

LAW STUDENTS — TWO GENERATIONS

by
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Recent decades have witnessed both the expansion of old established professions and the emergence of new ones, providing an ever-broadening range of services. Within the context of an increasingly industrial, technological and socially-conscious society, potential clientele for the modern lawyer ranges from the multinational organisation to the individual minority-group member. Moreover, since legal expertise rests in an aggregate of decisions concerning social behaviour and values, rather than a techno-scientific base, as for other professions, social change further compounds the complexity of the lawyers task. As Sexton and Maher summarize:

Lawyers have occupied a more important social, political and economic position than most other occupational groups in the community. And they are dealing with a commodity — justice — that lies at the heart of our social system. (1982:179)

This crucial position of professionals in society, especially that of lawyers, has been the source of considerable controversy for some time. The professional group is granted freedom, self-regulation and status, in trust that it will operate both ethically and efficiently on behalf of society. Definitions of professionalism include such factors as: formally qualified knowledge, autonomy, organised codes of conduct, monetary and symbolic rewards for practice, and work directed towards community or cultural benefit (Maley, cited Boreham et al, 1970 p.6). It is this last dimension of service-orientation which has been examined most critically during recent decades of social reform, when operation within a highly developed and competitive market economy has led to a tenuous balance between community service and individual reward.

In his classic, functionalist appraisal of the professions, Parsons emphasised the 'strategic significance in our society of a set of occupational groups which are not either in their own opinion or by and large in the public estimation, devoted mainly to the goal of their own profit, but rather in some sense to "service" namely the professions' (1964:370-371). Within this framework he described the role of lawyers as follows:

They are expected to provide a "service" to the public within limits without regard to immediate self-interest. The lawyer has a position of independent responsibility, so that he is neither a servant only of the client, though he represents his interests, nor of any other group, in the lawyers case, of public authority. (1964:381)

By contrast, Marxist and conflict critiques have challenged this 'myth' of service, emphasising the structural constraints and power pressures of negotiation within a capitalist, free enterprise economy (Johnson, 1972; O'Malley, 1980). Tomasic identifies 'cynical realism' as the prevailing ideology among modern lawyers, an orientation which he describes as:

far more in keeping with capitalist society than the aristocratically-based ideal of service. This may tend to limit the responsiveness of lawyers in broader social problems, as they have continued primarily to serve middle class and business interests. (1983:473)

In general, then, there are two approaches to the study of professionals: one which sees them as functional for society, performing tasks in a disinterested and collectively

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orientated manner, and the other perceiving them as agents of those who exercise power and whose work is, to an important degree, legitimating rather than appraising the power bases of society. The system of law can be seen as either the legitimated form of social order or as a rationalisation for infrastructural power relationships and competing interests within society.

Whatever the dominant orientation of the group, it is the process of professional socialization which ensures the transmission of professional sub-cultures to successive generations of practitioners. Legal socialization involves not only learning the significance of legal decisions and the skills through which they are achieved, but also internalizing the central codes and values of the legal community. In order to examine this learning process, Anderson and Western commenced a longitudinal study of the professional socialization of students in the fields of law, medicine, engineering and teaching in 1965. The study investigated the social origins of students, their reasons for choosing their careers, the development of career and role expectations and attitudinal profiles of the four groups. Research is still being conducted among members of the original sample of 645 lawyers who were enrolled for their first year at the Australian National University and the Universities of Melbourne, Monash, New South Wales, Queensland and Western Australia twenty years ago.

At that time, the social profile of the trainee lawyers showed them as coming from predominantly middle and upper class backgrounds. Over sixty per cent of trainee lawyers came from professional or managerial backgrounds, with more than double the proportion of students being from the homes of owners and managers of large business than in the other faculties. Over twenty per cent of the students were from homes where the income was over \$8000 (\$37,254 by C.P.I. in June, 1985). Lawyers were more likely than their contemporaries in other faculties to have parents with university education, a third of the group had been to independent schools and slightly more than a quarter had been to Catholic schools.

It seemed that the nature of professional services might be considerably influenced by the fact that most trainee professionals came from a background far removed from that of the majority of their clients. Furthermore, attitudes to professional practice varied considerably.

The choice of law as a career centred round two factors identified as 'status concern' — a desire for a high status career, and 'professional orientation' — a desire to practise and an interest in the role of law in society — (Anderson, Western and Boreham, 1978), a dichotomy which seems to reflect the previously discussed dimensions of professionalism. The researchers concluded:

Profiles were obtained from statements made very early in their courses but, interestingly, they persisted and the two major dimensions were seen as orienting a great deal of the students' activities . . . Status concern had to do essentially with extrinsic rewards which were likely to derive from professional practice, while professional orientation concerned matters of more intrinsic nature to the profession. (Anderson, Western and Williams, 1982:13)

Since the time of the original study, the growth of the professions has been accompanied by a parallel growth in tertiary courses for professional trainees. Moreover the intent of 'democratization' of education has led to changes, such as the restructuring of the tertiary sector, the abolition of fees, introduction of TEAS, encouragement of minority and 'disadvantaged' groups, all of which might be expected to have produced a broadening in the social origins of recruits with some accompanying effect on their perceptions of their 'status' and 'service' professional roles.

In particular, the establishment of the Colleges of Advanced Education sought to produce a

new type of student. In contrast to the university courses, it was explained, the colleges were established to 'offer courses at the tertiary level in the technologies which dominate the day-to-day practice of their specialities' to students who had already chosen their careers (Richardson, 1972:3). The most recent report of the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission for, 1985-87, again states that 'the Commission reiterates that the primary role of the C.A.E.'s is to provide vocationally oriented courses.' (1984:50) The colleges have a specific task of professional socialization. In the light of these changes, it was considered of interest to seek some measure of comparison between the original group of university lawyers and a sample of students enrolled at a College of Advanced Education, in order to discover any differences in the social origins and professional orientations of beginning trainees. It was hoped also to obtain a first year university law sample so that university and CAE students could be compared, but this was unsuccessful.

The CAE course to be studied was established in 1975, and the first LL.B students were enrolled in 1977. A Graduate Diploma in Legal Practice was introduced in 1978. There are more than 1,000 students enrolled in the course, studying full or part time, or externally. The minimum tertiary entrance scores for entrance to the course in 1985 were 935 (F.T.) and 937 (P.T. and External). The aims of the Law School are to provide courses in legal concepts, principles and moral responsibilities, as well as broadening the general educational abilities and experience of the students. In line with the mandate of the CAEs, one crucial aim is 'to provide as practical an education as possible', a theme which was echoed in students explanations of why they chose the course, for a quarter of those who said that the CAE course was their first preference mentioned the importance of its practical nature.

An updated version of the original Anderson and Western questionnaire was administered to students during the first week of their second semester. The structure of the present sample according to type of enrolment, is similar to that of the original group, although, in fact, the CAE has a far larger proportion of part-time and external students overall.

TABLE 1

COMPARISON OF 1965 AND 1985 GROUPS BY ENROLMENT
(Column percentages)

	1965 (n = 646)	1985 (n = 143)
Full-time	77	74
Part-time	19	13
External	4	13

In both groups the majority of students in the study-sample were young, first year undergraduates — 73.4 per cent in 1985 and 87.6 per cent in 1965 were under twenty years of age. The difference in these proportions and in the proportions of the CAE sample

having previous experience as law clerks — 23 per cent in 1985 in comparison to 9 per cent in 1965 — is probably due to the larger numbers of external students in the current sample.

SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF STUDENTS ENTERING LAW

Proportions of males and females enrolled

The difference between the two groups which is most immediately apparent is in the balance between the sexes. Although the participation of women in CAEs has accelerated over the last two decades, conventional distinctions between traditionally 'masculine' and 'feminine' fields have remained more marked in CAEs than in the Universities. (Anderson & Vervoorn, 1983:57) Between 1970 and 1981, for example, the proportion of women in commerce and business studies has risen from 9.5 per cent to 27.6 per cent, while proportions enrolled in engineering rose from .4 to 1.7 per cent in the same period.

Separate figures for women enrolled in Law in CAEs are not available, but the proportion of women enrolled in Law at universities rose from 11.4 per cent to 34.6 per cent between 1965 and 1980 (Anderson and Vervoorn, 1983:52). This shift in proportions is clearly reflected in a comparison between the original and present groups being studied:

TABLE 2
CHANGES IN GENDER FROM 1965 TO 1985
(Column percentages)

	1965 (n = 619)	1985 (n = 138)
Male	89	61
Female	11	39

A relevant finding from the Anderson and Vervoorn study of women's place in higher education, which may relate to both parents and the present generation, is that 'women students are more interested than men in those courses and occupations which offer opportunities for social service and working with people' (1983:3)

Socio-economic backgrounds of students enrolled in Law

The current serious debate concerning the funding and availability of higher education centres on the issue of access by candidates from all levels of the community. Attempts to broaden opportunity through reforms in selecting and funding students have been counterbalanced by the effect of the economic recession since the late seventies, with the ever-increasing imposition of entry quotas for limited numbers of places and anxiety about employment influencing the choice of tertiary education. Although the numbers of students undertaking higher education have increased, both social-structural and motivational constraints have meant that the social backgrounds of students have not changed markedly over the years. Anderson and Vervoorn conclude:

Higher education in general and universities in particular remain socially elite

institutions . . . Given the changes that have taken place in Australia since World War II, and in higher education especially, one might reasonably have expected participation to have become more representative of all social groups . . . Yet despite all these changes, the growth of numbers and demand for education is accounted for by greater participation from the middle ranking groups in society; there has been a slight reduction in the proportion drawn from the upper-class groups, but they remain over-represented by a factor of about 6. (Anderson and Vervoorn, 1983:170)

To determine if there have been changes in the social composition of law students from 20 years to the present day, the factors of parental education, occupation and income levels were re-examined. Table 3 presents the education levels of parents of the two samples.

TABLE 3

EDUCATION LEVELS OF PARENTS OF LAW STUDENTS FROM 1965 TO 1985

(Column percentages)

	Fathers		Mothers		General Population 1982*	
	1965 (n = 627)	1985 (n = 132)	1965 (n = 631)	1985 (n = 133)	Males	Females
Primary/some secondary	44	37	60	45	37	56
Secondary/post secondary	34	36	32	41	54	39
CAE/university degree	12	26	7	14	9	5

*(A.B.S.)

Clearly the proportions of parents with higher education for both mothers and fathers is larger today than it was two decades ago. The data indicates that mothers of the 1985 sample are still less likely than fathers to gain a tertiary qualification, however, proportionally more of them are likely to be in the secondary/post secondary category than fathers. Both parents have educational attainment levels well above the average for the general population.

It is difficult to compare income levels, due to enormous changes in inflation and cost of living. Table 4 shows clearly that fathers of present-day CAE law students still earn considerably more than the average income. Forty per cent earn more than \$32,000 per year, well above the average male wage or salary of \$21,013. In 1965, approximately two thirds of fathers were earning more than the then average income of \$2,900 per annum. Income levels of mothers were not sought in the original study and the mothers of the 1985 group earn very little in comparison with their husbands.

TABLE 4
INCOME LEVELS OF PARENTS OF 1985 QIT LAW STUDENTS
(Column percentages)

	Fathers (n = 120)	Mothers (n = 124)
Less than 20,000	14	77
20,001 — 32,000	26	19
32,000 +	40	4

Despite the apparent drop in income levels, when considering father's occupation in 1965 and 1985, the data indicate that the proportion of students from managerial/professional backgrounds has in fact increased by 5 per cent, with a decline in the proportion of entrants from blue-collar backgrounds. One must bear in mind, however, that there have been changes in the occupational structure, with blue collar occupations declining and lower white collar occupations increasing. Unfortunately, data concerning mothers' occupations was not collected in 1965, when approximately 30 per cent of married women were in the work force. The current data indicates that 32 per cent of mothers are working in a managerial or professional capacity, while in the broader population, among the 47 per cent of working women, only about 18 per cent are employed at this level. (Bureau of Census and Statistics, 1985) Only twenty-three per cent of mothers are not in some kind of paid employment, indicating that, not only are the mothers of this sample more likely to be employed, but also that they are employed at a far higher level than is usual for females.

TABLE 5
PARENTAL OCCUPATION OF 1965 AND 1985 LAW STUDENTS
(Column percentages)

	1965		1985	
	Fathers (n = 622)	Mothers	Fathers (n = 136)	Mothers (n = 133)
Managerial/professional	65		70	32
Clerical/sales/service	11		13	35
Blue collar	24		15	9
Domestic duties	—		—	23

Levels of Religiosity among Students

As religiosity has been shown to be related to aspirations of altruism, respondents were asked questions regarding their belief in the existence of God and the regularity of their attendance at religious services. Responses to these two items were then combined to form a scale from low to high religiosity. Table 6 indicates that levels of religiosity have remained fairly consistent. The 1965 group were slightly more religious, while the 1985 sample spreads evenly across the range.

TABLE 6
LEVEL OF RELIGIOSITY OF LAW STUDENTS FOR 1965 AND 1985
(Column percentage)

	1965 (n = 392)	1985 (n = 133)
Low	36	35
Medium	26	31
High	38	35

Ethnicity

As in the original study, the great majority of students are Australian-born and came from Australian backgrounds. Researchers in the area have found that mother's background is the most accurate measure of ethnicity, since it is she who tends to dominate cultural and linguistic family habits (Anderson and Vervoorn, 111). Using the measure of mother's country of birth, our sample can be compared with other available data on student enrolments.

TABLE 7
PROPORTIONS OF NEW STUDENTS WITH SPECIFIC NATIONAL
BACKGROUNDS

Mothers's birthplace	Australian metropolitan colleges, 1976		Monash University 1982	CAE sample
	Male	Female		
Australia	67.5	72.5	53.3	84.6
United Kingdom, Eire, and New Zealand	10.7	12.1	8.6	9.8
Europe	12.5	9.6	18.1	2.8
Asia	4.9	2.4	14.2	1.4
Other	3.4	2.8	4.9	.7

(Source: Anderson and Vervoorn, Chapter 7)

Even allowing for local population variations, students with other ethnic backgrounds seem under-represented in this sample (ethnicity was not asked in the 1965 sample).

Family Contacts

Since Law is identified as a 'familial' profession, a final basis upon which the two samples were compared was the strength of family connections in the profession. Again, results were very similar to those of the earlier group, but there was a slight drop in proportions of respondents stating that they had either family members or close friends who were solicitors, (33 per cent in 1965 to 30 per cent in 1985) barristers, (22 per cent in 1965 to 19 per cent in 1985) and judges, (9 per cent in 1965 to 7 per cent in 1985).

REASONS FOR ENTERING LAW

It was presumed, as in the original study, that motivation for career choice would indicate the orientations to law of entrants to the course. Students were presented with 19

possibly important factors, including impressions of the profession, their scholastic performance and the influence of others upon their decision to study law, and were asked to indicate the level of importance of each factor in their decision to commence a law course.

Results for both examples are remarkably similar, considering the twenty year time difference. Over two-thirds of students indicated that the subject matter of law, financial attractiveness, a desire for professional career and a desire to practice law had all been major factors in their decision.

Approximately one half of students also said that a desire to be independent of bosses, an interest in the maintenance of individual liberties and civil rights, a desire to use law as a stepping stone into politics, business or government, a good performance in appropriate school subjects and the high social standing of the legal profession had been important.

The major shifts in opinion over time have occurred with judgement of the importance of 'high social standing of the profession' and 'interest in debating and similar activities.' In the former instance the percentage indicating that professional status is very/somewhat important has increased by 20 per cent to 64.3 per cent in 1985; while the latter has declined in importance by 13 per cent to 36.4 per cent.

Generally speaking, factors such as failure to gain admission to course of first preference; lack of qualifications for other courses; influence of relatives other than parents, close family friend or friends, teachers at school and careers advisors are not important considerations when the decision to study law is made.

To determine if there were any underlying independent structures in the data, whereby groups of items could be combined to measure a single concept, these 19 items were subjected to factor analysis for both 1965 and 1985 data. Principal components were sought, and 'skewed' items eliminated, allowing for a two-factor solution. Table 8 shows the two factors and loadings of each variable after varimax rotation;

TABLE 8
FACTOR ANALYSIS FOR REASONS FOR ENTRY INTO
THE PROFESSIONS IN 1965 AND 1985

1965			1985		
Var.	Factor 1	Factor 2	Var.	Factor 1	Factor 2
1	0.53117 ¹	-0.18086	1	-0.16697	0.64585 ¹
2	0.06095	0.43908 ²	2	0.04091	0.18761
3	-0.03684	0.66603 ²	3	0.51452 ²	0.00281
4	0.48704 ¹	0.06996	4	0.06727	0.47032 ¹
6	0.09917	0.18316	6	0.46735 ²	0.11224
8	0.08330	0.49567 ²	8	0.75358 ²	0.05373
12	0.38623	-0.78923	9	0.61629 ²	-0.01372
14	0.32423	0.17479	11	0.52535 ²	-0.22154
19	0.68963 ¹	0.07919	14	0.37223	0.18731
			17	0.52406 ²	0.23967
			19	0.14846	0.70807 ¹
Percent of total variance accounted for			21.7	19.2	26.0
Percent of common variance accounted for			55.4	44.6	63.4

F¹ = professional service

F² = professional pragmatism

At first glance it would appear that there are two different structures underlying the analyses at the two time periods. However, closer inspection suggests that there is a similarity. The first factor for 1965 has three variables with loadings above .4 and these items correspond exactly to the items extracted for the second factor of the 1985 factor analysis; an interest in the subject matter of law, an interest in the maintenance of individual liberties and civil rights and a desire to practice law. In combination, this factor was identified as a 'professional service' orientation.

The second factor for 1965 has three items; a desire to be independent of bosses, the financial attractiveness of legal practice and the relatively high social standing of the legal profession, of which the last two correspond to the first factor of 1985. This factor now includes the further dimensions of good performance in appropriate school subjects, desire for a professional career, the influence of parents and admiration for persons in the legal profession, (perhaps reflecting the influence of quota restrictions and employment concerns). The second factor was labelled as 'professional pragmatism', since it shows less interest in the actual process and the social role of law than in the rewards of practice. Thus, at both times, we have been able to identify what we have called a professional/service orientation and a pragmatic orientation to law.

As we are particularly interested in the 1985 sample, it was decided to create two scales from the two sets of items extracted from the factor analysis of the 1985 reasons for entry as a basis for future analysis.

Items were coded to measure strength of response and tested for scaleability by inter-item correlation and cronbach alpha. (Pragmatism, cronbach alpha = .73033, Service, cronbach alpha = .61929). A nineteen point scale was structured measuring Pragmatism and a ten point scale indicated Service orientation.

The distributions are shown below in Table 9.

TABLE 9

DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENT SCORES ACROSS THE TWO SCALES

		Pragmatism scale																		
		High																	Low	
Scale	Score	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
n = 101		—	1	3	4	6	8	12	12	8	10	11	8	2	4	6	3	1	1	1
		Professional/service scale																		
		High															Low			
Scales	Scores	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
n = 103		15	16	20	19	15	8	6	3	1										

The distribution over the pragmatism measure is slightly skewed in the positive direction, while the professional/service distribution is strongly skewed in the positive direction. These results would tend to indicate that the majority of students have quite strong professional/service motivations for undertaking law and less strong pragmatic reasons. That is, while both orientations are discernible, the service orientation appears crucial to the decision to study law.

The motivation of sub-groups within the sample

We next attempted to determine whether different sub-groups within the sample systematically showed different reasons for deciding to enter law. To rationalise measurement, each scale was collapsed into three categories: high, medium, low, with approximately equal numbers in each category and gender, socio-economic status, and religiosity were cross-tabulated to seek relationships with the two scales measuring reasons for entry into the profession.

There was no significant differences on the two scales with regard to parents' education, occupation or income. Religiosity was not related to either measure. However, there were differences between the sexes. Table 10 presents the data.

TABLE 10

SEX OF THE RESPONDENT AND THE SCORE ON THE TWO SCALES (Column percentages)

	Males	Females
Pragmatism scale		
High	29	11
Medium	24	43
Low	48	46
Professional/service scale		
High	47	56
Medium	32	32
Low	21	13

The cross-tabulations show that a much higher proportion of males than females (29 per cent compared to 11 per cent of females) indicated pragmatic reasons for entering law. This trend is reversed slightly for the professional/service measure. Fifty-six per cent of females indicated this concept as very important compared to 47 per cent of males. Not only do these findings give evidence of the continuing differences between male and females with regard to career-orientation and, perhaps, assumed 'breadwinner' roles, but they also reflect noted propensity for females to opt for the service-related and people-oriented professions (Anderson and Vervoorn, 1983:54). Since gender is the key factor influencing orientation, and since there is a steady increase in the number of females entering the legal profession, an interesting line for future studies would be to investigate whether the influx of females changes the profile of the profession or whether females become more pragmatically oriented as they become an established sub-group.

IMAGES OF SUCCESSFUL PRACTITIONERS

It was considered that choice of profession and expectations about terms and conditions of practice would be influenced by the image which trainees have of 'successful' professionals.

In the 1965 study, students were asked to indicate the importance of a series of items concerning images of the profession. These same items were repeated in the 1985 survey and Table 11 shows percentages who indicated 'very important' for the items at both time periods. The characteristics have been grouped into six main categories-status qualities, personal qualities, professional style, knowledge and skills, some relations and contribution to the wider community. Students were asked to indicate on a five point scale how important these characteristics were for success as a solicitor and as a barrister.

Table 11
PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS INDICATING THAT LISTED ITEMS
WERE VERY IMPORTANT CHARACTERISTICS FOR A SUCCESSFUL
PRACTITIONER IN 1965 AND 1985

	1965		1985	
	Barrister	Solicitor	Barrister	Solicitor
Status qualities	%	%	%	%
Attendance at Private School	7	5	17	12
Male	21	11	15	8
Australian born	4	2	12	8
Family background in field	2	2	6	4
Being married	5	5	4	4
Protestant	1	1	1	1
Personal qualities				
Honesty and integrity	69	75	52	52
Wisdom and maturity	48	42	50	46
Professional style				
Able to communicate ideas	84	44	80	49
Meticulous attention to detail	61	62	48	45
Sustain hard work	55	48	56	51
Pleasing manner	52	40	60	44
Appearance of confidence	74	46	68	44
Knowledge and skills				
Knowledge of history and philosophy of law	34	21	20	5
Good academic record	17	11	21	13
Broad cultural knowledge	22	16	14	10
Administrative ability	9	25	5	25
Social relations				
Ability to gain respect and confidence of clients	69	73	65	66
Numerous professional contacts	49	41	41	36
Good relations with colleagues	45	41	31	30
Contribution to wider community				
Active in community affairs	10	13	6	8
Concerns of community well being	31	31	23	21
Interest in people	44	41	27	29

Status factors

It is immediately apparent that the samples at both time periods regard the status factors as relatively unimportant. However, there has been some change in perceptions of importance in regard to attendance at private school, being a male, being Australian born and having a family background in the legal field. In all four instances the proportions indicating these items as very important have marginally increased for both solicitors and barristers with the large increase occurring for barristers. There has been very little change for the two final status items, being married and being a Protestant.

Personal qualities and professional style

While there has been virtually no change in the item concerning wisdom and maturity there has been a decline in the importance of honesty and integrity. For the professional style items, only in one instance concerning meticulous attention to detail, has there been any change in importance between 1965 and 1985. In 1985 the student lawyers saw this factor as more important for a success than in 1965.

Knowledge and skills

Two of the four items concerning knowledge and skills have declined in importance over the two decades. These items are 'knowledge of history and philosophy of law' and 'broad cultural knowledge'. There has been very little difference in the perceptions of importance of a good academic record and administrative ability.

Social relations

With regard to social relations, 'good relations with colleagues' has declined slightly in importance while there has been a slight decline in importance for the other two items in this group.

The wider community

Two of the variables concerned with the wider community have declined in their level of importance for success. Concern for the well-being of the community and an interest in people are not regarded as important for success as either a barrister or a solicitor for law students today compared to students enrolled in 1965 (which rose from 7 to 17 per cent for barristers and from 5 to 12 per cent for solicitors).

In general, there have been large changes in reductions of perceived importance, while increases are marginal, (in the order of between 1 and 7 per cent) except for the status item, attendance at private school.

It is of some interest that students place a very low value on the status measures yet the reality of their situation is very different. If we consider responses to various status characteristics for success as solicitor we find that 12 per cent of the sample in 1985 indicated that attendance at a private school was very important for success yet 51 per cent actually attended a private school; 8 per cent indicated being Australian-born was very important for success yet 90 per cent are actually Australian-born; and 4 per cent indicated a family background in the legal profession as important for success, yet 34 per cent of the sample actually have a relative in the profession.

This difference, between values and situational characteristics, raises the question of the relationship between structural and causal influences upon educational opportunities. Although students do not value the elements of their advantage, the structural constraints operating upon their career paths mean that those who have them are far more likely to accrue the added benefits of higher education.

Conclusion

Perhaps the most noticeable finding to emerge from these preliminary analyses is the remarkable continuity with the past. Socio-economic backgrounds are little different over 20 years, reasons for choice of the profession are little different and, with few exceptions, images of successful practitioners are much the same.

Of course the two groups are different. One comprised an entering cohort at universities, the second an entering cohort at a College of Advanced Education some 20 years later. What if the CAE cohort had been compared with a university cohort of the same vintage? Would the same degree of persistence have been found? We are unable to answer this question at the present time, but if continuing studies of other professions such as medicine are any guide, then the answer is that probably a university cohort would be very similar to the college cohort.

Western (1983) found the social backgrounds of medical students in 1979 was no different from a 1966 intake. He concluded:

there is no reason to suspect that Queensland medical students are atypical in terms of their social background. It is clear . . . that they are still a highly privileged group, and that access to prestigious professions is still very much class determined. (1983:59)

Social reform is in the control of those professions to whom the community has given both the freedom of autonomy and the trust of guardianship. A constant social background of privilege has vital implications for the role of the profession, in perceiving the need for change and being willing to invoke it. Certainly the factors identified in motivation to study law and the characteristics of success judged by these trainee lawyers illustrate the duality of the status and service dimensions of professionalism.

At this stage however, we were able to identify a clear 'service orientation' among these students, which offers the potential that future motivation on behalf of clients and the community may compensate for a lack of broad social experience. In preparation for practice in a social environment dominated by economic enterprise, the nurturing of this service role would seem a crucial part of the process of professional socialization. Or must we accept that, since the social backgrounds of the group have not changed, neither will the practice of law?

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