

CHAPTER 3
CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

... there will be time

To prepare a face to meet the faces that you meet

- T. S. Eliot

(The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock)

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Examination of the literature on role unavoidably entails being confronted with two especially notable facts. Firstly, there is the sheer volume of it. So widespread has been its application that McNamara (1972: 20) reports Taylor (1968) as suggesting that even then (that is, by the late 1960's) reviews of the literature were becoming unmanageable, while more recently Biddle (1980: 64) has commented that role theory has been so accommodating as to have been applied to the description of animal as well as human behaviour!

A second and no doubt related fact (to be discussed later) is that role theory has been afflicted with definitional and conceptual problems. Suffice it to say here, along with Adams (1970: 121) that the term 'role' came 'to mean many things to many men'. Apart from the fact that, as a theory, role is still in its relative infancy compared with the more established natural sciences, this may, in brief, be attributed largely to the fact that the vocabulary of role was blurred by considerable and indiscriminate lay usage (cf. Biddle, 1980: 335) and that also the concept of

role was used for different purposes by disciplines such as anthropology, psychology, social psychology and sociology (cf. Gross et al., 1958: 16-17; Francis, 1977: 13).

In Chapters 1 and 2 some of the basic ideas of role theory were outlined by way of introducing and explaining the nature of the investigation reported here and in discussing the literature relevant to the study. It now becomes necessary to examine in more detail the conceptual orientation employed. At this point then, it is perhaps useful to restate as simply as possible the broad intention of the present research in order to make clear the concepts that will require exposition.

This study investigates the focal position of the primary teacher in New South Wales as it is perceived by student teachers, the norms and expectations attaching to the role of primary teacher they attribute to two significant others (lecturers and teachers) of the formal training period, and the accuracy (veridicality) of these attributions. The approach in the major part of the study utilises a role norm inventory of forty five role norms for this focal position in four role sectors each of which deals with a role-set relationship of the teacher. The four sectors concern norms and expectations for teacher role relationships with pupils, teaching colleagues, pupils' parents, and citizens in the wider community. In sum, what is being explored in these pages is the role of the primary school teacher from the standpoint of student teachers' definitions of the situation, including their perceptions of the norms of lecturers and teachers. Inevitably

this will therefore involve a consideration of how much consensus, perceived and actual there is amongst student teachers and between them and their significant others. Concomitantly, such an analysis will point to areas of potential, if not actual role conflict.

The perspective used thus conceives of the teacher as being at the focal point of a network of norms and expectations. This is not the only framework that could have been used, and the role analogy (like all analogies) has its limitations. As Calvert (1975: 126-127) points out, the analogy does tend to suggest there is something unreal about role performance, that our parts in the 'drama' of life are more or less clear cut, and that it makes one think too concretely about behavioural expectations as if they were something 'out there' rather than an idea which facilitates thinking about behaviour. Notwithstanding these and other limitations discussed in the following pages, role theory does provide a body of concepts which, in view of an almost universal tendency in the literature to see the school as potentially (if not actually) an arena for conflict, have proven to be particularly appropriate tools of analysis in educational as well as in other empirical research (cf. Biddle 1980: 335-336; 347).

However, because of the ambiguities that have attached to the concept of role, and bearing in mind Gouldner's (1957: 281) warning that 'the very currency of role concepts may invite complacency concerning their theoretical clarity', it is mandatory that

studies such as this discuss in proper detail the way in which and purposes for which terms like those underlined in the outline at the beginning of this section are used.

The remainder of this chapter therefore attempts to do this and at the same time to take some cognisance of the broader issues involved in the use of role theory. Throughout, an effort has been made to illustrate points made with examples relevant to the present study.

3.2 ROLE THEORY AND ITS CRITICS

Shakespeare's lines:

All the world's a stage,

And all the men and women are merely players

have often been quoted in the context of role theory (so called) since most discussions attempting to trace the use of the concept of role invoke the philosopher G. H. Mead (1934) who in his Mind Self and Society made perhaps the first systematic attempt to develop the notion of 'playing a role' into a theory of human behaviour. A more recent use of a dramaturgical framework to explore social life in organisational settings has been that of Erving Goffman (1959, 1961) whose concern with the dramatic nature of human transactions is reflected in a presentation of man as relatively self-aware and introspective in social situations, such an orientation being perhaps something of a reaction against the structural-functional and normative emphasis given to the role concept in the work stemming from theory developed chiefly by Talcott Parsons (1951). In the theatrical analogy then, the concept

'role' represents a bridge between individual personality and social structure: society is the stage and the individual the actor upon it. The metaphor from Shakespeare has, according to Dahrendorf (1958: 12) 'become the central principle of the science of society'. From a sociological standpoint 'the idea that relates the individual to society' continues Dahrendorf, 'is the idea of the individual as a bearer of socially predetermined attributes and modes of behaviour'. Thus the perspective of man in society and society in man is undeniably deterministic and anti-individualistic, and, in that the fact of society is inescapable, is 'vexatious' (Dahrendorf, 1958: 13) and even 'coercive' (Berger: 1963: 110). Inevitably perhaps, such a standpoint has attracted criticism, some of it virulent.¹

It must be stated at the outset therefore that whereas the fact of disagreement about role theory does not necessarily detract from its usefulness in applying aspects of it in the fields of educational and other research (cf. Westwood, 1967a: 124; Biddle, 1980: 10), if an uncritical acceptance of the theory and its uses is not to be implied, some cognisance should be taken of the misgivings voiced by numerous commentators in the field (see for example Wrong, 1961; Andreski, 1964; Urry, 1970; Coulson, 1972; Pfohl, 1975; House, 1977; Stryker, 1977; Connell, 1979).

Amongst other things, role theory has been criticised for its confused terminology especially (e.g. Neiman and Hughes, 1951;

1. See, for example, Connell (1979), the very title of whose piece - 'The Concept of Role and What to do with it' - underscores the point.

Gross et al., 1958; Biddle and Thomas, 1966 - and many others), its banality (e.g. Andreski, 1964), its lack of propositional structure (e.g. Dunkin, 1972; Biddle, 1980), the obscurity and obfuscation that characterises some of the writing in the field (e.g. Coulson, 1972; Biddle, 1980), its essential conservatism (e.g. Coulson, 1972; Connell, 1979), and its mechanistic orientation (e.g. Naegle, 1960; Wrong, 1961). That some, at least, of this criticism is not entirely warranted however has been suggested by Biddle (1980: x):

For some, role theory is integral to functionalism in sociology, for others it is an expression of the symbolic interactionist perspective, or of cognitive social psychology; and proponents and critics have alternatively praised and damned role theory without being aware that they were often talking about quite different things.

Perhaps the most substantial criticism of role theory has been of the over-integrated conception of society it is alleged to espouse, together with a concomitant view of man as 'a disembodied, conscience-driven, status-seeking phantom' (Wrong, 1961: 46). Indeed such has been the reaction against what was seen as an overly mechanistic and deterministic view of man - homo sociologicus, the puppet-like, dehumanized, reified abstraction of the contemporary sociologist - that, according to Martins (1974: 247) Parsonian structural-functionalism from which such a conception is often considered to have emanated '*dies* every year, every Autumn term' in universities and colleges, 'being ritually executed for introductory teaching purposes'. As Popitz (1967: 11) has observed then, 'Even in sociology the concept of role...leads a rather dramatic existence'!

That the concept of role embodies a social determinism is undeniable. As Goffman (1961: 87) says:

In entering the position, the incumbent finds that he must take on the whole array of action encompassed by the corresponding role, so role implies a social determinism and a doctrine about socialization.

or, as Berger (1963: 112) puts it:

A role then may be defined as a typified response to a typified expectation. Society has predefined the fundamental typology. To use the language of the theatre, from which the concept of role is derived, we can say that society provides the script for all the dramatis personae. The individual actors, therefore, need but slip into the roles already assigned to them before the curtain goes up. As long as they play their roles as provided for in this script, the social play can proceed as planned.

However, as Berger explains (and as many critiques of role theory seem to ignore), the understable demand for an affirmation of human freedom in the face of the 'gloomy determinism' (Berger, 1963: 110) of the role perspective cannot be satisfied within a scientific framework since, 'in terms of social-scientific method one is faced with a way of thinking that assumes a priori that the human world is a causally closed system' in which 'freedom is not empirically available' insofar as while it 'may be experienced by us as a certainty along with their empirical certainties, it is not open to demonstration by any scientific methods' (Berger, 1963: 142-144). This does not mean that sociological thought need 'necessarily end in a positivistic swamp' (Berger, 1963: 163) for it is possible to examine the problem of social existence using as a starting point the postulate of freedom, in which case the role perspective 'now appears to us as an immense apparatus of

bad faith', that is, a pretence that something is necessary when it is really voluntary (Berger, 1963: 164,165). However, to re-iterate, while criticisms that the concept of role convey an image of man as 'oversocialized' (Wrong, 1961) and overly determined might be valid from one standpoint, from a scientific standpoint they are not, since, as Berger argues, it is not possible a priori to establish man's freedom to act socially within a scientific universe of discourse.

Nevertheless, just as many scientists would concede that their work carries with it a burden of social responsibility, so it can be argued that on ethical grounds the social scientist ought not ignore the possible consequences of the use of his theories and constructs. The fact is that, far from ignoring such an argument, some role theorists themselves acknowledge the dangers inherent in a purely mechanistic view of man. Dahrendorf (1968: 88) for example warns that theories based on such assumptions are likely to be misinterpreted by those who do not know or accept the conventions of scientific research, and that 'sociology is obliged to pronounce on such misinterpretations'. True to his word, he protests, in Homo Sociologicus:

However we turn and twist homo sociologicus, he will never be the particular person who is our friend, colleague, father or brother. Homo sociologicus can neither love nor hate, laugh nor cry. He remains a pale, incomplete, strange, artificial man. (Dahrendorf, 1958: 58).

The moral consequences of a sociological perspective that sees man as merely the sum of his roles - that effects upon society of accepting such a conception - clearly concern Dahrendorf as much

as his critics when he warns that it is 'only a step from seeing man as a mere role player to the alienated world of 1984 where all loving and hating, all dreaming and acting, all individuality beyond the grasp of roles, become a crime against society - society in this sense being sociology hypostasised'. (Dahrendorf: 1968: 86). The focus thus shifts in Dahrendorf's writings from a concern with merely the validity of sociological accounts to the ethics of them as he warns of the dangers of misinterpretation.

Berger (1963) too argues that a mechanistic conception of man as nothing more than a player of pre-determined roles can become a device for the abrogation of moral responsibility and urges that a humanistic sociology can help counter such a viewpoint by posing alternatives that permit escape from the image of man as socially determined. Also, some relief from the mechanically determinist conception of man as role player is suggested by theorists such as Turner (1962), for example, who sees roles as being 'taken' in the process of being forged thus attributing to the actor a less passive part in the playing of a role. Goffman (1959, 1961) too admits of far more spontaneity and latitude in the playing of roles, particularly through the process of 'impression management', than is suggested in an image of man as a role playing automaton. Scarcely no area of social life escapes Goffman's probing analysis, and while his standpoint is deterministic, the point emphasised here is that it is not mechanistic in that the individual can consciously distance himself from or embrace a role, and there is much scope for spontaneity.

Moreover, tendencies in the role literature towards the simplistic determinist analyses of position and role which aroused the ire of critics of role theory have been greatly modified in studies such as Gross et al's (1958) investigation of the role of the School Superintendent by emphasis on, inter alia, the complexity of role audiences (e.g. the 'role-set': Merton, 1957a) and the extent of consensus among these audiences (cf. Jackson, 1972: 6). Thus it is that the context within which social action occurs is included in the analysis and the capacity for role modification considered in relation to this context. Even Coulson (1972: 111-116) who advocates abandoning the concept of role (substituting for it the inelegant 'structured network of expectations'), concedes that 'some writers have acknowledged the possibility that role consensus may be a variable - or rather that the degree of role consensus may be regarded as a variable' and that 'Merton's use of role conflict and role set, Gross, Mason and McEachern's segmentation of position and role, and Dahrendorf's development of their ideas are among the more serious attempts to recognise conflicting expectations'.

Furthermore, staying within a sociological framework, the perspective of society as drama permits amelioration of an overly-determined view of man by emphasising that roles are not merely played - mostly unconsciously - but can be played at. Pre-eminent in arguing such a view is the aforementioned Erving Goffman (1959, 1961) whose work also refreshingly answers another charge - that role theory has not addressed problems such as when and how social

roles affect individual behaviour (House, 1977). Using subtle and modified concepts such as 'role distance' - the extent to which the individual may free himself from the demands of mere adequacy in a given role and exploit the possibilities of play and improvisation beyond the requirements of 'correct' behaviour - Goffman (1961: 95) has offered a compelling analysis of 'moment-to-moment' behaviour in which virtually no human social endeavour is excluded from the necessity for the 'presentation of self in everyday life' (Goffman, 1959). The concept of role distance therefore both makes possible that role performances can always be consciously self-monitored and, as Goffman himself says, '...helps to combat (the) touching tendency to keep a part of the world safe from sociology.'

It is hardly reasonable to claim then that 'to the role theorist the archetypal role is that seen in ritual or classic drama, in which every line and every gesture of each actor is rigidly specified in the sacred script.' (McCall and Simmons: 1966: 7). As Goffman's work in particular makes clear, such a rigid, unitary and mechanistic concept of role is unacceptable to role theorists.

Further, studies such as those by Gross et al. (1958), Foskett (1969) and Preiss and Ehrlich (1966) - to name but a few - have revealed patterned differences in the expectations held by different groups for an organisational role which may be interpreted as reflecting the relative position in the organisation of the particular group of role-definers being questioned and has resulted in a situation latterly where a concept of role which implies any necessarily 'close correspondence between dominant social prescription and the orientation of role-incumbents, and between

orientation and actual behaviour, is universally rejected as a theoretically unwarranted restriction on empirical investigation' (Hughes, 1977: 32). Merton (1972) too, reacting against what he sees as an unwarranted assumption of social determinism by the statistically innumerate makes clear that 'there is a tendency for, not a full determination of, socially patterned differences in the perspectives, preferences and behaviour of people variously located in the social structure' (quoted in Hughes, 1977: 46).

Finally, Dahrendorf (1968) in a riposte to the critics of his controversial essay Homo Sociologicus (Dahrendorf, 1958), defends role theory on methodological grounds. He argues that the concepts derived from role theory enable formulation of the powerful proposition 'man behaves in accordance with his roles' which 'implicitly or explicitly underlies all research and theoretical work in modern sociology' (Dahrendorf, 1968: 72). The fact that this might be 'unrealistic' in that most people at some time or other violate the expectations associated with a position does not make a sociological theory operating on the assumption that men behave in accordance with their roles a 'bad' theory. On the contrary, Dahrendorf, invoking Karl Popper, points out that it is feasible that 'the less realistic the assumptions, the better the theory' where such theory provides powerful explanations and useful predictions. Dahrendorf explains this with an example that needs to be reproduced here in its entirety:

It has been widely observed in German universities that students of working-class origin are the most inclined to join dueling fraternities. It has also been observed that upwardly mobile people are more inclined to vote for conservative political

parties than people who have not risen above their parents' social position. How can we explain such observations? In both cases we encounter a version of role conflict, namely the conflict between what is expected of the people concerned as children of their parents and what is expected of them in their new positions, acquired by upward mobility. A young man's parents may vote for a radical party, but in his new social stratum he votes conservative. Now the assumption that man behaves as homo sociologicus makes possible a general explanatory proposition: that a person in a situation of role conflict will always choose the role with which the stronger sanctions are associated. In our two cases, it seems clear that for the working-class student, and even more for the person whose career is well under way, the parents' sanctions are relatively mild compared with those of their new peers. This is why people go against their parents in these cases. It follows as a prediction that the working-class child who rises socially will in due course deny and betray his origins many times.

This is an example of a "good" sociological theory. It allows us to derive from a general statement definite, precise, and unrestricted predictions, and it has considerable explanatory power with respect, say, to the voting behavior of people who have risen socially from working-class origins. All this is true even though the role conformity assumed by the theory is obviously "unrealistic", in the sense that there are many people who do not behave in the manner postulated here. If we should now try to make our assumption "realistic", the entire theory would fall to pieces. The following statement would clearly be more "realistic": "In the face of role conflict, many people (perhaps 60 percent) are inclined to prefer the role with which the stronger sanctions are associated; others (say 25 percent) behave in accordance with moral principles without regard to social sanctions; and some (say 15 percent) react to role conflicts with complete resignation or passivity". Such a statement is all very well, but it can no longer be used to explain anything. To the extent that the assumptions underlying scientific theories become "realistic", they also become differentiated, restricted, ambiguous, uncondusive to definite explanations or predictions. In this sense, then, the less realistic and more stylized, definite and unambiguous the assumptions underlying a theory are, the better the theory is.

(Dahrendorf, 1968: 74-76)

In a retrospective note over a decade after publication of his reply to the critics of Homo Sociologicus, Dahrendorf (1973: 43-44), though admitting to the 'esoteric debate' such a rigorous argument amounted to, nevertheless reasserted the validity of the main methodological point then made. Suffice it to say here that despite some just and swingeing criticisms of role theory, it has proven to be a resilient and viable framework within which to analyse 'the study of behaviours that are characteristic of persons within contexts' to use the definition of role employed by Biddle (1980: 4) in the most recent and comprehensive attempt at an integrative exposition of its concerns. While role theory is not the only perspective on human social behaviour, and while it is perhaps only beginning to emerge as a theory in the most rigorous sense, it does take into account that as a social animal man's behaviour is not random but 'predictable to the extent of making individual actors interchangeable' (Dahrendorf, 1973: v). That there are dangers in an abstraction of man as role-player is recognised, and such recognition is, ipso facto, some defence against crass reification and insensitive misuse of the concepts of role theory. In this study these concepts permit of a unified rather than piecemeal approach to the study of the normative world of student teachers at the beginning and end-points of their formal period of professional socialization by enabling conclusions to be drawn about clusters of, as well as single, expectations for their future behaviour in a position which, as Wilson (1962: 22ff) has so cogently argued, is no less vital to society than those of professions with more social standing.

It perhaps needs to be re-emphasised that while this study does not concern itself with testing propositions derived from the theory of role, its use of role concepts and terminology as a framework has made necessary the foregoing commentary as a means of indicating that the approach used in the study is defensible, despite misgivings about role as a theory. The following discussion therefore develops a conceptual framework by examining in some detail the concept of role and allied terms upon which the Foskett (1967a) Role Norm Inventory for the position of primary school teacher used in this study was explicitly built.

3.3 THE CONCEPT OF ROLE: AN OVERVIEW

The concept of role encapsulates the sociologist's idea of man in society. Basic to the concept is that man's individuality is forged within social milieux and that most human social behaviour takes place in recurrent situations. From one perspective, deriving primarily from the work of Durkheim (1964), explanations of social life are to be sought in the nature of society itself. Society is seen as an objective reality independent of its particular members. In Durkheim's words it is 'not a mere sum of individuals, but rather, the system formed by their association represents a specific reality which has its own characteristics' (Durkheim, 1964: 102), and uniformities observed in behaviour are seen as a product of society rather than in terms of the inherent characteristics of individuals. Thus, from this admittedly deterministic perspective, the characteristics of a teacher reflect the position he occupies in society rather than anything inherent in his nature and this, in turn, leads to consideration of the structure of the social system in which man operates.

Briefly, this structure consists of a complex network of interrelated positions which are categories of persons with certain similar attributes related in certain structured ways to other position holders. These positions are independent of those who occupy them. Associated with each position are certain behavioural expectations (see Getzels and Guba, 1957; Gross et al., 1958), clusters of which are referred to as the role or roles that characterise the position. Individuals typically occupy a number of positions and therefore 'play' or enact numerous roles. The concept of role then, 'stresses the influence of contemporaneous forces arising in the person's immediate social environment to impress his behaviour' (Charters, 1963: 788). In particular, role designates the influence of the expectations of 'significant others' (Sullivan, 1940) associated with a specific position – the 'role-set' for that position (Merton, 1957a). That is, an individual occupying a particular position interacts with others associated with the position who expect him to be and not be a certain kind of person (in that particular position) and to behave or not behave in certain ways; these expectations vary systematically in the variety of situations in which the individual and his significant others interact. Since different demands may be made on the incumbent of a position by his significant others, it is possible that he may experience, if not manifest, 'role conflict' insofar as he perceives the conflicting expectations. According to Charters (1963: 788, 789), 'perceived expectations constitute the behaviourally influential environment' for role theorists in education. To sum up, there is a degree

of predictability about the behaviour and what ought to be the behaviour of role incumbents. Without such uniformities in behaviour social organization in both small and large social systems would not be possible. Consensus on expectations therefore is a starting assumption for social systems. However the phrase 'degree of predictability' used above indicates that full consensus on expectations is unlikely.

The concept of role then, represents acknowledgement by the social scientist of observable patterns of human social behaviour which are situation-specific (cf. Charters, 1963: 788). Thus the primary teacher - to take an example relevant to this study - is engaged in behaviour towards others such as parents, pupils and colleagues over the course of his training. In any given situation though numerous ways of acting are possible theoretically, some ways tend to become preferred by given groups and so come to be regarded as the 'proper' or 'best' ways of behaving in a particular situation. That is, expectations arise for specified role incumbents in particular situations. For example, the primary teacher (the role incumbent or 'actor') is expected to be neatly and cleanly attired (the expectation) throughout practice teaching (the situation).

Social behaviour is thus situation-linked. As an individual shifts from one situational context to another so his behaviour changes. When for instance the primary teacher finishes teaching for the day he might meet his colleagues for a drink in a bar

and in such a situation, more casual dress than that he has taught in all day may not only be acceptable - it may be the 'norm'² in this particular context.

Specific norms attaching to given positions are not discrete but tend to form complexes so that there are, typically, multiple norms for a given actor in a given situation. For example, a primary teacher might be expected in the classroom situation to pay as much attention to individual pupils as possible, to set an appropriate amount of homework, to maintain order, and so on. Such norms for a given actor in a given recurrent situation constitute a cluster of rules of behaviour for that situation which are amenable to empirical observation. As stated, these clusters are called roles.

The combining of norms into roles is based on the group - that is, the position - towards which the individual is acting. Since an individual occupying the position of teacher interacts with the incumbents of several other positions such as pupils, colleagues, parents and the like, there will be several roles associated with the one position. Each of these roles will be composed of a complex of norms which for analytical purposes can be seen as separate and distinguishable from the norms for his other roles such that interaction with each group is characterised by different behaviour. In this investigation for instance, four roles attaching to the position of primary school teacher are explored which are considered important 'sectors' of the total role of the primary teacher. These are: clusters of norms for behaviour towards pupils, colleagues, parents and the community.

2. 'Norm' here is used as Foskett (1969: 7ff), following Bates (1956), used it, that is, as 'a patterned or commonly held behaviour expectation'. Later, the term will be further defined to accommodate Biddle *et al.*'s (1961) distinction between 'norm' and 'expectation' and Gross *et al.*'s (1958) distinction between 'expectation' and 'anticipation'.

3.4 THE NORMATIVE STRUCTURE

Sketched in thus, the framework constitutes a model of what Foskett (1967a) calls 'the normative structure'. Though such a model is that of a static structure not recognising change and implying full agreement among position incumbents as to the rules of behaviour in recurrent situations, it is ultimately derived from experience of actual social behaviour and provides a useful framework for inquiry by pointing to those elements of the real normative world that are to be examined empirically (cf. Foskett, 1969: 3, 4). Clearly, the observable order of everyday life points to the fact of a normative structure of some kind. Social life is to some degree predictable for if it were not there would be chaos. In church for example most people most of the time do kneel to pray, and stand to sing, and sit patiently through the sermon. When such taken-for-granted patterns of behaviour are broken the consequences can be disturbing and dramatic as Hargreaves (1972: 99-100) shows in quoting from an experiment by Garfinkel (1967) in which students were asked to behave in their homes as if they were lodgers:

...family members were stupefied. They vigorously sought to make the strange actions intelligible and to restore the situation to normal appearances. Reports were filled with accounts of astonishment, bewilderment, shock, anxiety, embarrassment, and anger, and with charges by various family members that the student was mean, inconsiderate, nasty, or impolite. Family members demanded explanations: What's the matter? What's gotten into you? ...Are you out of your mind or are you just stupid? One student acutely embarrassed his mother in front of her friend by asking if she minded if he had a snack from the refrigerator. 'Mind if you have a little snack? You've been eating little snacks around here for years without asking me. What's gotten into you?'

Thus, it is that failure to conform to expectations in a particular situation, that is, acting out of role, tends to be disturbing because it is disruptive of the predictability of social intercourse, a predictability based on an observable degree of order. Though it is clear that the relationship between the norms for behaviour which together make up the normative structure and actual behaviour itself is not always one-to-one, it is also evident that there is some relationship insofar as behaviour is conditioned or controlled by expectations (cf. Foskett, 1967, b:3)³. The basic premise then, is that the expectations which comprise the normative structure guide behaviour insofar as they define the limits or range of tolerated behaviour (Sarbin and Allen, 1968: 501). Correspondence between the normative structure and behaviour can vary from rigid conformity to expectations as for example in wedding, funeral, coronation and similar kinds of ceremonies, to behaviour bearing little or no relationship to expectations such as in the circumstances of a shipwreck or when riot or revolution first break out.⁴

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3. The question of conformity to expectations, although not investigated in this study is, clearly, crucial. Generally speaking, it is held that there is a tendency to conform rather than otherwise, irrespective of the level of collectivity (Francis, 1977: 54). Stouffer (1962: 6) discerns a strain toward conformity to the central values of the group while Kahn (1964: 5) asserts a 'prodigious' degree of conformity to organizational requirements. Sarbin and Allen (1968: 502-3), while recognising 'that role behaviour does not consist of the rigid following of specific directives', nevertheless comment that it is easy to demonstrate that behaviour is determined in predictable ways by conformity to expectations:
It is meaningful to say that males in our society sometimes act like husbands, sometimes like fathers, sometimes like workers, sometimes like sons; it is meaningful because such designations indicate fairly well-known differences in behaviour which are due to conformity to the expectations associated with each role.
 4. Even in circumstances where the social order breaks down, as in a riot, it may not take long it seems for patterns of expected behaviour to emerge, the more especially so if the event is repeated as in the Toxteth and Brixton riots in the United Kingdom in the 1981 northern hemisphere summer. This may reflect that human social behaviour is characterised by a need to create or impose some sort of order where this is chaos.

These variations, themselves fluctuating from time to time, person to person, group to group, situation to situation, norm to norm, and so on, are thus open to empirical investigation. Where a high level of agreement exists amongst or between members of groups concerning the explicit rules of behaviour for most situations relevant to those groups it might be expected that for the individuals concerned, conflict would tend to be minimised and harmony and order maximised in interpersonal interactions. Conversely, the reverse might be expected - namely, interpersonal tensions and hence organizational stress - where such rules are ambiguous and open to a variety of interpretations. It is thus that analysis of the network of expectations (or, more realistically, important parts of that network) can usefully point to areas of potential strain.

The fundamental importance of mapping the normative setting in organizations has been stressed by Foskett (1967a: 3) who argues that study of the rules or norms that individuals in a social system hold for each other may be seen as logically prior to the study of the structure of the organization itself since, although the relationship between the organizational and normative structures is one of reciprocity, the normative structure may be less susceptible to the capriciousness of current events and the unique elements in a given situation or community. In pointing to the potential utility of such an approach, Foskett (1969: 5) takes care not to deny the importance of individual characteristics which have often been seen as explaining problems facing schools:

Inadequate performance by teachers has been traced to such things as inadequate training, lack of motivation and low ability. Complaining parents have been seen as ignorant trouble makers, as having evil motives, or even as mental cases...Always it is something about the individual as such.

However, other variables such as the characteristics of the normative network can provide plausible complementary if not rival explanations of such problems (cf. Gross et.al., 1958: 321). Foskett (1969; 5) illustrates this proposition with a real-life example of severe tension which developed between two capable and highly regarded individuals - one a teacher, the other a resource person sent to work with the teacher - who refused to work with each other. Investigation of the incident by the principal of the school concerned revealed that the basic cause of the clash seemed to lie in the differing expectations each had for the roles of teacher and resource person rather than in any individual characteristics of the persons involved. What is more, each misperceived the other's expectations, thus exacerbating the situation.

Similarly, an interview with a student teacher involved in this present study⁵. reinforced for the investigator the notion that some such analysis might at least help account for problems experienced in organizations. The student in question (student F48) resigned a few weeks after entering teaching. The exit was traumatic. She had wanted to teach and, insofar as she had no plans to marry immediately and raise a family, had intended to

5. The interview took place, along with other interviews conducted with the 1976 cohort of students, during the students' graduation week three months after entering teaching. The purpose of these interviews was to explore the initial impact of teaching on students in the light of their responses to the Role Norm Inventory completed three or four months earlier in College.

make a career of teaching. Initially she was pleased with her school and especially with the fact that she was given a permanent position in a school in a 'good' area on a bright Year 2 class since she had wanted to teach infants. However, trouble soon began when she perceived that, 'the Headmistress expected a real lot'. In particular, whereas the ex-student expected to plan in detail only for the day ahead, with accompanying broad long-range programming, her perception of the Headmistress's expectations were very different:

I got the impression that she (the Headmistress) sort of expected a week's lessons in advance on the first day I started because she'd told me the Friday before that, that that's what they do - in all the first-year outs there - there's two others... They had to have a day book done by 9 o'clock on Monday morning on her table with Monday to Friday's lessons done out and we had to have it done. We had a timetable in front of the day book and the lessons had to be short lessons, mainly about ten minutes long, twenty minutes long and um....we had to follow that strictly, really strictly (wry laugh) and we had to have the lesson notes down....even had to have lesson notes for news time....we had to say that....where they'd be sitting and which line of children came out....they had to have places on the map and you had to have them. A whole line would have to come out on Monday -that's their day - and you had to have that written down and you had to have written down what they'd say and for how long they'd have to say it and..um..the words she used were, 'You can't leave anything up to anybody's imagination.' If the Inspector wants to see the book or she wants to read it, everything about the lesson had to be written down step by step.

As the interview progressed it became apparent that, in addition to clashes in expectations about lesson preparation and procedure, there was little congruence, - perceived or actual, between the ex-student's and Headmistress's expectations on other matters critical to the beginning teacher such as classroom discipline.

On a more general level the ex-student clearly expected a good deal of sympathetic support so early in her career but the Headmistress's expectation was perceived to be that beginning teachers must stand on their own two feet from the start - a 'sink or swim approach':

'I got the class straight away and I was just sort of walked straight into the class you know. 9 o'clock, right! There's your classroom and there's your class!

The support expected by the student to help her through the first troublesome weeks was not forthcoming:

She said she could tell the difference the first day I started - how different I was to the other first year outs that year...

and

She acted really nicely but deep down I wondered what she was sort of thinking, whether she was just trying to get rid of me because the school was up for evaluation and the school has just been upgraded...

Finally, the Inspector was called but before he came the ex-student reports the Headmistress as saying:

You don't have to wait until he (the Inspector) comes you know. You can sign your resignation papers now, and leave now, and don't prolong the agony. I'll take the class for the rest of the day and get a casual (i.e. a temporary replacement teacher) for tomorrow.

In short, the Headmistress's views on crucial aspects of the teacher role were not what the student expected and, on this evidence, the student's views were not what the Headmistress expected.

This episode has been included here as an exemplification of the thesis that analysis of differences in expectations offers a potentially fruitful alternative perspective on the strains that from time to time beset social intercourse in organizational settings, the more especially so where a position appears to be particularly the focus of possibly incompatible expectations. In this respect, Wilson's (1962) analysis of the teacher role indicates just how vulnerable to conflict the position of teacher is. Wilson (1962: 27ff) suggests that any role in which there is a high commitment to other people is subject to considerable insecurities resulting from factors such as the diverse obligations attaching to the role, the differing expectations of role-set members, the marginality of the role, the inadequacy of institutional support and the vulnerability of the institutions in which the teacher's role is performed, the conflict between role and career commitments, and the divergence between the role's value commitments and those of the wider society.

With respect to conflicts associated with the role-set Wilson (1962: 28) makes the point that these are especially formidable in contemporary society because everyone has ready-made opinions about what a teacher does and ought to do. Thus the teacher is the focal point of expectations from a wide variety of sources - parents, pupils, colleagues, the Education Department, the business world, the universities, and so on. The value of using a framework derived from role theory to determine levels of consensus and conflict on expectations has been demonstrated by research into a variety of occupational roles. As summarised in the previous chapter, perceptions of conflict and ambiguity by role incumbents for a

particular role can be associated with various personal, job-related outcomes which are regarded as dysfunctional for both the individual and organizational efficiency. These outcomes include job dissatisfaction, job-induced tensions, physical and mental disorders, unfavourable attitudes towards role-senders, a propensity to 'escape from the field' (Toby, 1952) and perceived ineffectiveness and futility (cf. Miles, 1977: 22).

3.5 CONCEPTS AND TERMINOLOGY USED IN THE STUDY

3.5.1 ROLE

This discussion has so far mentioned terms such as 'position', 'role', 'role-set', 'role-conflict', 'consensus', 'expectations', 'norm', and so on, without making clear precisely what they mean in this study. The terminological and conceptual problems that have beset role theory make imperative the clarification of these terms in a study of this kind. Reviews of literature such as those by Neiman and Hughes (1951) and Gross et al. (1958) attest to what Charters (1963: 788) then referred to as 'the reigning confusion' of theory. Latterly the confusion has been less conceptual than terminological which is to say, as Dahrendorf (1958: 47) observes, 'a matter to be determined by considerations of convenience'. Even in respect of terminological differences Banton (1965: 28) has pointed to 'a growing tendency for divergent definitions...to be dropped'. He identifies four common elements:

It is agreed: that behaviour can be related to a position in a social structure; that actual behaviour can be related to the individual's own ideas of what is appropriate (role cognitions), or to other people's ideas about what he will do (expect-

ations), or to other people's ideas about what he should do (norms). In this light a role may be understood as a set of norms and expectations applied to the incumbent of a particular position. (Banton: 1965: 29).

This definition is virtually identical to the sense in which 'role' is used by Foskett (1969: 3) in the development of the inventory used in this study. In his research Foskett acknowledged the terminological and conceptual advances reflected in the work of Bates (1956) and Merton (1957a) and, especially, in the classic research of Gross et al. (1958) in which three basic ideas to appear in most conceptualizations of role are discerned. These are that individuals: (1) in social locations (2) behave (3) with reference to expectations. From this they define 'role' as 'a set of evaluative standards applied to an incumbent of a particular position' (Gross et al., 1958: 60). According to Gross, this represented a step forward in that the concept of role was freed of relational and situational restrictions and no restrictions were placed on the definers of expectations. However, while granting that the work of Gross and his co-authors was an advance in that it was conceptually clear and plausible and that a serious attempt was made to replace 'society' by more precise and operationally useful categories, Dahrendorf (1958) criticises Gross for treating role expectations as deriving from particular, concrete groups and individuals thus giving the impression that roles reflect the opinions of those with whom we interact:

If six out of ten parents interviewed think that a school superintendent should not smoke and should be married, these expected attributes or actions are for Gross constituents of the role of school superintendent; if on the other hand - Gross does not go this far, but nothing in his approach rules out such absurdities - thirty five out of forty pupils think that none of them should ever get bad marks, this too is an expectation, associated in the first instance with the role of teacher but applying also to the school superintendent as the teacher's superior.

(Dahrendorf, 1958: 30)

Dahrendorf thus makes the point that role expectations, which in his view derive from social norms,⁶ are not the same as opinions. He goes on then to say however that such opinions are nonetheless important for role analysis in that they affect the legitimacy of extant norms and indicate the likelihood of change:

If...a teachers' association requires all teachers to arrange a weekly parents' meeting but most teachers consider it pointless to hold meetings so frequently, we can safely predict that in due course this norm will be modified, or at least that it will not be enforced and will thus be converted from a shall - into a can - expectation.

(Dahrendorf, 1958: 32).

In this way Dahrendorf makes clear that the results of studies such as this present investigation are to be interpreted not as constituting some current definition of the teacher's role but as pointing to the prevailing climate of opinion within a specified population about that role and thus signifying those aspects of the role that are most susceptible to change because they are not held to be valid by position incumbents.

6. Dahrendorf (1968: 49) argues that it is through an individual's normative reference groups that he orientates to social norms. These reference groups are those significant generalised others from whom the individual 'takes' the norms governing his behaviour and the expectations impinging on his roles. Berry (1974: 77) comments: 'Thus, the role of teacher may be defined in terms of the expectations of pupils, parents...and other groups that are significant for the teacher's role as generalised others. Each of these groups serves as a reference group for the teacher, and he takes into account their expectations in the performance of his role.'

3.5.2 POSITION

The concept of 'role', then, as used in this study, refers to a cluster of norms constituting a complex of rules for behaviour for a given actor in a given recurrent situation. That is, 'role' refers to patterns of expectations for behaviour associated with a position (cf. Dahrendorf, 1958: 46; Foskett, 1969: 2,3). The concept of 'position' is an abstraction that points to the fundamental fact of the division of labour in a society and represents a way of thinking about the relationship of individuals to one another. The allied concept of role vivifies the abstraction by giving it 'empirical content' (Foskett, 1967a: 7) or lending it 'substance' (Dahrendorf, 1968: 72). Like 'role' the notion of position necessitates elaboration.

As Dahrendorf (1968: 71) says, 'It is widely agreed, and attested to by the poetry of all ages, that people invariably perceive each other as the possessors of certain attributes or the incumbents of certain positions...'. Implicit in the concept of society is that there is more than one such position. That is, 'society' is not conceivable without some degree of internal differentiation. These obvious features of human social behaviour are reflected in the labels such as 'teacher', 'politician', 'doctor', and so on used by individuals to identify or characterize others. The many such labels assigned to positions serve to differentiate amongst them and always imply relationships between acting individuals. Every social position then, defines a field of social relationships and society can be represented theoretically as an intricate, multi-

dimensional network of such relationships. According to Newcomb (1951: 277) positions are the building blocks of societies and, from one standpoint, 'societies and organised groups are structures of positions which are organised to reach certain goals'.

Such positions are seen as independent of the persons occupying them. They can be entered, filled and left; the incumbent goes but the position remains. Thus the position of Principal at Small-town Public School will typically be occupied by numerous individuals over the years. The structured network of such interrelated positions can, as Foskett (1967a: 6) observes, 'be identified empirically and treated as an independent variable in the explanation of a wide range of theoretical problems regarding social phenomena'.

Generally speaking, 'position' has been used to represent the idea of social location and has often been coterminous with 'status' (e.g., Merton, 1957; Goffman, 1961; Foskett, 1967a). Terms such as 'niche' and 'office' have also been used (Biddle, 1966: 28). In arguing for the acceptance of 'position' Gross et al. (1958: 48) make a useful distinction between it and 'status' pointing out that it is more neutral than 'status' which 'connotes the idea of differential ranking among a set of persons or social locations'. Dahrendorf, following Gross, emphasises the neutral nature of 'position' and adds that in general usage 'status' refers primarily to one particular position - that in a hierarchical scale of social prestige which is a distinctly different meaning to that increasingly used in role analysis (Dahrendorf, 1958: 47). For this present study therefore the term 'position', rather than 'status', was used as defined by Gross (1958: 48); 'the location of an actor or class of actors in a system of social relationships'.

3.5.3 THE ROLE SET

As both Biddle (1966: 64) and Foskett (1967a: 4) observe, the complement of positions in a given social system is finite and discernible, with individuals typically occupying multiple positions each having an array of associated role relationships. In respect of this, Newcomb (1951: 277) reasons that since every position is part of an inclusive system of positions 'no one position has any meaning apart from the other positions to which it is related'. That is, the position implies the relationships and the relationships the position. The implication for the investigator of a particular position then, is that the analysis will inevitably involve at least one associated or 'counter' position or, more usually, several counter positions. Thus the position of primary teacher will be associated with the counter positions of primary pupil, colleague, parent and the like. In Merton's terms these associated positions constitute the primary teacher's 'role-set' which he defines as 'that complement of role relationships in which persons are involved by virtue of occupying a particular social status' (Merton, 1957a: 110). Merton is careful to point out that the role-set differs from 'multiple roles' by which is meant the different positions an individual occupies.

Each occupant of a counter position in an individual's role-set for a specified position will have numerous expectations about how that individual should behave in that position. Thus in the case of the student teacher, his college lecturers and serving teachers will, amongst others, hold certain expectations about the way he ought to behave in his future role of primary teacher.

Generalising, it can be said that any occupant of the position of primary teacher will, in his inevitable relationships with the occupants of the counter positions constituting his role-set, perceive their expectations about the way he should behave as primary teacher. Since the occupants of the counter positions associated with any 'focal' position (Gross et al. 1958)⁷ are likely to be diversely located in the social structure, they are, in Merton's words, 'apt to have interests and sentiments, values and moral expectations differing from those of the status-occupant himself' (Merton, 1957a: 112). That is, the potential exists for differing and oftentimes conflicting expectations about appropriate behaviour for the occupant of a focal position by those in his role-set. Such differential location of position occupants in the social structure is, according to Merton, 'the basic structural basis for potential disturbance of a role-set' and gives rise to the questions of which, if any, mechanisms operate to counteract such role-set instability and under what circumstances they fail to operate, with resultant conflict (cf. Merton, 1957a: 112, 113).

3.5.4 THE FOCAL POSITION

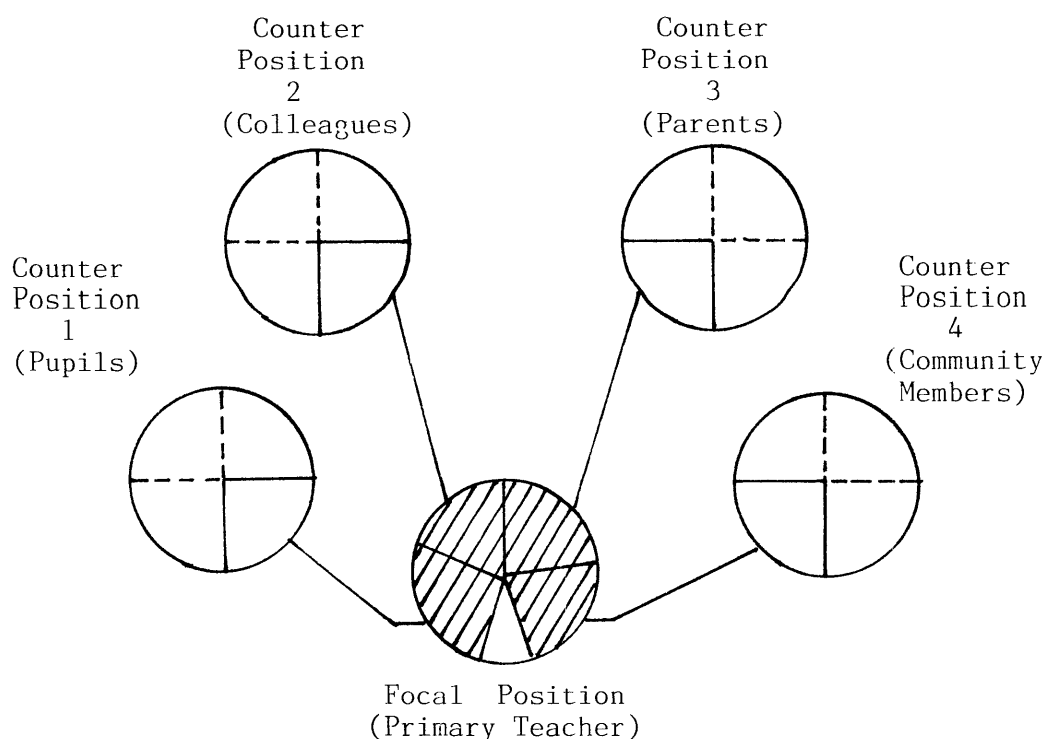
As previously stated this study investigates the focal position of the primary teacher as it is perceived by student teachers and their significant others. The approach utilises a role norm inventory for this focal position in four role sectors developed by Foskett (1967a), and deriving from the relational specification of positions

7. That is, the position which is the focus of investigation.

in Gross, Mason and McEachern's (1958) classic study of the School Superintendency Role in the United States. The term 'focal position' refers to the particular position which is the focus of investigation (here, the primary teacher).⁸ Any other position which helps define the focal position is a 'counter position'. Where a position is specified by its relationship to a number of counter positions Gross *et al.* (1958: 52) postulate a position-centric model for its investigation. Figure 3.1 shows such a model for the position of primary teacher as it is specified in the Foskett (1967a) inventory used in this study:

FIGURE 3.1

Position Centric Model for the Position 'Primary Teacher'



After Gross *et al.* (1958)

8. Defined as a teacher in the primary sector of the New South Wales (Australia) education system. The primary sector consists of all grades from Kindergarten to Year 6 covering pupil age ranges from 5 to 11 or 12. The education system is taken here to include both public (State) and private (mostly Catholic parochial) schools.

Figure 3.1 shows that in this study the focal position of primary teacher is defined in terms of relationships with pupils, colleagues, parents and citizens in the community. Since these counter positions are only some of all the possible related positions, one sector of the focal position has been left blank. As other relevant positions are added the system and hence the specification of each position within it becomes more complete. Studying the position of primary teacher in relation to that of 'pupils' is a different unit of analysis from that of primary teacher in relation to 'colleagues' or 'parents'. Hence the Foskett inventory is divided into sectors such as 'Acting Toward Pupils' and 'Acting Toward Parents' which are each made up of clusters of expectations dealing with those particular teacher role relationships.

A position-centric model thus enables one position to be focused on and its relationship to a series of counter positions investigated.

Given that the relationships associated with a focal position have been clarified as described, it is then necessary to specify precisely the situational context in which the position is to be investigated. Firstly, taking the position of primary teacher as the focal position to be explored it needs to be made clear as to whether this means the primary teacher in a particular school, a district, a state, a country and so on. That is the scope of the social system must be specified. Relating a particular position to a particular social system overcomes the difficulty of determining the boundaries for that position and has the added advantage

of resolving the problem of overlapping positions (cf. Foskett, 1967a: 5, 6). Once the boundaries of a social system are thus drawn it then remains, if desired, for various relevant contextual variables to be detailed such as the size of the community, and so on (cf. Gross et al., 1958: 57).

3.5.5 THE PERCEPTION OF EXPECTATIONS

When the role-set relationships for a position are examined not only is it likely that the role-set members will hold different expectations for the occupant of the focal position, it is also possible that the occupant of that position will perceive such differences and these perceptions may vary in accuracy. As well, role-set members' expectations for the focal position may be partly determined by what they perceive to be the expectations held by the incumbent of the focal position. To add further complexity there is the possibility that the expectations of both focal position incumbents and role-set members are influenced by what they think the others expect of them. Hargreaves (1972: 109) following Laing (1966, 1967) demonstrates this complexity in his discussion of the direct- and meta-perspectives that may need to be considered to more fully comprehend the interactions between teacher and pupils in a hypothetical classroom situation. In this situation, whereas both teacher and pupil actually do like each other, they both think they are disliked by the other. In the hope of changing what he thinks is the pupil's opinion of him, the teacher mildly teases the pupil to persuade the pupil that he really likes him. However, the pupil interprets this as 'making fun of him' and, confirmed in his belief that the teacher dislikes him, reacts with hostility.

This, in turn, convinces the teacher that the pupil does not like him and thus the misperception is reinforced. Even this analysis might constitute a simplification for, as Hargreaves shows, there are perspectives beyond the meta-perspective which may immensely complicate the problem of untangling what is 'real' from what is perceived to be real. The point that these Laingian spirals emphasise is that consideration of more than the direct perspective may be necessary to clarify the interactions of a position incumbent - a matter that will be taken up in a subsequent discussion of consensus within and between the student teacher groups of this study and their significant others.

3.5.6 SIGNIFICANT OTHERS

The term 'significant others' (Sullivan, 1940) is associated with reference group theory. Broadly, the concept of reference group refers to how an individual in defining a situation is influenced by his perception of how others might define it. These others are not necessarily specific, actual individuals but may be 'generalised others' (Mead, 1934). The concept of the generalised other corresponds to the notion of 'people in general' and may be conceived of as 'society's' influence on the individual insofar as the reality of society is experienced by individuals. Of this Cooley (1902: 84) once remarked, 'the imagination which people have of one another are the solid facts of society' and Mead (1934: 155) later commented; 'It is in the form of the generalised other that the social process influences the behaviour of the individuals in it and carrying it on...for it is in this form that the social process or community enters as a determining factor into the individual's thinking.'

Generalised others may be limited to specific groups of people that are significant for the individual in that they influence his definition of the situation. Such groups are 'reference groups' (Hyman, 1942) defined by Shibutani (1962: 132) as 'that group whose presumed perspective is used by an actor as the frame of reference in the organization of his perceptual field.' One of the functions of a reference group to which this refers is the normative function (Kelley, 1952): those who aspire to become a member of a group must conform to that group's norms, adopt its values and evaluate themselves in terms of the group members who become his significant others.

Kuhn (1964 in Hargreaves, 1972: 12) has defined significant others as:

- (a) the others to whom the individual is most fully, broadly and basically committed, emotionally and psychologically;
 - (b) the others who have provided him with his general vocabulary including his most basic and crucial concepts and categories;
 - (c) the others who have provided and continue to provide him with his categories of self and other and with the meaningful roles to which such assignments refer;
- and (d) the others in communication with whom his self-conception is basically sustained and/or changed.

Significant others then, are those generalised others who influence a position incumbent's definition of the situation (Thomas, 1928). In this way a position incumbent's reference groups provide

a basis for the ordering of social reality. From a sociological standpoint the concern is with social rather than interpersonal influences on the individual's construction of social reality. Turner (1956: 328) argues thus in seeing the reference group as 'a generalised other viewed as possessing member roles and attributes independently of the specific individuals who compose it'.

Arguably it is the student teacher's lecturers and teachers in the schools that dominate his world during the period of training for, if he is to graduate, it is very largely to their conceptions of the teacher role that he must accommodate. As the student 'takes' the attitudes of these significant others unto himself - that is, learns what is expected and conforms reasonably to those expectations - he begins to formulate a view of himself as teacher. Mead (1934) has referred to this process as 'taking the role of the other':

The individual experiences himself as such, not directly but only indirectly, from the particular standpoints of other individual members of the same social group or from the generalised standpoint of the group as a whole to which he belongs. For he enters his own experience as a self or individual... only in so far as he first becomes an object to himself just as other individuals are objects to him or are in his experience; and he becomes an object to himself only by taking the attitudes of other individuals toward himself within a social framework or context of experience and behaviour in which both he and they are involved...

(quoted in Hargreaves, 1972: 14)

By way of demonstrating the relationship between socialization and taking the role of the other Mead goes on to point out that, in the same way as one 'takes' the attitudes of other individuals,

one must also take their attitudes toward the various aspects of the common social activity or set of social undertakings in which they are all engaged as members of a social group or organised society.

It might be worth noting at this point that, in the present study, to determine just how influential lecturers and teachers were perceived to be by students relative to other possible significant others, the 1976 sixth semester students were asked to estimate how much influence certain groups had on how students thought about their future role. The results are given in Table 3.1 below:

TABLE 3.1
RELATIVE PERCEIVED INFLUENCE OF
SIGNIFICANT OTHERS: 6TH '76 (n = 97)

SIGNIFICANT OTHERS	PERCEIVED INFLUENCE			\bar{X}	Rank
	1 Considerable	2 Some	3 Little or none		
Own Parents	23	49	25	2.02	3
College Lecturers	33	42	22	1.89	2
Fellow Students	22	48	27	2.05	4
Own School Teachers	24	36	37	2.13	5
Teachers met on Prac. or School Visits	50	26	21	1.70	1
Close friend or friends not necessarily at College	18	30	49	2.32	6

Thus it was that teachers met as a student and lecturers were in fact seen as more important than other possibly relevant groups in influencing the group's professional role conceptions.

According to the criterion posited by Dahrendorf (1968: 51) for identifying the most important reference groups for a given position - the severity of negative sanctions at the disposal of the reference group - it is scarcely surprising that teachers and lecturers rank above other possibly influential groups, for, in the final analysis, they do have the power to prevent the student becoming a teacher. Dahrendorf argues that the question of the relative importance of significant others must be understood as a structural question - that is, as a question of their importance in the institutional context rather than of the personal preferences of a respondent group (cf. Dahrendorf, 1968: 51). What the data above show is that, in this case, the respondents' views of who are the influential others happen to correspond with the relative importance of those others institutionally. That is, none of the other possibly influential groups listed have at their disposal the kinds of sanctions that teachers and lecturers do.

3.5.7 THE DEFINITION OF THE SITUATION

The term 'the definition of the situation' mentioned above is important sociologically for it is considered that reality is often accepted by individuals as they perceive it irrespective of the 'objective' accuracy of those perceptions. This is what W.I. Thomas (1928) was referring to in his much quoted theorem: 'If men define situations as real, then they are real in their

consequences'. Commenting on this, Merton (1968: 476) has observed that once individuals have perceived something as real, then their consequent behaviour and some of the consequences of that behaviour are determined by the ascribed meaning. He gives the example of people who, believing their bank was about to collapse financially, rushed to withdraw their savings, and in so doing caused a perfectly solvent institution actually to collapse. This in fact almost occurred in N.S.W. in 1979 when an influential talk-back radio commentator reported a rumour that a large building society was in financial trouble. The ensuing run on that society might have brought about its demise had not the State Premier of the day intervened to assure depositors of its solvency. As it was, the society lost a substantial sum.⁹ Similarly, Orson Welles' now-notorious radio broadcast in the 1930's of an imminent Martian invasion resulted in many people fleeing certain American cities. More recently, and more seriously perhaps, the controversial 'Pygmalion in the Classroom' study of Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968) purported to show that pupils made impressive learning gains because their teachers believed that a test the pupils were given had singled out those who could be expected to make dramatic academic progress. The test, in fact, was simply an intelligence test and the pupils selected were a random twenty per cent from the entire group. Though in the wake of methodological and statistical criticisms of the study (see for example Greiger, 1971; Rosenthal, 1972; Greiger and Saavendra, 1972) its findings must be accepted with caution, the thrust of this and other such research on expectation effects (see for example Garner and Bing, 1972)

9. See: The Sydney Morning Herald, Wednesday, March 7th, 1979, p. 1.

does appear to substantiate Thomas's (1928) notion that social reality may be largely dependent on the way individuals perceive it. The self-fulfilling prophecy at the heart of the Rosenthal and Jacobson study is, as Merton (1968: 477) sees it, 'in the beginning, a false definition evoking a new behaviour which makes the originally false conception become true.' The point to be made in respect of this present study is that the student teachers' perceptions of reality may, for them, be reality and even operate, as the Laing example given previously suggests, to help create a different reality from that which, objectively, is the case.

3.5.8 NORMS AND EXPECTATIONS

At this point it will be necessary to look more closely at the terms 'norm' and 'expectation'. Berry (1974: 36ff) makes the point that society is ordered according to moral rules, that is, what should be so rather than what is, and that the sociologist may approach this moral order of social life by considering the socially prescribed rules for social conduct and the procedural rules for ordering social reality. Such rules are known as 'norms' which both refer to and are a product of social life, prescribing its scope and limits. Very broadly, throughout life the individual is socialised to internalise the norms of the various groups to which he belongs.

In respect of the socialization process from a role theoretical standpoint, it is considered that effective role performance requires that the position incumbent knows adequately the norms - the obligations, privileges, rights and duties that define a particular

position - since he will then be better equipped to enact the role associated with the position. Such thinking is implicit, for example, in orientation and induction programmes in a variety of bureaucratic organizations where it is assumed that knowing the norms or expectations associated with a position is likely to be reflected in acceptable role performance. Failure for any reason to acquire such expectations for recurring roles leads, according to Sarbin (1968: 547) 'to enactments judged as inept, invalid, improper, antisocial, or illegal'. An example would be the student teacher judged as inept by his practice teaching supervisors for failing to maintain reasonable order in the classroom.

In one modality (cf. Biddle, 1980: 126 ff) the term 'expectation' conveys the notion of 'prescription' which is a central idea in role analysis denoting behaviours that should be engaged in. Prescriptions can be formal and informal, explicit and implicit, individual and shared; they can vary in permissiveness, completeness, complexity and in the degree to which they are codified and universal, and, according to Biddle and Thomas (1966: 103) 'appear to be among the most potent factors in the control of human behaviour, either by directly triggering conformity behaviour, or through a system of positive and negative sanctions that accompany them'.

In the literature, the term 'expectations' has also referred either to what a position incumbent ought to do (i.e., behaviours), or ought to be (attributes). As regards behaviours (to which most authors have restricted their treatment according to Gross et al., 1958: 63) Banton (1965: 28,29) distinguishes between what should be done, which he calls 'norms' and what will be done

- 'expectations'. It is in this sense that 'norms' and 'expectations' are used in this research. In the normative sense an example of such an orientation could be: 'I think that a primary teacher should deprive a pupil of privileges as a form of punishment', whereas in the predictive or 'anticipatory' sense (cf. Gross et al. 1958: 58) the orientation would be: 'I think that a primary teacher will deprive a pupil of privileges as a form of punishment'.

Analytically, the distinction between 'norms' and 'expectations' as used by Banton (1965) is important for, in terms of actual behaviour, what a position incumbent should do in a given situation may not be what he necessarily will do. The student teacher may hold the ideal that pupils should be permitted to follow their own educational interests in the classroom. However, the student might also recognise that, as a teacher, he anticipates that he will actually fall somewhat short of this norm, and thus the 'norm' is modified by the 'expectation' (or, what Gross et al., 1958: 59, have usefully termed 'anticipation').

According to Goslin (1969: 11) the recognition of disparities between norms and expectations frequently makes possible the resolution of role conflict and is mostly a necessary skill when attempting to learn a new role. Because most position incumbents are unable to live up to 'norms' in the sense used here (that is, what should be done), recognition by the incumbent of how closely actual behaviour is expected to approximate the ideal of what ought to be is therefore of critical importance in socialization.

In this investigation data were collected on student teachers' 'norms' (what should be done) and 'expectations' (what will be done) in an effort to determine the degree to which they modify their ideal conception of the teacher role (their 'norms') in anticipating their future role behaviour (their 'expectations'); thus a measure of student teacher 'idealism' is furnished. Concerning this, it should be noted that since the term 'norm' implies an ideal perspective on reality, then 'idealism' can be conceived of in terms of the degree of correspondence between norms and expectations as defined by Banton (1965) and used here. This can vary from complete correspondence to little or none. For example, a student teacher might think he ought not use corporal punishment and also consider that he will not when he is a teacher. In this case the student can be seen as idealistic in respect of that particular behaviour toward pupils. To the extent that such behaviour toward pupils is also acceptable within the school system, the student can also be regarded as 'realistic' or 'unrealistic'. That is, high idealism does not necessarily imply an unrealistic orientation.

Norms and expectations vary in numerous ways and, where relevant, this must be accommodated in the methodology used. In this study for example, a precise specification of the focal position was necessary in order that respondents knew unambiguously to whom a particular norm or expectation applied. Also, norms and expectations can vary in the intensity with which they are held and, insofar as they are reducible to a statement for or against something, in direction. This necessitates the use of measuring devices such as Likert-type scales which, though widely used, are

not entirely unproblematic as will be discussed later. Another methodological necessity, again to be raised later, concerns the contextual specificity of norms and expectations for if they are not situationally specific in their phrasing respondents will have to 'read in' a situation thus confounding comparison of different subjects' responses, (see, for example, Cook and Cook, 1950).

In assessing the consequences of norms and expectations for teachers Charters (1963: 797) observes that some social psychological theories stress the teacher's identification with the significant others with whom he interacts, and the influence of their norms/expectations upon his own self concept and the way he defines his role, whereas other theories emphasise how group norms provide frames of reference in ambiguous situations for perceiving and judging oneself and others who internalize the norms. It is considered that the perceived role definitions of significant others directly affect a teacher's 'more or less public modes of performance in the classroom' (Charters, 1963: 798). Mostly this has been assessed by examining the congruity or disparity between sets of norms/expectations held by the teacher and by those considered to be significant others (cf. Charters 1963: 798). As suggested in the previous chapter, the degree of consensus and conflict between the incumbents of the relevant, specified positions is considered to be important for the stability of the social system as a whole, with congruity generally being equated with stability, satisfaction, and harmony, and conflict with tension, dissatisfaction, and disequilibrium.⁹

9. This is epitomized, for example, in the well-known model postulated by Getzels and Guba (1957). The model constitutes a theory of a social system functioning in which role is a central concept.

3.5.9 ROLE CONSENSUS

Consensus is defined for operational purposes by Biddle and Thomas (1966: 33) as 'the degree of agreement of individuals on a given topic'. They list numerous classifications of the concept such as consensus of prescription, consensus of sanction and so on.¹⁰ Moreover, all such varieties of consensus can be covert (privately or implicitly held) which is the meaning of the term used in this study, or overt (publicly displayed). Even this formidable descriptive vocabulary needs to be added to though for there remain the two problems of the order of consensus and the question of position (Kerr, 1978: 307).

The order of consensus refers to not only the level of agreement but awareness of it too. First-order consensus concerns the degree of agreement of position incumbents A and B on an expectation or set of expectations for either A's or B's position. Thus it might be that very close agreement is found to exist between student teachers (A) and college lecturers (B) for a 'norm' such as 'a teacher should give pupils a great deal of rote learning in the basic subjects', or for a role sector such as 'Acting Towards Pupils' involving a set of such norms. On another level - second order consensus - agreement may (or may not) exist between the student teachers' perceptions of a particular norm or set of norms held by the lecturers in question. Thus student teachers might perceive that, to some specified degree, college lecturers agree, say, that extra academic work should not be used as a form of punishment by teachers, and college lecturers might (or might not) actually hold such a view. To the degree that the actual and

10. For a detailed description of these terms see Biddle and Thomas, 1966, pp. 26-28.

attributed norms do coincide, consensus of the second order can be said to exist. The relevance of perspectives other than that of straight agreement between position incumbents has been discussed previously using examples drawn from the work of Laing (1966). From these examples it will be apparent that though consensus can be measured at other levels, the difficulties of obtaining valid measurements of these meta-metaperspectives increase dramatically after the second order.¹¹ Operationally, to ascertain first order consensus, measures of their own norms or expectations must be taken for a norm (or an expectation) or set of such norms from two sets of position incumbents, while to determine second order consensus such measures must be taken for the actual norms of one set of position incumbents and the norms attributed by these incumbents to another set of position incumbents for the same norm or set of norms. Thus in the present study data gathered on students', lecturers' and teachers' own norms enable first order consensus to be measured while that gathered on students' attributed norms make possible the determination of second order consensus.

The question of position concerns determination of the relationships between the groups who define norms or expectations for a role or a role sector. Agreement amongst a set of position incumbents is referred to as intraposition consensus while agreement between two or more sets of position incumbents is termed interposition consensus (cf. Gross et al. 1958). The various orders of consensus

11. To test this notion the investigator did in fact ask a group of 10 lecturers to respond to the role norm inventory at the 3rd order consensus level (i.e. what lecturers thought a student teacher thought a primary teacher should do in respect of role behaviours). All respondents complained of the difficulty in holding in their heads what it was they were responding to.

can be investigated at both position levels. In this study, within-group and between-group consensus at the first order level is investigated with all respondent groups, and between-group consensus at both first and second order levels with the student teachers of the 1976 research.

To summarise, consensus can exist either within or between position incumbents on the levels of agreement, the correct attribution of agreement, and awareness of the correct attribution of agreement. The foregoing exposition should make clear the need for some precision in specifying just what is meant by the term 'consensus' in investigations such as this.

3.5.10 ROLE CONFLICT

An assumption underpinning most studies of role consensus is that, if agreement facilitates organizational functioning, disagreement or dissensus on roles may result in dysfunction. As Biddle et al. (1966: 303) point out, it may be second-order rather than first-order dissensus that causes the problems:

...groups of persons who are separated by physical or social distance may often hold quite distorted views of one another without engendering immediate problems. However, when subject and object persons are called upon to interact with each other, distortions of one anothers' views are likely to pose problems for both parties...

Indeed Price (1968) has reviewed numerous studies which do suggest just such a relationship between organizational effectiveness and consensus/dissensus. However the assumption that all lack of consensus results in conflict and that conflict is necessarily

dysfunctional for organizations has been labelled 'naive' by Westwood (1967b: 33). As has been intimated, complete consensus on role definition is scarcely likely for even the most rigidly defined of organizational roles. That certain types of role conflict can enhance organizational effectiveness through productive transformations and inventions has been demonstrated by Getzels (1963) while Kahn et al. (1964) have recognized that role conflict may result in organizational reform through creative problem solving. Merton (1957a: 116) too, has proposed that role conflict may actually reduce the problems of role incumbents when those of the role-set who impose contradictory demands become aware of these incompatibilities. Unquestioning assumption of the equation 'conflict equals organizational dysfunction' then, would appear to be untenable. Nevertheless, as a general proposition, the equation of role conflict and (by definition) trouble for the individual (Charters: 1963: 799) and, consequently for the organization of which he is part, appears to have substantial empirical support as the review of literature in the previous chapter has shown.

It appears to be the case that social systems impose conflicting expectations upon position incumbents and, consequently, ambivalence is built into the social structure (cf. Horowitz, 1962: 180). Though institutionalized mechanisms to reduce the likelihood and severity of conflict are also part of that structure (e.g. excuses, etiquette, tact - Toby, 1952: 325; role segregation, insulation and priorities - Bertrand, 1967: 282-5) position incumbents nonetheless may find themselves in situations where incompatible demands are made upon them. Though the term 'role conflict' has been given many different meanings by social scientists (see for example the discussion in

Gross et al., 1958: 244ff) the notion of incompatibility is central to all formulations. Jones (1970: 45) concludes that despite the disagreements about the precise conditions and pre-conditions of role conflict, most definitions have stressed the disparities in expectations¹² held or perceived to be held by and for position incumbents.

Charters (1963: 795) is careful to point out that while agreement and conflict both entail comparison of the expectations of position incumbents, a low level of agreement in expectations does not necessarily certify the existence of conflict, since disagreement can exist to varying degrees before reaching a state of incompatibility. The assertion of conflict therefore from any comparison of expectations can be problematic. Definitions of role conflict can embrace both subjectively experienced incompatibility requiring data to be taken only from occupants of the position being investigated, or objectively demonstrated incompatibility, requiring measurement of the expectations of groups other than that of the focal position. Studies like the present investigation which gather such data are referred to as 'perceptual' studies and should, realistically, be regarded as revealing potential rather than actual role conflicts. To establish the fact of conflict the investigator needs to demonstrate that conflicting expectations somehow either manifest themselves in actual behaviour or, at least, are felt to be problems, in which case terms such as 'role strain' and 'role stress' become appropriate (cf. Grace, 1972: 2). Whereas interview techniques have been used to establish that perceived problems

12. For ease of reading, now that 'norm' and 'expectation' as used in this investigation have been defined, the generic term 'expectation' which is widely used in the literature will henceforth be used (cf. Biddle, 1980: 133). Where the term 'expectation' appears then, the reader could read 'norm/expectation' (except where specifically indicated) in the context of this study.

are actually felt to be burdensome (e.g. by Gross et al., 1958), Biddle's review of teacher roles reported that, to that date (1969) 'no study has appeared in which teacher-role performances were observed directly' (Biddle, 1969: 1440). No doubt this reflects amongst other things the prohibitive cost and the daunting methodological problems and logistics of mounting and carrying through such research. However, whereas the paucity of such research leaves open the question of the precise relationships between expectations and behaviour, the reasonable assumption of conformity to role expectations continues to be made, though it is widely recognised that such conformity is a variable, as has been mentioned.

A major distinction of conceptual and empirical import in role-conflict studies is made between inter-role conflict which 'is due to simultaneous occupancy of two or more positions having incompatible expectations' (Sarbin and Allen, 1968: 540) and intra-role conflict which refers to conflict arising (from numerous sources) within a specific role. The former thus concerns the occupancy of multiple positions (e.g. instructor and officer - Getzels and Guba, 1955) and has generated numerous studies over a longer period than has the latter which developed with the concept of roles being segmented (Dahrendorf, 1958: 54) thus representing a more recent shift toward the study of conflict within a single position (Grace, 1972: 3-4). An example of this latter is Gross et al.'s (1958) School Superintendent faced with resolving incompatible expectations from different members of his role set such as the school board and teachers. As Sarbin and Allen (1968: 540) make clear, intra-role conflict is inherent in the role definition of some positions, amongst which, as mentioned, is that of teacher (cf. Wilson, 1962).

A useful typology of incompatibilities inherent in the teacher role has been proposed by Kelsall and Kelsall (1969: 52ff). Their concern, as primarily in this investigation, is with perceived rather than actual conflict. Since most of the types of incompatibilities discussed by Kelsall and Kelsall are of possible relevance for analysis of the data of this study some will be considered below using hypothetical examples involving the Foskett inventory items and the student teacher/lecturer/teacher relationships to illustrate.

The first two kinds of incompatibility involve the perception of internal inconsistencies amongst the members of a reference group (that is, a role-set group) by a position-incumbent (or incumbents). For example, the student teacher on his first practice teaching session may perceive that his supervising teacher wants him both to experiment with new teaching techniques as often as possible (thus exposing him, the neophyte, to uncharted problems) and, simultaneously, to keep order - if necessary through various punitive devices such as extra academic work. While there may be no problem for the experienced teacher in reconciling these expectations, they might be considered as very nearly mutually exclusive by the inexperienced student teacher. The first type of incompatibility concerns his correct perception of such expectations (that is, his supervising teacher actually holds them) whilst the second type concerns his incorrect perception of these expectations. In both cases the student's views will be essentially the same though the eventual outcomes might differ.

The next two types of incompatibility are the correct and incorrect perception by a position incumbent or incumbents of incompatibilities between reference groups. For instance, the student-teacher might perceive that whereas his supervising teacher expects him to give pupils a great deal of rote learning in the basic subjects, his college supervisor expects the very opposite, preferring to emphasise discovery methods perhaps. This is but one of many possible examples of this kind of incompatibility and whatever the situation, the position incumbent is, from his own standpoint, faced with the problem of trying to please two masters. If accurate in his perceptions it may devolve upon the conflicting role-set members to solve the problem, assuming they are aware of it. However, such an assumption cannot automatically be made and the problem may be left for the focal position incumbent to resolve. If his perceptions are inaccurate the situation can be equally problematic. Taking the example used above, if the student teacher wrongly perceives his supervising teacher to favour rote learning but decides that, of his two masters he will please his teacher rather than lecturer, then he will end up pleasing neither. Clearly there are numerous variations on this theme most of which involve at least the possibility of trouble for the individual in the focal position.

Finally, other types of incompatibility occur where the position incumbent's own norms/expectations and those he correctly or incorrectly attributes to significant others conflict. For example, the student teacher might perceive that both his supervising teacher and college lecturer insist on the making and following of detailed lesson plans whereas he himself would prefer to teach more spontaneously,

dealing with each learning situation as it arises. If correct in his perceptions, the student may feel constrained to teach in a manner anathema to the way he would like to teach, with serious possible consequences. Alternatively, he might risk teaching the way he wishes to with probably subsequent condemnation from his supervisors if his work falls short of their required standard. If incorrect in his perceptions, the student might run the risk of being regarded as 'unadventurous' or 'overly formal' by his supervisors in teaching the way he sees them as wanting him to teach. If, on the other hand, he teaches as he thinks his supervisors do not want him to teach, their subsequent behaviour might easily be regarded by the student as 'weak' or 'hypocritical'.

It is emphasised that these are merely hypothetical examples of some of the possible consequences of the incompatibilities inherent in the teacher role. For clarity of exposition and analysis, the typology assumes the enactment of only one role and therefore does not account for the many possible conflicts that can arise through the occupancy of multiple positions. The examples given serve to underscore the potential that exists in the teacher role for both intra-role conflicts (that is, conflicts arising from a number of possible sources within a specific role) and inter-role conflicts (that is, conflicts that 'occur when a person occupies two or more positions simultaneously and when the role expectations of one are incompatible with the role expectations of the other' - Sarbin, 1954: 228).

3.5.11 ACCURACY AND VERIDICALITY

Clearly, it should be a matter for concern that role conflict can arise from incorrect as well as correct perceptions, for it should be possible to rectify incorrect definitions of the situation and so help remove the source of conflict. In this study the term 'accuracy' has so far been used to designate the correctness, or otherwise, of perceptions since this is a widely understood term. However, Biddle (1980: 186-7) distinguishes between the concept of accuracy which he uses to refer to comparisons between someone's overt characteristics and the expectations that describe them, and 'veridicality' which refers to the relationship between another's expectations and the attributed expectations that purport to describe them. This is a technical, but necessary distinction which must be borne in mind here for, strictly speaking, though reference is made to the accuracy of students' perceptions (using 'accuracy' in the lay sense of the word), the concern is with how veridical those perceptions are.

In his most recent work on nonveridical expectations Biddle (1980: 192-3) categorises five types of what Schanck (1932) originally termed 'pluralistic ignorance'. Each of these are likely to arise from different conditions and to have different effects. For example the type labelled 'contrast' (Biddle, 1980: 193) reflects a situation in which a position incumbent (A) attributes to another position incumbent (B) an expectation in a direction opposite to that which characterises the relationship between A's own expectation and B's actual expectation. Thus a student teacher might attribute to a teacher more approval than the student himself holds for say, the use of corporal punishment as a disciplinary measure; the teacher

however may be less approving in fact than the student. Such a situation is more likely of occurrence according to Sherif and Hovland (1961) when the person to whom the erroneous expectation is attributed is disliked. The other kinds of pluralistic ignorance listed (see Biddle, 1980: 193) are 'false differentiation' where a gap between expectations is attributed but does not exist, 'disparity reversal' where an expectation is attributed in the wrong direction, 'projective distortion' where no difference is attributed but does in fact exist, and 'assimilation' where another's view is seen as closer than it is. A classification like this indubitably permits of more precise analysis of data patterns and the possible explanations for and consequences of such patterns.

3.6 SUMMARY AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

While role as a developing theory has attracted some just and serious criticisms - especially concerning its alleged mechanistic and dehumanised representation of man - it is reasonable to say that in its educational applications it has, as Jackson (1972: 6) observes, moved away from the sort of 'simplistic' determinist analysis of social position and role occupant' which earlier drew the wrath of some commentators. Shortcomings of theory and disagreements about the status of role in the social sciences have not prevented the widespread and oftentimes fruitful application in educational contexts of the concepts and vocabulary of role. Biddle (1980) sums up this position:

Consider education. Given that teaching involves role behaviours on the part of both teachers and pupils, and that teaching goes on within a context of demands and beliefs, it is possible to view much of education within a role framework. And for this reason, scores of studies have now been conducted using role concepts. (Biddle, 1980: 12)

However, since in the role literature the use of those concepts has been characterised by confusion and ambiguity, it is necessary for studies such as the one reported here to show clearly the sense in which key ideas have been employed. These important concepts used in this investigation were stated at the beginning of this chapter and, by way of summary, are reiterated here.

This investigation constitutes an exploration of certain aspects of the normative world - that is, a network of norms and expectations - of the student teacher. It examines, primarily by means of a role norm inventory, student teachers', lecturers', and teachers' perceptions of the focal position of the primary teacher (the students' future role). As well, it investigates the norms attributed by students to the lecturers and teachers who are perhaps the most influential of the significant others of the pre-service years, and the accuracy of those perceptions. It also investigates disparities between students' own norms (norms held for self) and own expectations (expectations held for self). In sum, it is student teachers' definition of the situation concerning their future role and the impress of their lecturers and practising teachers which is the major concern of the study. Inevitably then, the study entails analysis of consensus on role expectations, potential role conflict (perceived and actual) and the veridicality of role perceptions.

The foregoing review of some of the salient literature associated with role as applied to educational and other contexts has attempted to indicate the utility of the concepts underlined above in studies such as this concerned with one aspect of occupational socialisation. At the same time, it has aimed at clarifying the way in which those concepts have been applied in this investigation and has thus served to orientate the research, facilitate operationalisation of key ideas and, hopefully, ensure that the results of the study may be interpreted with minimal ambiguity.