts employing the basic concepts discussed in his important book, Professions and Power (1972).

3. Johnson (1972) terms the institutionalized form of occupational control, whereby a third party determines clients' needs and how those needs are met, as "mediation."

4. There were no consistent, significant differences in the way the four strata of respondents replied to questions posed during the interview.

5. This differed from the suggested wording on the interview schedule, which was: "I would like to clarify what it means to you when an occupation is called a profession. Does this term, profession, mean anything else to you?"

6. It is worth considering the implications of this finding for self-perceived occupational status among teachers if Shils (1969: 345) is correct in his conclusion that: "In the land of Guru, the profession which has taken over its obligations is held in low esteem both by those who practice it and by others."
7. The eighteen teachers stating that bureaucrats possessed more power/autonomy than teachers seemed to have associated the term with the senior level administrators in the Indian civil service. That they saw professionals as subordinate to bureaucrats provides reinforcement for Johnson's (1973) thesis.

8. Of the thirty-nine responding to this question, thirteen communicated satisfaction, fifteen indicated dissatisfaction, three suggested they were resigned to their situation since it could not be changed, and eight did not report their evaluation of their situation verbally.

9. During June and July 1977, eighteen teachers were interviewed as part of a larger, longitudinal ethnographic study, which began in November 1976, in five middle schools attended by 9-13 year-old pupils in a Midlands county in England (see Ginsburg et al., 1977). The sample included headmasters and other teachers perceived to be relatively active in teacher organization affairs, e.g., school representatives to the county level organization of the National Association of Schoolmasters -- Union of Women Teachers and the National Union of Teachers. The tape-recorded interviews were semi-structured and designed to elicit respondents' conceptions of professionalism and trade unionism (see Ginsburg, Kharna, Meyenn, Miller, & Spatig, 1980 and Ginsburg, Meyenn, & Miller, 1980) as well as their individual and collective/organizational reactions to cuts in educational expenditure and the "Great Debate" on education (see Ginsburg, Meyenn, & Miller, 1979 and Ginsburg, Wallace, & Miller, 1982).
References


