



## Analyzing Lieberman's Teaching Profession Model: A Comparative Approach

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### *Abstract:*

This study seeks to answer the following main question: Which Lieberman comparative education pattern can be used in analyzing the teaching process as a profession? To provide an answer to this question, the study offered a theoretical analysis of the research methods used in comparative education on the basis of the various kinds of knowledge involved in social sciences. It also discussed the role of comparative philosophy as adopted by Comte and Mill. Furthermore, it shed some light on Carl Bauber's principles which have been used as fundamentals of scientific research methods in comparative education. Besides, the study has analyzed Fiber's ideal patterns together with their value rules and considered the role played these social patterns in setting the comparative study methods.

The study also treated Lieberman's Teaching Profession Pattern and the role of professional unions in developing teachers' status. It provided a list of criteria as set by Lieberman. This list of criteria has been presented within three main entries. The study has then discussed the proposed pattern including its advantages and disadvantages. It also offered three main techniques on how to use Lieberman's method in analyzing the teaching profession from a comparative point of view, and shown the advantages and disadvantages of each of these techniques.

### *Introduction:*

This paper attempts to address two major points of interest that deserve consideration in the field of educational development today. The questions addressed therein are: What are the theoretical

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justification for and the objections against the use of models in comparative research? And how appropriate for the analysis of 'Teaching as a Profession' is an ideal-typical model drawn from Myron Lieberman's 'Education as a Profession'.

The answers and consequent further discussion points are based on the results from the in-depth questionnaire conducted with teachers within Kuwait and the use of these results as a basis for further discussion with the previous research entitled 'Theoretical Basis for Comparative Education.' Once these results were correlated a further comparison is considered with 'Lieberman's Model of the Teaching Profession.

As a result of this research, the findings are set forth to provide a proposed base for educational progression that benefits educational establishment, teachers' ability to provide positive input and ultimately the success of educating students.

## ***2. Research Questions:***

In contribution to the search for a paradigm, this study explores two major questions:

- 1 - What are the theoretical justifications for and objections to the use of models in comparative research?
- 2 - How appropriate for the analysis of 'Teaching as a Profession' is an ideal-typical model drawn from Myron Lieberman's 'Education as a Profession'?

The findings in a recent survey are included in this analysis that supports the 'for and against' arguments for this discussion point.

The search for knowledge, useful in the planned reform of education, which has occupied comparativists since Jullien de Paris, is reflected in the dual intentions Holmes' (1981:15) claims that underpin his development of models and techniques. These are the following:

- 1 - To provide a theoretical framework, taking account of debates in the philosophy of science and social sciences.
- 2 - Within this paradigm, to show how comparative educational research can contribute to the planned reform of education.

The key issues in these debates and their relevance for compara-

tive methodology in general and the development of models in particular are discussed. The findings of this study are also supported by the views of teachers working as part of this ongoing and significant argument within the progress of education as a profession.

### ***3. Research Tools and Methodology:***

One of the main tools of this study is a Questionnaire made by the researcher. This Questionnaire was given to some teachers and educators in the State of Kuwait. It aimed at collecting the views of teachers and educators who are part and parcel of the ongoing educational development process in Kuwait.

### ***4. Literature Review and Theoretical Basis for Comparative Education:***

Discussions now turn to the post-relativity paradigm shift in natural science and recent attempts to replace the traditional paradigm in social science. Major issues are concerned with the nature of knowledge, its acquisition and use. Despite the evidence of the effects of 'historicist' blueprints inspired by Marx and Hegel, the positivism of Comte and Mill remained the ruling faith in social science until the 1960's.

Popper's (1973:222) post-war assault on the positivist paradigm claims that "physical determinism was a day-dream of omniscience" and that:

the corresponding dreams of social scientists were never more than castles in the air.... Utopian dreams of attaining equality with physics and perhaps even superiority by moulding men and societies.

Rejecting the 'Laws of Succession' and the 'Laws of Evolution', of Mill and Comte, Popper (1973:128) concedes that "explained trends" may exist, but he insists that "their persistence depends on the persistence of certain specific initial conditions." Along with positivism, Popper rejects its method of Induction. He (1973:121) suggests that as a prior principle itself, induction cannot guarantee the objectivity of data since "before we can collect data our interest in

data of a certain kind must be aroused: the problem always comes first".

The failure of an induction to show which facts are relevant is reiterated by Medawar (1999:29), who claims that any adequate account of scientific methods needs "a canon to restrict observation to something less than the whole universe as observable".

Central to Popper's (1973:133) alternative hypothetical-deductive method is the 'Theory of Classification' which claims that "all lists can be interpreted as attempts to weed out false theories-to find the weak points in a theory in order to reject it if it is falsified by the text".

However, Kuhn (1970:147) insists that scientists work mostly within a normal science paradigm, applying its theories and hypotheses in a commonsense way:

Falsification, though it surely occurs, does not happen with, or simply because of, the emergence of an anomaly or falsifying instance. Instead, it is a subsequent and separate process that might equally be called verification since it consists in the triumph of a new paradigm over the old one.

Popper's (1973: Ch. 3) view that knowledge is advanced through rational criticism of our trial hypotheses seems appropriate for social science where testing is both difficult and morally dubious. Popper (1973:133) indicates that it is better, as it were, to let

our hypotheses die in our stead...for if we are uncritical we shall always find what we want: we shall look for, and find, confirmations, and shall look away from, and not see, whatever might be dangerous to our pet theories.

Popper's (1973:67) preoccupation with falsification can be appreciated in the context of his rejection of utopian planning for the gradualist approach of the piecemeal social engineer "who know", like Socrates, "how little he knows." In place of universal panaceas, Popper (1973:136) recommends a kind of "social technology" which seeks to minimize the unavoidable, unwanted consequences of any reform. The task of social theory is to "construct and analyze our

sociological models carefully in descriptive or nominalist terms....in terms of individuals, of their attitudes, expectations, relations etc."

Popper claims that man's more or less rational behavior allows the possibility of constructing a 'comparatively simple model' of our actions and interactions and of using these as approximation, i.e. the method of "Logical or Rational Construction", where he (1973:141) points out that

The method of constructing a model on the assumption of complete rationality on the part of all the individuals concerned and of estimating the actual behavior of people from the model behavior, using the latter as a kind of zero coordinate.

Weber's ideal-typical models are similar. By introducing "a point of view" into a particular society (e.g., a capitalist society), rather than as Popper's advocates, introducing a "preconceived selective point of a view of history", these models attempt to disentangle our cultural pattern from the complex web of behavior patterns and diversified social phenomena. Weber (1995:51) points out that "such a cultural pattern is a finite segment of the meaningless infinity of the world process, a segment of which human beings confer meaning and significance".

Weber's ideal-typical hypotheses are theories that based on the assumption that if they were true people, they would be likely to act in certain ways. They are judged by their own internal value system, by their usefulness rather than by their approximation to reality; for while never perfectly realized in fact, they help us understand the examples that never actually conform to them. Valuable as they may be in helping us make sense of multifarious subject matter, there is a need to guard against the reification that occurs when their conceptual scheme is taken for reality. Weber (1995:114) argues that "philosophy has to escape from both the intransigence of pure fact and from the tyranny of the pure conceptual model that reflects it. This is, in both forms, reified thinking".

The functionalist paradigm in social science has been attacked on these grounds. Gouldner (1974: Ch. 2) has called for a new dimension

in sociology, "a sociology of sociology", to take account of the "domain assumptions" or "intellectual capital" a theorist inevitably brings to this theory. Some see this "reflective sociology" in phenomenology and ethno methodology. These aspirants to an alternative antipositivist paradigm, such as Esland (1991:75), criticize the objective view of knowledge because

It ignores the intentionality and expressivity of human action and the entire complex process of the intersubjective negotiation of meanings. In short, it disguises as given what has to be continually interpreted.

This view of knowledge as "the social construction of reality", as also pointed out by Berger and Luckman (1972), claims support from Kuhn's view of "normal science". For Schultz, as illustrated by Esland (1991:81), this paradigm-negotiated and legitimated by the scientific community itself- constitutes the taken-for-granted natural world of the scientists. Esland (1991:82) also points out that Berger sees this supporting community as "a plausibility structure which serves to control the expression of doubt and cognitive dissonance and to regulate the legitimate change". Paradigm breakups represent the disintegration of the taken-for- granted world, the dereification process in which the paradigm is seen to be a relative human artifact. The alternative path to knowledge of the social world, this school recommends consists of sociologists 'acting as participant-observers to get the 'inside view' of how the actors in social situations negotiate their shared meanings.

Popper (1973:214) earlier criticized the sociology of knowledge as "an extreme relativism" or "the bucket theory of the mind", as Esland (1991:16) puts it. Ultimately he sees this "Vulgar Marxism" as destroying the intellectual basis of any discussion by establishing a kind of "enforced dogmatism". The related "conspiracy view of society" is also rejected by Popper (1973:95) on the grounds that:

Social life is not only a trial of strength between opposing groups: it is action within a more or less resilient or brittle framework of institution and traditions, and it creates, apart from any conscious counter-action, many unfore-

seen reactions in this framework, some of them perhaps unforeseeable.

Hence, Popper's own critical dualism seems to have anticipated many of the arguments of phenomenologists, while his 'Three Worlds' scheme offers a viable alternative. Central to this, is his view that the 'largely autonomous World 3' with its objective contents of thought (theoretical systems, problems, critical arguments, contents of journals, books, libraries) can be better understood by studying the products themselves rather than the production behavior which belongs to the 'States of Consciousness and Mental States' of his World 2 (Popper (1973: Ch. 3)).

These unresolved debates form the background of the recent search for a sound theoretical basis for comparative education. In the absence of a clear single paradigm, two traditions have dominated the field. The first reflects Jullien's claim that education might become almost a positive science, is the borrowing tradition encouraged by nineteenth century pioneers. Recently dubbed "Misconceived Comparative Education", as illustrated by Holmes (1981: Ch. 1), still has its adherents. Holmes (1981:25) also points out that the other tradition is inspired by Sadler's emphasis on "the living spirit" of each national system and Harris's distinction between what is of universal application and what is peculiar to local circumstances. While the former tradition reflects positivist views of knowledge, the latter anticipates the primacy attached by Popper to the specific initial conditions.

Furthermore, Holmes (1981:34 & 46), like Harris, claims that comparative studies can supply "theories with predictive value", but true to Sadler's spirit and Popper's method, he states that "no theory should be used to predict events unless it is accompanied by a careful analysis and statement of the initial conditions or circumstances associated with the prediction."

Whether comparativists work as pure scientists stressing falsification or as applied scientists, stressing verification, these specific initial conditions present them with a multifarious subject matter, that of educational systems and their related societal infrastructures.

As universal models of education are not to be induced from the

facts, models are needed to guide data collection. If comparative studies are to provide a kind of 'social technology' for the piecemeal reform of education, there is a need, Holmes (1981:61) claims, for more extensive area and case studies based on an internationally approved taxonomy which helps draw out the unique features of particular systems while placing them in a context that is universal. Holmes (1981:34) argues that

The successful planning of educational development depends on the care with which we refine models and techniques to describe local needs and to formulate generalizations from which predictions can be made.

For example, the International Bureau of Education's (IBE) model seeks to "establish a taxonomy with Universal applicability, useful for collecting information about a particular country while seeking to meet the requirements of world-wide problem analysis." Implicit in the classification of data under universal categories is the major distinction between stated aims and the way they are realized in practice. Teachers are major participants in this process and information about them and their training is related to the other categories. Holmes (1981:108) also mentions that

Aims influence the tasks teachers are expected to perform. Structure and organization influence decisions about the types of training teachers should be given. Curricula determine what teachers should know and the skills of presenting information they should possess. Administration and finance constitute national frameworks in which teachers are selected, trained, certified and paid. The delicate balance between professional autonomy and national needs, as governments see them, has been maintained.

However, idea-typical models can facilitate the organization of data on each of the categories. Drawn from major public statements such as constitutions, legislations, official reports or the writings of 'representative philosophers', they meet the requirements that data be publicly accessible and capable of replication. Their major justification

is that they allow the sensitive area of national norms to be examined in a neutral manner, making comparisons possible against a clearly identified set of assumptions. Such models, as illustrated by Holmes (1965:2), are not intended to represent reality but are to be judged by the extent to which they:

- a) represent the opinions of a sizeable proportion of the population;
- b) facilitate and understanding of on-going debates by providing a framework to judge the pro and cons of the discussion; and
- c) facilitate a comparison of the norms of different societies.

Some Ethnomethodologists claim such models reify reality, reducing it to unacceptably simple abstract principles and stereotyping people's behavior. Schultz's (1967:184) reminder that "no matter how many people are subsumed under it.... An ideal, type... it corresponds to no-one in particular" needs to be heeded. Nevertheless, Holmes (1965: 113) claims that such models can be defended on the grounds that the investigation of diversity within a context of critical dualism is their aim, not the proof of consensus with the model:

Against rational constructs or ideal normative patterns analyses of change and no-change can be made, major national differences of belief and opinion can be identified and irrational, conformist and deviant behavior within a socially constructed world of norms be analyzed.

While claiming this "top-down" approach from the "higher valuations" is more practical than one which seeks to understand society by participating with its members in the construct of their social world. Holmes (1965:71) recognizes that only the extent individuals can act entirely rationally and that such models can tell us with certainty about human behavior. Participatory research can contribute to our knowledge about human motivation and behavior by checking the extent to which ordinary people subscribe to the "higher valuations" (Ibid., p. 113). This acceptance for the need for diverse

approaches to the study of norms is important if ideal-typical models are not to be stereotypes, and if, as Lewis (19:114) puts it, the "tyranny of the conceptual model" is to be avoided.

### ***5. Lieberman's Model of the Teaching Profession:***

The second part of this study explores how Lieberman's model might be used to analyze the problems involved in the "professionalization" of teachers. The context is that of rapid social and educational change which has transformed teaching throughout Europe since 1945. The explosions of aspirations, population and knowledge have brought a much enlarged and more heterogeneous clientele and a mass teaching force for the schools, changing educational structures, curricula, methods and patterns of participation. The social, economic and political importance of education has been recognized by devoting vastly increased resources to it (recent cut-backs withstanding). Accordingly, the education explosion has raised aspirations among authorities responsible for education as well as among young teachers themselves for an improvement in the professional status of teachers. According to a recent survey, 73% of teachers, from various nationalities and subject specializations, confirm that they seek increased independence within the classroom as well as to be allocated the respect afforded to other professional categories.

National statements have sought a solution through the improvement of teacher education and its full integration into higher education. International agencies such as OCED and the United Nations Educational and Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) have joined the chorus. A statement of the latter's special "Intergovernmental Conference on Teachers" (UNESCO (1966:524)) best summarized these aspirations:

Teaching should be regarded as a profession: it is a form of public service which requires of teachers expert knowledge and specialized skill, acquired and maintained through vigorous and continuing study: it calls for a sense of personal and corporate responsibility for the education and welfare of the pupils in their charge. The status of

teachers should be commensurate with the needs of education: it should be recognized that the proper status of teachers and due public regard for the profession of teaching are of major importance for the full realization of these aims and objectives.

Professional organizations express similar aspirations for improved status, 'revalorized' but the malaise among teachers continues into the 2000s with little evidence of any real improvement in teachers' status and, at best, only the partial integration of teachers education into higher education. Thus, Kelsall and Kelsall (1969:148) speak of:

The failure to translate the high-sounding platitudes about the life-saving values of education into practical measures calculated to enhance the prestige of those to whom the community has entrusted this all-important task.

Accordingly, a major requirement of such "practical measure" or solutions is the need to maintain, as Holmes (1965:108) argues, "the delicate balance between professional autonomy and national needs as governments see them."

Explanations for teachings relatively low status compared to the older professions are legendary. A model is needed to reduce the variables to manageable proportions while highlighting crucial aspects of the problem. Much of the literature on professions list several criteria and arranges occupations on a continuum with the ideal-typical professions of law and medicine at the opposing end.

The eight criteria Lieberman (1956:2-6) lists, can be condensed into three major ones. The first is the need for a unique, definite and essential service function. Lieberman (1956:47) mentions that

To be a profession, an occupational group must have delegated to it relatively specific functions. A group which has already been delegated a large number of contradictory functions, which does not have the human and material resources to carry out even those functions which are not logically incompatible, and which is nevertheless continually seeking new worlds to conquer, is a long way from professional status.

Therefore, these functions are to be performed responsibly on the basis of, as Lieberman (1956:417) points, "a code of ethics formulated, interpreted and enforced by the professional group itself". The role of professional organizations in protecting autonomy is further stressed by Lieberman (1956:257) as follows: "In the absence of a strong professional organization there maybe individuals doing the same work but there can be no profession." As a result, the possession of a common body of knowledge and skills is equally vital since, as Lieberman (1956:4) illustrates, "is difficult to see how persons could be members of the same profession unless they shared common bodies of specialized knowledge skills and techniques".

These skills should be kept up-to-date; teachers should "know enough about research to be intelligent consumers of it (Ibid, 94)." The need for professional autonomy is justified by the Lieberman's (1956:4) view that:

Professional work is not amenable to the kind of close supervision often present in factories and offices. Professions necessarily require a broad range of autonomy, that is, freedom to exercise independent skill and judgment.

A distinction is made, however, between the moral authority of teachers (legitimately in the hands of the layman) and their professions autonomy, which should extend to:

Subject taught, materials used, criteria for admission, retention and graduation at all levels, form to be used in reporting progress, entry to teacher training, length and context of programs, standards for entry and expulsion from the profession, standards of professional conduct. (Ibid., p. 91)

While conceding the rights of laymen to delegate functions and moral autonomy to teachers, Lieberman's (1956:11; 16; 14) model is based on the assumptions that:

- The existence of professions assumes a high degree of independence and autonomy not tolerated in totalitarian societies.

- The older professions are an appropriate model for teachers.
- Teacher's vocational and service objectives are inter-dependent.

### ***6. The Proposed Model - Its Uses and Defects:***

The proposed model might be used in three ways. First it could be applied to a positivist-type assessment of the place of teaching in the pecking order of occupational responsibility, rather in the Noah and Eckstein fashion. Assuming Lieberman's criteria to be universally relevant, indicators might be devised for each one of them. The degree of definiteness of functions might be examined empirically by comparing the amount of time spent by teachers on their different roles as instructor, socializer, administrator etc.

Equally, the degree of autonomy might be assessed by examining teacher's freedom in curricular planning and implementation, their role as evaluator, the extent of group control of entry etc. However, their extent of knowledge and skills might be tested by their length of training, balance of academic and professional courses, teaching practice etc. Such data might be analyzed and used to draw up a "League Table of Professionalism" either comparing teachers with other professionals in one country or teachers in different countries. Such an approach might also test Lieberman's first assumption that "the less totalitarian the society, the greater the degree of professionalism". Ironically, when this argument is tested, as can be seen from the results of the attached survey, teachers in a 'less totalitarian' type society still prefer more freedom to display the true degree of professionalism that is required to be an effective role model and teachers.

So, a small step from here would be to test the hypothesis, often implied, that teaching is more a profession in decentralized than in centralized systems.

As the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) studies have shown, the methodological problems involved in such studies are enormous. Even if satisfactory

cross-cultural indicators for such terms as "teacher autonomy" could be devised, there would still be the difficulty of weighting them.

At best, it might lead to a second possible approach. By throwing up low scores on certain criteria, it might indicate that those interested in the professionalization of teachers should pay closer attention to those areas. The Lieberman criteria might, in other words, be used as possible solutions. Assuming the criteria to be unproblematic, such an approach in the applied comparativists idiom might investigate obstacles to the successful implementation of the universal solutions.

Thus it may be argued that English teachers need to have clearer, more definite functions than Kuwaiti teachers who need greater control over curriculum policies, or that teachers almost everywhere need more and better education and training. Such an approach might even manage to respect the initial conditions of each country, at least on the right-hand side of the equation.

The major defect in such an approach, however, would be failure to examine the suitability of the proposed solutions. These are problematic on two accounts: In the first place, it must be questioned whether they type of solutions Lieberman recommends for teachers in the USA can be successfully transplanted to countries with very different educational traditions.

The second major objection to this approach concerns Lieberman's assumption that the model of the liberal professions are appropriate for teachers to emulate and his claim that teachers vocational and service objectives are interdependent. While recognizing the danger of false analogies with doctors and lawyers, Lieberman believes these professions who that systematic attention to problems of professionalization if a prerequisite to higher status. Assuming that the desirable features of professionalism of education to society outweigh the undesirable ones, Lieberman (1956:15-17) claims that:

One of the main reasons for studying education as a profession is to demonstrate that educators have the power to achieve certain vocational objectives which materially affect the educational objectives and possibilities of public schools.

On one hand, Lieberman (1956:18) anticipates to some extent a conspiracy theory of the professions by acknowledging that partial professionalization (improved social status) may be harmful if unaccompanied by greater responsibility: "Teachers should show as much concern for their professional obligations as for their prerogatives at every stage of the process."

While it may be argued that the Lieberman criteria well express the aspirations of teachers, this view on the other hand does not necessarily command such solutions in the public interest. For, as the deprofessionalizers have pointed out, the term "profession" is value loaded. Those operating in this "deprofessionalizing idiom", as Hoyle (1980:43), claim the support of Schultz and Kuhn in particular and of the sociology of knowledge in general for the view expressed by Susan Balloch (1974:524) that "the improvement of professional status and the improvement of services to clients may (will) be inimical to each other."

As a result, calls for more specialized knowledge and skills, for example, are seen as attempts to mystify the crafts of teaching and immunize professionals from legitimate public scrutiny. Ethnomethodologists claim teachers would do better to increase their common-sense knowledge and skills to improve their effectiveness with the mass of their clients.

A third approach to the application of Lieberman's model assumes both the initial conditions and the solutions to be problematic-the stance of the pure comparativists. This approach accepts the potential incompatibility between the aspirations of the teachers improved status and the public interest in an improved service while paying close attention to the specific initial conditions of each country studied.

## ***7. Discussion and Conclusion:***

This paper attempts to study Lieberman's comparative education patterns in analyzing the teaching process as a profession. It discusses a set of criteria that are suggested by Lieberman. Then it suggests a framework, based on Lieberman's, for analyzing the

teaching profession. Still, this model fails in examining the proposed solutions or criteria.

Although Lieberman claims that these criteria are universally relevant, the conclusion is that these criteria are not used as universal solutions but as a framework within which to investigate problems arising within a national tradition, solutions that are attempted and the obstacles to their success. The aim is both to respect the "living spirit" of each system and to distinguish what is universal application and what is peculiar to local circumstances, therefore an examination of diversity rather than an attempt to prove consensus. Instead, such an approach to comparative education should investigate the obstacles to the successful implementation of universal solutions.

Finally, Lieberman's model may be appropriate for teachers in the USA and needs to be modified if it is to be applied in countries such as Kuwait with very different educational traditions. In order to apply these criteria in the State of Kuwait, teachers in Kuwait then need both more and better education and training and greater control over curriculum policies.

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