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The Nature and Resolution of Role Conflicts Among **Queensland Primary School Teachers:** An Application of Field Theory.

> by M. J. DUNKIN

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# The Nature and Resolution of Role Conflicts Among Queensland Primary School Teachers: An Application of Field Theory

by

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### THE NATURE AND RESOLUTION OF ROLE CONFLICTS AMONG QUEENSLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS: AN APPLICATION OF FIELD THEORY

#### INTRODUCTION

This paper<sup>1</sup> is a response to two main stimuli. One is Gage's strong plea for the development of teaching theories as distinct from learning ones.<sup>2</sup> The other is Biddle's concern<sup>3</sup> at the absence of a propositional structure in psychological "role theory".

In commenting on the development of theories of teaching, Gage writes that we really know very little about three fundamental issues:"... how teachers behave, why they behave as they do and with what effects".<sup>4</sup> This study is concerned with the second of the issues, namely the determinants of teacher behaviour, and it focuses upon two specific facets, warmth and directiveness, which other studies have shown to be particularly significant in teaching. Both have been shown to be prominent in relation to the whole repertoire of teacher behaviour,<sup>5</sup> and both have been shown to have important effects upon pupils.<sup>6,7</sup>

Both, too, lend themselves easily to psychological role analysis, for warmth is an essential quality of the teacher's role as "nurturer", and the role of "director of learning" necessarily involves directiveness. But the study as reported here is concerned with predicting the behaviour of teachers under rather specific psychological conditions, namely, role conflicts. That domain of role theory which concentrates upon situations in which members of a social system experience incompatible prescriptions for their behaviour as occupants of positions within the system, is perhaps less open to Biddle's criticism than others. Hypotheses have been formulated and tested by several students of role conflict resolution. While a high proportion of these hypotheses has been confirmed, however, they are to be considered as mere beginnings which, on the grounds of acceptable and more general psychological theory, are open to a variety of criticisms.

In this study, therefore, attempts are made to predict the behaviour of teachers who experience role conflict concerning the levels of warmth and directiveness they display in the classroom. Role analysis suggested some of the main concepts employed, but these were supplemented by non-role variables in an interactive model drawn from the writings of Kurt Lewin.

#### THEORETICAL ORIENTATION

To Lewin, behaviour is the result of interactions among psychological forces having their source in either the psychological environment or the personality. Environmental, or induced forces, can arise from the physical environment in the form of barriers preventing, or even as coercions demanding, certain types of behaviour. But, more often, it is held, the incumbents of positions within social systems experience induced forces attendant upon social interactions with other members of the system. These socially induced forces commonly result from perceptions of expectations or prescriptions for behaviour. The prescriptions for his own behaviour which the incumbent of a focal position attributes to others may be accurate or they may contain inaccuracies, but for him they are psychological realities.

Seldom, however, is the life space likely to consist solely of induced forces. Own forces, those arising from the personality, such as needs, seek levels of satisfaction in behaviour and, therefore, are to be considered as central motivating influences. Other own forces may take the form of values, attitudes, expectations, or anticipations, but these arise from more peripheral regions of the personality and are likely to be dependent upon, and have less claim upon behaviour than needs.

At any one time the life space is likely to contain a variety of own and induced forces interacting to produce a resultant force which determines behaviour. If all the socially induced forces, in the form of attributed role expectations, apply in the same direction, a state of psychological *role consensus* exists. Such is the case when the incumbent of a focal position perceives agreement among role definers in prescriptions for his behaviour. However, in a complex social structure like a school system, in which there is a variety of participants with diverse backgrounds, it is likely that the incumbent of the teacher position will perceive disagreements among role definers and that he will experience role conflicts.

The way in which he resolves such conflicts will depend upon the strength of opposing socially induced forces and also upon own forces involved in the interaction. Needs which he has related to the behaviour in question will be important forces, especially to the extent that they are consistent with prevailing socially induced forces. When own forces and prevailing socially induced forces apply in the same direction, decisions as to the appropriate responding behaviour can offer only insignificant problems for the incumbent who experiences role conflict. When, however, as well as role conflict, there is conflict between own forces and the prevailing socially induced forces, behaviour is not to be predicted so easily. Previous research suggests that other own forces in the form of central personality orientations are likely to play a prominent role in determining the resultant under these conditions of the life space. In particular, it seems that individuals vary in their susceptibility to psychological forces such as pressures applied upon them by others. For example, studies by Asch<sup>8</sup> and Crutchfield<sup>9</sup> have been able to discriminate between conformers and non-conformers at the level of personality characteristics. Similarly, Abraham,<sup>10</sup> Bernardin and Jessor<sup>11</sup> and Gisvold<sup>12</sup> have found that needs such as Autonomy and Deference provide acceptable bases for predicting whether an individual will conform or not conform to pressures from others.

It might be expected, therefore, that individuals who, on the basis of such needs as Autonomy and Deference, might be described as "self-oriented", will tend to resolve role conflicts in accordance with own forces they experience towards the behaviour in question. On the other hand, individuals who might similarly be classified as "other-oriented" will be likely to attach greater significance to social pressures than to own needs and, therefore, will tend to conform to the former rather than the latter where they conflict.

With respect to behavioural continua, such as warmth and directiveness, the structure of conflicts among own and socially induced forces can take a variety of forms. Two of the more complex of these are shown in Figures 1 and 2. In the first case, own forces or needs can apply towards a position on the continuum which is incompatible with, and intermediate to, positions adopted by attributed roles which themselves conflict.

Attributed Role v Needs v Attributed Role

Behavioural Continuum

FIG. 1.—Type I structure of conflicts among needs and attributed roles.

For example, a teacher may have needs consistent with medium directiveness but feel that the parents of his pupils prescribe low directiveness while the principal of his school prescribes high directiveness.

In the second case, as shown in Figure 2, own forces can apply towards a position on the continuum which is incompatible with, but beyond, positions adopted by attributed roles which themselves conflict.

Attributed Role v Attributed Role v Needs

\_\_\_\_\_

Behavioural Continuum

FIG. 2.—Type II structure of conflicts among needs and attributed roles.

An example would be the case where a teacher has needs disposing him towards high warmth but perceives pressures from his peers towards medium warmth and from his superiors towards low warmth. The following hypotheses, which guided this study, are predicated upon assumptions of frequent conflict of the above types concerning teacher warmth and directiveness, and form the basis of predictions made as to the ways in which different types of teachers resolve them.

Hypothesis I. There is a significant positive correlation between "otherorientedness" and significance attached to socially induced forces.

*Hypothesis II.* When "self-oriented" individuals experience role conflict, and their needs concerning the behaviour in question are incompatible with prevailing socially induced forces, they will not depart significantly from behaviour consistent with their needs.

*Hypothesis III.* When "other-oriented" individuals experience role conflict, and their needs concerning the behaviour in question are incompatible with prevailing socially induced forces, they will depart significantly from behaviour consistent with their needs, in the direction of prevailing socially induced forces.

#### THE INVESTIGATION<sup>13</sup>

In broad terms the study involved: (i) selecting a sample of teachers; (ii) assessing the teachers' manifest personality needs; (iii) assessing the warmth and directiveness of the roles attributed by members of the sample to significant other role definers; (iv) determining the degrees and types of social power which these other role definers are perceived to have over members of the sample; (v) assessing the significance attached by members of the sample to roles attributed to other role definers; and (vi) assessing the degrees of warmth and directiveness displayed by members of the sample in the classroom.

#### (i) The sample

The study involved 114 male teachers in the state primary schools of Queensland who were each employed on a full-time basis in charge of one class of pupils. Some were undertaking part-time evening courses at the University of Queensland, some were external students of the same university and were teaching outside the Brisbane metropolitan area, and others were not enrolled as students but were teaching within the city limits.

#### (ii) Manifest personality needs

After a survey of standardized instruments purporting to measure personality needs, the Edwards Personal Preference Schedule (EPPS)<sup>14</sup> was chosen as the most appropriate one for this study. This instrument was designed as a quick and convenient measure of fifteen of the manifest needs presented by Murray,<sup>15</sup> whose terminology was used in naming the variables. The fifteen needs measured by the instrument are as follows:

- (a) Achievement (ach)
- (b) Deference (def)
- (c) Order (ord)
- (d) Exhibition (exh)
- (e) Autonomy (aut)
- (f) Affiliation (aff)
- (g) Intraception (int)

- (h) Succorance (suc)
- (i) Dominance (dom)
- (j) Abasement (aba)
- (k) Nurturance (nur)
- (l) Change (chg)
- (m) Endurance (end)
- (n) Heterosexuality (het)
- (o) Aggression (agg).

In this study, the EPPS was used to measure manifest personality needs relevant to warmth and directiveness displayed by teachers in interaction with their pupils, and as a measure of a personality orientation to conform to pressures exerted by significant others.

The need considered to be most relevant for displays of warmth is Nurturance, which is described as follows:

nur Nurturance: to help friends when they are in trouble, to assist others less fortunate, to treat others with kindness and sympathy, to forgive others, to do small favours for others, to be generous with others, to sympathize with others who are hurt or sick, to show a great deal of affection toward others, to have others confide in one about personal problems.<sup>16</sup>

A strong need for Nurturance, then, as measured by the EPPS, was taken as an indication of a strong own force to display warmth toward pupils.

A cluster of needs might seem relevant to directiveness, for example, Achievement, Order, Dominance, and Endurance. However, two appear to stand out. The first is Order, which is described thus:

ord Order: To have written work neat and organized, to make plans before starting on a difficult task, to have things organized, to keep things neat and orderly, to make advance plans when taking a trip, to organize details of work, to keep letters and files according to some system, to have meals organized and a definite time for eating, to have things arranged so that they run smoothly without change.<sup>17</sup>

The second is Dominance:

dom Dominance: To argue for one's point of view, to be a leader in groups to which one belongs, to be regarded by others as a leader, to be elected or appointed chairman of committees, to make group decisions, to settle arguments and disputes between others, to persuade and influence others to do what one wants, to supervise and direct the actions of others, to tell others how to do their jobs.<sup>18</sup>

High scores obtained on these variables were taken as indications of strong own forces to be directive in classroom relations with pupils.

The distribution of scores obtained on need for Nurturance were divided into six groups to correspond with proportions assigned scale scores ranging from 1 to 6 on the basis of a 5-item H-scale developed to measure warmth of teachers' professional values.<sup>19</sup> Similarly, the distribution of combined standardized scores on needs for Order and Dominance were divided into five groups to correspond with proportions assigned scale scores ranging from 1 to 5 on the basis of a 4-item H-scale developed to measure directiveness of teachers' professional values. Thus, teachers were given final scores ranging from 1 to 6 on needs for warmth and from 1 to 5 on needs for directiveness.

On the basis of the findings of previous studies and simple face validity, Deference, Autonomy, and Succorance were accepted as needs related to a general personality orientation to conformity:

def Deference: To get suggestions from others, to find out what others think, to follow instructions and do what is expected, to praise others, to tell others that they have done a good job, to accept the leadership of others, to read about great men, to conform to custom and avoid the unconventional, to let others make decisions.

aut Autonomy: To be able to come and go as desired, to say what one thinks about things, to be independent of others in making decisions, to feel free to do what one wants, to do things that are unconventional, to avoid situations where one is expected to conform, to do things without regard to what others may think, to criticize those in positions of authority, to avoid responsibilities and obligations.

suc Succorance: To have others provide help when in trouble, to seek encouragement from others, to have others be kindly, to have others be sympathetic and understanding about personal problems, to receive a great deal of affection from others, to have others do favours cheerfully, to be helped by others when depressed, to have others feel sorry when one is sick, to have a fuss made over one when hurt.<sup>20</sup>

High scores on Deference and Succorance, together with a low score on Autonomy were taken to indicate "other-orientedness", that is, a strong general personality orientation to conform to others, while low scores on Deference and Succorance, together with a high score for Autonomy were taken to indicate "self-orientedness", that is, a strong general personality orientation to conform to own needs rather than to prescriptions attributed to others.

#### (iii) Warmth and directiveness of roles attributed to significant others

These were assessed on the basis of the H-scales developed to measure warmth and directiveness of teachers' professional values. The teachers attributed prescriptions for their behaviour in "warmth" and "directiveness" situations to eight role definers: The Department of Education, their inspectors, their head teachers, their senior assistants, their fellow assistant teachers, their pupils, the parents of their pupils, and the local community served by the school.<sup>21</sup>

#### (iv) Social power of significant others over teachers

Among the many conceptualizations of social power which appear in the literature, that of French and Raven<sup>22</sup> seems particularly appropriate for this study. These two writers identify the following types of social power:

- (a) *Referent*, arising from a desire by the subject to model his behaviour upon that of another person because of liking or respect
- (b) *Expert*, which applies when the subject acknowledges the superior knowledge or skill of another

- (c) *Legitimate*, based upon an acknowledgment by the subject that another person has a right to expect certain behaviour of him
- (d) *Coercive*, in which it is perceived that another person is able to apply negative sanctions for behaviour of certain kinds
- (e) *Reward*, in which it is perceived that another person is able to apply positive sanctions for behaviour of certain kinds.

French and Raven point out that the last two types of power are associated not only with ability to punish or reward, but also with the likelihood that this ability will be actualized and with whether or not the subject's behaviour is likely to be observed by those who are able to punish or reward.

The primary aim in this section of the study was to obtain an estimate of the strength of the psychological forces which particular role attributions would constitute, so in the instrument used the teacher respondents were asked: (a) to indicate the likelihood that rewards and punishments would be used by the role definers if they knew of the teacher's behaviour; (b) to indicate the likelihood that pertinent behaviour would be observed by the role definers; (c) to indicate the likelihood that pertinent personal regard for the role definers would make conformity to their wishes preferable to non-conformity; (d) to assess the expertise possessed by each role definer in the pertinent areas of teacher-pupil relations; and (e) to assess the right of each role definer to expect conformity to his prescriptions in those areas.<sup>23</sup>

The items devised to measure these variables were arranged in 4-point Likert scale form to which weights ranging from one to four were assigned. On the basis of combinations of scores obtained on each variable, overall assessments of the social power of each role definer over each teacher were made. These assessments were used as indicators of the relative strength of forces in the form of attributed roles and enabled prevailing socially induced forces to be determined.

#### (v) Significance attached to attributed roles

Included in the instrument used to measure the social power variables were two items designed to measure the positive and negative internal sanctions experienced by the teachers as a result of their conforming or not conforming to the roles attributed to significant others.<sup>24</sup> Members of the sample were asked to disregard rewards and punishments but to indicate on 4-point Likert scales how pleased or disappointed with themselves they would be if they conformed or did not conform to the prescriptions attributed to each of the eight role definers. On the basis of the responses made to these items, teachers were assigned scores for significance of socially induced forces.

#### (vi) Warmth and directiveness of teachers' classroom performance

These "performance" data were obtained with a questionnaire<sup>25</sup> in which the teachers were asked to indicate their most likely response to the classroom problem situations included in the H-scales of warmth and directiveness.

#### RESULTS

#### Hypothesis I

The null hypothesis was tested, namely that there is no significant positive correlation between "other-orientedness" and measures of significance attached to socially induced forces related to warmth and directiveness. The Spearman rank correlation coefficient between the two variables was .20 (p < .05). While the coefficient is small, it was accepted as providing significant support for Hypothesis I.

#### Hypothesis $\Pi$

This hypothesis and Hypothesis III were tested with respect to two behavioural continua, warmth and directiveness, so that, in a sense, the study was replicated.

Table 1 shows that, with respect to warmth, "self-oriented" teachers experience considerable role conflict, in that there are significant differences among a variety of points on the continuum which attributed roles prescribe. Of special interest to this study, however, is the finding that simultaneously with role conflict, there are conflicts between these teachers' needs for warmth and most of the roles they attribute to the others. Moreover, those with whom there is this conflict are mainly their superordinates who, as shown in Table 2, have strongest social power over them.

#### TABLE 1

Differences among means of variables related to warmth: "Self-oriented" teachers (N = 57)

Variables : Means :	Head Teacher 2.06	Inspector	ment	Fellow Teachers 2.41	Assistant	munity		Needs

 $F^* = 7.66, p < .01$ 

NOTE: Any two means not underscored by the same line are significantly different at the .05 level. Any two means underscored by the same line are not significantly different at the .05 level.

\*All "F's" reported in this paper were computed by analysis of variance comparing the means on the ten variables concerned. Significances of differences between pairs of means were calculated using Duncan's New Multiple Range Test. See D. B. Duncan, "Multiple Range and Multiple F Tests", *Biometrics*, XI (1955), 1-7.

Table 1 also indicates that "self-oriented" teachers anticipate a degree of warmth which is consistent with their needs rather than with most of the strongest induced forces. Thus, it seems justifiable to conclude that "self-oriented" teachers resolve role conflicts concerning the degree of warmth they display in the classroom in terms of their own needs rather than in terms of socially induced forces. The data in Table I are, therefore, taken to provide significant support for Hypothesis II.

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#### TABLE 2

 Rank order of role definers on social power continuum: "Self-oriented" teachers

 Iligh

 Low

 Senior

 Head
 Fellow

 Assistant
 Teacher

 Image: Senior
 Head

 Senior
 Senior

 Image: Senior
 Senior

 Social Power
 Image: Senior

Table 3 contains the data used in testing Hypothesis II with respect to the continuum of directiveness. There it is shown that "self-oriented" teachers experience role conflict mainly between roles attributed to their superordinates and the non-professional participants in the education system. When their own needs for directiveness are considered in relation to attributed roles it appears that these teachers experience conflict similar in structure to that shown in Figure 1. Their needs conflict with roles attributed to parents prescribing low directiveness at one end of the continuum and with roles attributed to superordinates prescribing high directiveness at the other end. However, Table 3 shows also that, as predicted, "self-oriented" teachers do not depart significantly from their needs in their anticipated directiveness, in spite of strong pressures to the contrary. The data contained in Table 3 are, therefore, also accepted as providing significant support for Hypothesis II.

#### TABLE 3

Differences among means of variables related to directiveness: "Self-oriented" teachers (N = 57)

Variables: Means	Parents 2.46	Com- munity 2.74	Antici- pations 2.75	Pupils 2.81	Needs 2.98	Fellow Teachers 3.24	Depart- ment 3.51	Senior Assistant 3.68	Inspector 3.69	Head Teacher 4.00

F = 7.29, p < .01

NOTE: Any two means *not underscored* by the same line are significantly different at the .05 level. Any two means *underscored* by the same line are not significantly different at the .05 level.

#### Hypothesis III

Table 4 contains the data used in testing Hypothesis III with respect to warmth. There it is to be seen that "other-oriented" teachers experience conflicts almost identical in structure with those experienced by "self-oriented" teachers and similar to that illustrated in Figure 2. In particular, their needs are consistent with high warmth but are incompatible with roles attributed to pupils and the Department of Education which prescribe medium warmth which, in turn, conflicts with roles attributed to head teachers who are seen to prescribe low warmth. Since, as shown in Table 5, superordinates of "other-oriented" teachers have strongest social power over them, it was predicted under Hypothesis III that "other-oriented" teachers would anticipate behaviour which is not consistent with their needs but which is more in keeping with the roles attributed to their superordinates in the profession. As Table 4 shows, this prediction is supported by the data which are, therefore, accepted as providing significant support for Hypothesis III.

#### TABLE 4

Differences among means of variables related to warmth: "Other-oriented" teachers (N - 57)

Variables: Means:	Head Teacher 2.22	Fellow Teachers 2.54	Senior Assistant 2.62	Inspector 2.80	Pupils	pations	Depart- ment 3.14	Parents	munity	Needs 3.93
_	$\mathbf{F} = 5$	5.70, p <	.01			<u>-</u> -				

NOTE: Any two means not underscored by the same line are significantly different at the .05 level. Any two means underscored by the same line are not significantly different at the .05 level

#### TABLE 5

### Rank order of role definers on social power continuum: "Other-oriented" teachers (N = 57)

High				$(1 \vee - 5)$	)				Low
111911	Head	Senior			Fellow				1.0 1
	Teacher	Assistant	Inspector	Department	Teachers	Parents	Pupils	Community	
1									

Social Power

Table 6 contains the data used in testing Hypothesis III with respect to directiveness. The conflict experienced here by "other-oriented" teachers is simpler than the type shown in Figure 1, and the pattern obtained for "self-oriented" teachers on this continuum. Unlike "self-oriented" teachers, the "other-oriented" group have needs which conflict with only two of the eight attributed roles. The fact that these teachers' needs for directiveness are supported by roles attributed to most of the role definers, including some with strongest social power over them, might explain why their anticipated behaviour is not significantly different from their needs. Nevertheless, it cannot be concluded that the data in Table 6 provide significant support for Hypothesis III.

#### TABLE 6

### Differences among means on variables related to directiveness: "Other-oriented" teachers (N = 57)

Variables: Means:	Com- munity 2.75	Pupils	Parents 3.02	pations	Needs	Teachers	ment	Senior Assistant 3.56	Inspector	Head Teacher 3.88

F = 4.21, p < .01

Note: Any two means not underscored by the same line are significantly different at the .05 level. Any two means underscored by the same line are not significantly different at the .05 level.

#### CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The results reported above have implications both for education and for psychology. Discussion of these implications will be facilitated by a summary of the conclusions which seem permissible on the basis of tests of the hypotheses guiding the study.

#### **Conclusions**

With respect to the teachers who participated in the study, at least, and within the limitations of the instruments used in measuring the variables, the following conclusions may be stated:

- 1. There is a low, though statistically significant, positive correlation between "other-orientedness" and significance attached to socially induced forces concerning the degrees of warmth and directiveness displayed by teachers in the classroom.
- 2. Teachers who on the basis of manifest personality needs may be described as "self-oriented", resolve role conflicts concerning the degrees of warmth and directiveness they display in the classroom in terms of their needs for warmth and directiveness rather than in terms of roles prescribing their behaviour which they attribute to significant others.
- 3. Teachers, who on the basis of manifest personality needs may be described as "other-oriented", resolve role conflicts concerning the degrees of warmth they display in the classroom in terms of roles prescribing their behaviour which they attribute to others who have strongest social power over them, rather than in terms of their needs for warmth or roles they attribute to others who have weakest social power over them.

#### Implications for education

It is difficult to assess the implications of the findings of this study for education without invoking some criteria of teacher effectiveness. And yet, on the testimony of many reviewers, educational research has provided almost no knowledge of what it is that constitutes the competent teacher. However, reference has been made above to studies<sup>26, 27</sup> which suggest that the warmth and directiveness displayed by teachers in interaction with their pupils have important effects upon the latter. In particular, these studies give reason to believe that high warmth and medium to low directiveness are, in general, optimal in their effects upon affective characteristics of pupils, such as their achievement motivations and fear of failure. For the purposes of this discussion, therefore, it will be assumed that pressures militating against displays of high warmth and medium to low directiveness by teachers are adverse influences upon teaching effectiveness.

The findings of this study suggest that role conflict is a common experience of teachers and that the main sources of social pressures towards other than optimal levels of warmth and directiveness are teachers' superordinates within the profession itself. When it is considered that these very superordinates have great responsibility for enhancing and evaluating the quality of teaching, the suggestion that they are the source of adverse influences is a matter worthy of considerable alarm.

It is salutary to discover that, in general, teachers' needs incline them towards optimal levels of warmth and directiveness, and that an identifiable group of them resists strong adverse pressures. However, there is evidence that another group tends to succumb and conform to pressures which could militate against good teaching.

There are, perhaps, implications in what has been said above for educational administration and for teacher training. Do the prescriptions for their classroom behaviour which teachers attribute to their superordinates correspond with what the latter actually do prescribe? If so, there is an obvious need to have those prescriptions altered. If not, and superordinates really prescribe optimal levels of warmth and directiveness, the communication between teachers and superordinates is in need of improvement. It would indeed be an anomalous situation if some teachers, in the belief that they were satisfying the demands of their evaluators, engaged in behaviour which those same evaluators censured.

Just as importantly, it might be claimed that since some teachers resist even the strongest social pressures upon their behaviour in favour of satisfying their needs, selection procedures should take note of personality needs concerning behaviour on important continua such as warmth and directiveness. Alternatively, if there is room for optimism concerning attempts to change personality needs once maturity is attained, there may be value in attempting to ensure that teacher training institutions provide formative experiences in keeping with personality characteristics which are desirable in teaching.

This study was not designed to test the validity of these implications. The questions they raise are, however, important ones upon which subsequent research might well focus, and it is in that hope that they are presented here.

#### Implications for psychology

There is much that could be said under this heading, but most obvious are the implications which this study has for theories of role conflict resolution. The limitations of space do not permit a review of the literature on this topic,<sup>28</sup> so instead the most significant aspects of this study will be enumerated and elaborated upon briefly.

1. No attempt to predict behaviour can justifiably ignore psychological forces having their source in the personality.

Previous theoretical formulations and research studies of role conflict resolution have tended to ignore variables such as needs the individual has for the behaviour concerned in role conflicts. This study, however, has shown that, depending upon the general personality orientation to social forces, needs are strong determinants of behavioural outcomes of role conflict.

2. The social power relationship between the incumbent of a focal position and others to whom he attributes conflicting prescriptions for his behaviour is a useful variable in predicting behavioural outcomes of role conflict.

Previous studies of role conflict resolution have employed concepts such as observability, legitimacy of expectations and negative sanctions for non-conformity. To the author's knowledge, however, no previous study of role conflict resolution has brought such concepts together with other social power variables as a measure of the strengths of the forces which role attributions constitute within the life space. This study has provided evidence that for "other-oriented" individuals accurate prediction of behaviour in role conflict situations is enhanced by knowledge of the strength of conflicting forces and that social power is a valuable indication of such strength. 3. It is possible to manipulate a large number of variables in a complex interactive model to predict the outcome of role conflict.

Previous studies of role conflict resolution have tended to over-simplify the life space by studying role conflicts involving only two incompatible socially induced forces upon behaviour. In reality, however, it is likely that the life space is not so simple and that incumbents of positions within complex social systems experience a much larger number of pressures upon their role performance. This study has demonstrated that the universe of psychological forces can be much more adequately sampled and that the interactions among a large number of variables can be conceptualized so as to make accurate predictions of outcomes.

#### It is possible to predict the behavioural content of outcomes of role conflict. 4.

Previous studies of role conflict resolution have concentrated upon predicting techniques of resolution rather than the actual content of behaviour. When the conceptualization of role conflict has permitted the subject only to conform to one or the other of two incompatible prescriptions, the content of the behaviour is known, for it is defined by the prescription to which there is conformity. The same, of course, is true whenever conformity to a particular prescription is predicted accurately. When, however, techniques of compromise or avoidance are predicted, the actual content of the compromising or avoiding behaviour remains an unknown. If the life space is adequately represented, however, it should be possible to identify the resultant of interacting forces and make specific predictions accordingly.

The present study has demonstrated that it is possible to make such specific predictions within the bounds of statistical significance. Here again needs proved valuable, but in addition the investigation of psychological forces as they applied to various points along continua of behaviour proved helpful. The suggestion is, therefore, that as well as asking what *techniques* will be adopted in resolving conflicts, students of role conflict resolution might well ask to *what degree* will a certain type of behaviour be performed when psychological forces relevant to that behaviour conflict.

#### NOTES

1. This paper is based on a study by M. J. Dunkin, "Some Determinants of Teacher Warmth and Directiveness" (Ph.D. thesis, University of Queensland, 1966).

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13. Details of the methodology adopted in this study are to be found in M. J. Dunkin, op. cit. 14. A. L. Edwards, Edwards Personal Preference Schedule (New York: Psychological Corporation, 1953).

15. H. H. Murray, Explorations in Personality (New York: Oxford University Press, 1938). 16. A. L. Edwards, Manual to the Edwards Personal Preference Schedule (rev. ed.; New York: Psychological Corporation, 1959).

17. Ibid.

18. *Ibid*.

19. Professional values were employed as variables in the larger study from which this paper is taken. Examples of items contained in the scales are given in Appendix A.

20. A. L. Edwards, loc. cit.

21. Details of this instrument are given in Appendix B.

22. J. R. P. French, Jr., and B. Raven, "The Bases of Social Power", in D. Cartwright (ed.), Studies in Social Power (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1959).

23. Details of this instrument are given in Appendix D.

24. Items 2 and 3 in Appendix D.

25. Appendix C.26. W. J. Campbell, op. cit.

27. Pauline S. Sears, and E. R. Hilgard, op. cit.

28. This literature is reviewed in N. Gross, W. S. Mason, and A. W. McEachern, Explorations in Role Analysis: Studies of the School Superintendency Role (New York: Wiley, 1958).

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#### APPENDIX A

#### Teachers' Values Questionnaire

This instrument contained descriptions of forty-one classroom situations and four alternative responses to each situation. Only twelve of the situations were used in assessing the warmth and directiveness of teachers' professional values. Seven of those twelve formed the H-scale of warmth, while the remaining five situations formed the H-scale of directiveness. Below, instructions included in the instrument are given, together with examples of the items. Situation 1 is a "warmth" item and Situation 2 is a "directiveness" item.

NAME:

(Surname first)

PRESENT POSITION:

(Please check where applicable)

(a) State Primary Assistant Teacher

(b) State Primary Head Teacher

DATE OF BIRTH:

(c) Other Teacher (Please specify)

PRESENT SCHOOL:

NUMBER OF TEACHERS AT SCHOOL:

NUMBER OF PUPILS AT SCHOOL:

GRADE/S YOU TEACH AT PRESENT:

NUMBER OF BOYS IN YOUR GRADE/S:

NUMBER OF GIRLS IN YOUR GRADE/S:

LENGTH OF YOUR TEACHING EXPERIENCE:

#### **INSTRUCTIONS**

This questionnaire contains descriptions of forty-one situations which a teacher might encounter in his work. To each situation there are given four responses which different teachers might make.

You are asked to imagine that, *unless otherwise stated*, the pupil or pupils concerned are of average intelligence and age for a class you teach at present and do as well at school work as the average pupil in that class.

Of the four responses given to each situation, please indicate which one you consider would have the most desirable effects upon the pupil or pupils concerned, by placing a cross (X) on the left side of the page beside that response.

Be sure to choose only *one* response to each situation and leave the other three unmarked. Do not make any alterations or attempt to combine responses. Please do not discuss your choices with others.

The information you give will be treated as confidential. So far as this research is concerned, *there are no right or wrong responses*.

#### SITUATION 1

During a particular lesson, George, whom you regard as a generally satisfactory student, has caused several distractions in class routine by talking excitedly to other children. You are in the process of drawing the lesson to a close when George does it again.

RESPONSES: (i) Express interest in George's excitement, but ask him to postpone his conversation.

- (ii) Express disappointment with George's behaviour, and warn him not to interrupt again.
- (iii) Express interest in George's excitement, and ask him to tell the class about it.
- (iv) Reprimand George, and tell him to stay in after school to write an imposition.

#### SITUATION 2

Dorothy knows the difference in the spelling of "their" and "there" but through carelessness often uses one when she should use the other. You have corrected her again and again but in her latest composition she has repeated the mistake.

- RESPONSES: (i) Indicate the error whenever it is made but wait for Dorothy to learn the difference as she matures.
  - (ii) Give Dorothy daily drilling in the use of the two words and insist that she read over her compositions and show that she has checked these words by underlining them.
  - (iii) Tell Dorothy to make a card with two pictures—one illustrating the use of "there", the other illustrating the use of "their" and instruct her to refer to it whenever she uses one of the words.
  - (iv) Refer to the words incidentally during the course of teaching and indicate the error whenever it is made.

#### APPENDIX B

### Teachers' Opinions Questionnaire

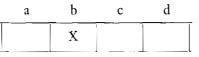
The instruments concerned in this appendix, and in Appendix C, asked teachers to respond in terms of the same twelve classroom situations included in the H-scales of warmth and directiveness. Therefore, only the instructions and examples of the formats of these instruments are included in this Appendix and in Appendix C.

NUMBER:....

#### **INSTRUCTIONS**

- 1. Imagine that you are facing each of the following situations with your present class.
- 2. Imagine that there are only the four responses given to each situation to choose from and that you may choose *only one* of these.
- 3. Place a cross (X) in the box corresponding to that response which you consider each of those people listed would most likely think you ought to make.

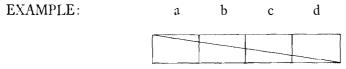
EXAMPLE:



4. IF you have no idea, write the words "NO IDEA" in the appropriate row of boxes.

EXAMPLE:	а	b	С	d
	N	I O	DE	A

5. If you have no Head Teacher, Senior Assistant, or fellow Assistant Teachers, draw a line diagonally through the appropriate row of boxes.



#### SITUATION 1

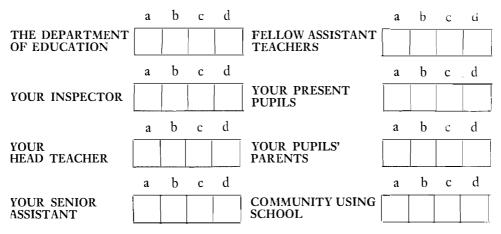
During a particular lesson, George, whom you regard as a generally satisfactory student, has caused several distractions in class routine by talking excitedly to other children. You are in the process of drawing the lesson to a close when George does it again.

- RESPONSES: (a) Express interest in George's excitement, but ask him to postpone his conversation.
  - (b) Express disappointment with George's behaviour, and warn him not to interrupt again.

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NATURE AND RESOLUTION OF ROLE CONFLICTS

- (c) Express interest in George's excitement, and ask him to tell the class about it.
- (d) Reprimand George, and tell him to stay in after school to write an imposition.



## Teachers' Anticipations Questionnaire

NUMBER:	
---------	--

#### **INSTRUCTIONS**

- 1. Imagine that you are facing each of the following situations with your present class.
- 2. Imagine that, unless otherwise stated, the pupil or pupils concerned are of average age, intelligence, and achievement for that class.
- 3. Imagine that there are only the four responses given to each situation to choose from and that you may choose *only one* of these.
- 4. Place a cross (X) beside that response which you mould most likely actually make.

#### SITUATION 1

During a particular lesson, George, whom you regard as a generally satisfactory student, has caused several distractions in class routine by talking excitedly to other children. You are in the process of drawing the lesson to a close when George does it again.

#### RESPONSES: (i) Express interest in George's excitement, but ask him to postpone his conversation.

- (ii) Express disappointment with George's behaviour, and warn him not to interrupt again.
- (iii) Express interest in George's excitement, and ask him to tell the class about it.
- (iv) Reprimand George, and tell him to stay in after school to write an imposition.

#### APPENDIX D

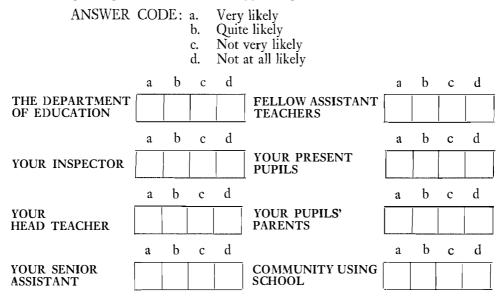
#### Social Power Questionnaire

NUMBER.....

#### **INSTRUCTIONS**

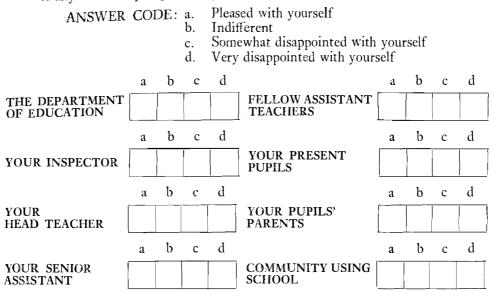
Answers to all questions in this instrument are to be given by placing crosses (X) in appropriate boxes.

1. In the types of situations contained in Appendix A, how likely would your personal regard for any of the people mentioned make you prefer to do what they think you ought rather than risk disappointing them?

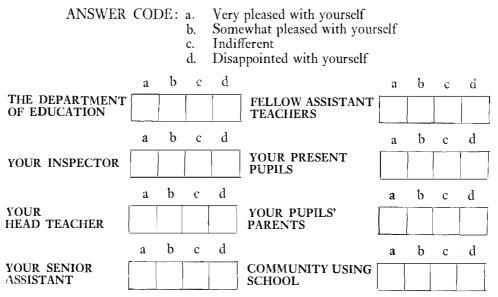


[continued overleaf]

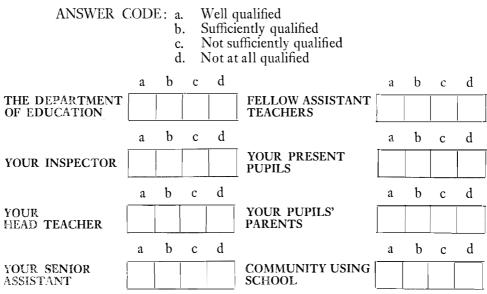
2. How would you feel *if you did not do* as those people think you ought, regardless of any action they might take as a result?



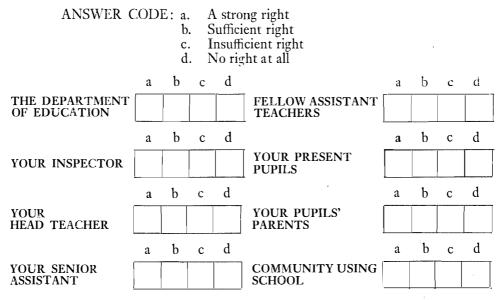
3. How would you feel *if you did do* as those people think you ought, regardless of any action they might take as a result?



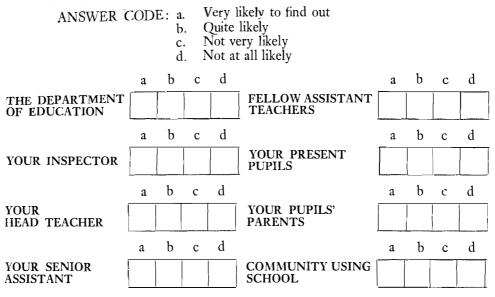
4. How well qualified in Education are those people to know what you ought to do in those types of situations?



5. How much right do those people have to expect you to do what they think you ought in those types of situations?

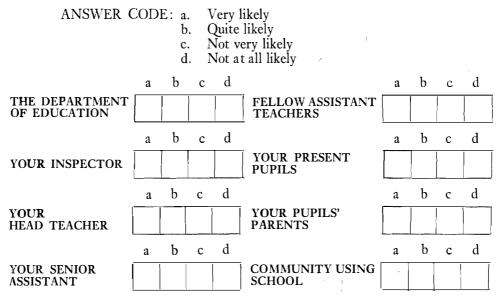


6. How likely are those people to find out what you actually do in those types of situations?



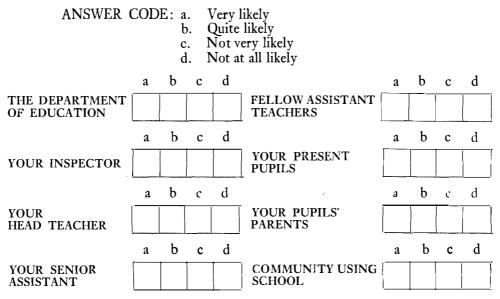
4

7. How likely would those people be to take action to censure or penalize you if they found out that you did not do what they think you ought in those types of situations?



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8. How likely would those people be to take action to show their approval of you or to reward you if they found out that you did what they think you ought in those types of situations?



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