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Plotting Conflict

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Conflict management is an important issue in library management. Therefore, it is curious that so little seems to have been published about understanding and managing conflict in libraries.[1] In the present article, we seek to bridge the gap between conflict theory and library practice by orienting several published explanatory conflict models according to two axioms: (1) conflict invariably involves more than one person; and (2) entanglement implies intersection because there can be no interaction unless paths converge. These axioms in no way imply that intersects are necessarily dysfunctional, for management theory accepts that controlled, creative competition is a form of productive, stimulating conflict and, as an extension of natural self-interest, a healthy indication of autonomy.

Conflict can delay or prevent the achievement of organizational objectives and personal goals, and from that standpoint it is unproductive. Yet conflict can promote innovation, creativity, and the development of new ideas that make organizational growth possible. From that standpoint, conflict is useful.[2]

For this article, the crucial point is that, as Blake and Mouton recognized over thirty years ago,[3] every conflict, whether creative or dysfunctional, involves the intersection of two or more interests. Having initially graphed the organizational relationship between people and production, Blake and Mouton developed a conflict grid and produced a film examining the implications of the grid approach to conflict resolution.[4] Their grids galvanized management thinking when they first appeared and, while they may be largely forgotten, their importance, if not their impact, remains.[5]

Surprisingly, the graph approach to conflict has engendered very little published interest in librarianship, even though conflict is as prevalent in libraries as in other organizations. Moreover, while much has been written on library management theory without adding much that is applicable to library practice, the graphic approach to conflict in libraries lends itself to case studies. Here, conflict theory is illustrated in a series of hypothetical scenarios, typical of library situations. Each scenario is discussed in terms of a specific management theory and the theories are transposed into useful management tools by plotting each situation along relevant axes.[6] The reader may review each event against a conceptual grid to provide theoretical validity to solutions of everyday problems.

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First Scenario: Following the Rules

"Do you mean to tell me, Mary Lee, that you limited one of our trustees to four books?" gasped Cora Smith in disbelief. "Dr. Highboy is furious and I don't blame him. I leave you in charge for ten minutes and you insult a member of the board. You just never think things through."

"But the rules set a four-book limit, Mrs. Smith," responded Mary Lee miserably.

"Surely even you can understand that the rules don't apply to Dr. Highboy," said Cora. "Fortunately he's a forgiving man, and after I told him that this was your first time in charge, and that you'd be given a reprimand, he agreed to forget the incident. So this time you get off lightly; but from now on, check with me before you make even the smallest decision. Okay?"

The Underlying Theory

There is an old monologue by comedian Bob Newhart in which a driving instructor advises his inept pupil that, as long as they remain parked on a safety island, they're not in anybody's way—and certainly one way of avoiding conflict is to keep out of everybody's way. However, few of us have the option of removing ourselves from the traffic of life, and the

type of disagreement exemplified in the first scenario is commonplace enough. What, then, are the points of view that "crossed each other" in this scenario and what is their theoretical context?

Cora Smith (supported by Dr. Highboy) has one set of expectations in this case, deriving in part from her employer role, while employee Mary Lee's behavior is shaped by another set. From a practical point of view it doesn't matter which expectations are the more ethically "correct." What does matter is that the conflict in this case stems from incompatible expectations that must be more or less reconciled if conflict is to be avoided. One theoretical construct which may be useful in resolving the present case is that of situational management, as proposed by Hersey and Blanchard.[7]

Hersey and Blanchard postulate four levels of work maturity, which is a combination of job maturity (knowledge of the job and its place in the organization) and psychological maturity (or self-confidence), and four styles of management: (S1) telling; (S2) selling; (S3) participating; and (S4) delegating. In contrast to most earlier management theorists, Hersey and Blanchard invoke no single "best" way to manage people, but believe that, in any given situation, a supervisor's management style should match the employee's level of work maturity. If an employee (probably, but not necessarily, a novice) is at the first level of work maturity (M1), with only a rudimentary knowledge of the job and lacking self-confidence, it will be dysfunctional to expect that employee to be able to participate in management decisions, let alone to be entrusted with delegated authority. The effective management style for an M1 employee is to tell him or her what to do. In other words, M1 maturity requires S1 (telling) management. M2 maturity requires S2 (selling) management. M3 maturity requires S3 (participating) management, and M4 maturity (which involves thorough knowledge of the job and its relationship to all aspects of the organization) requires an S4 (delegating) management style. If style and maturity match, management will be effective. This ideal is described in figure 1. The vertical axis represents situational management styles; the horizontal axis represents levels of work maturity,[8] and the A/B diagonal represents perfect M1/S1, M2/S2,
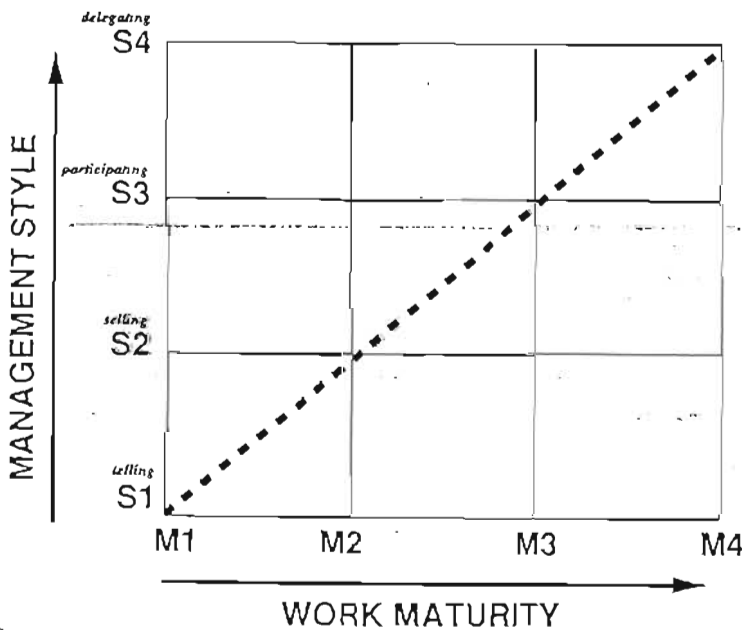

Figure 1. Situational Management

M3/S3, and M4/S4 matches. In this discussion, M1, M2, M3, and M4 are considered to be points along the continuum of an employee's work maturation. Similarly, a manager's style may be diagnosed anywhere along a continuum between a predominantly S1, telling style and an S4, delegating style.

One of the most useful attributes of situational management theory is that it can be used to identify *both* management styles *and* levels of work maturity exhibited in a case so that they can be plotted in terms of a telling/selling/participating/delegating continuum and of an M1/M2/M3/M4 progression. In figure 2, possible diagnoses of Cora Smith's management style are plotted on the X axis and diagnoses of Mary Lee's work maturity level are plotted on the Y axis. The graph permits us to readily observe both the magnitude and direction by which the intersect of management style and employee maturity veers from the A/B diagonal once a diagnosis is established.

There will almost certainly be differences between readers' analysis of this first scenario. Most will agree that Mary Lee is exhibiting M2 or even M3 work maturity and plot her at the second or third level on the X axis. However, some may see Cora Smith as exhibiting a telling (S1) management style, and thus plot her style at S1 on the Y axis (see point A [Analysis #1] illustrated in figure 2, below), while others (such as participants at a recent workshop which discussed the Smith/Lee scenario) may feel that Cora Smith initially practiced S4 management by leaving Mary Lee alone, reverting to S1 management only when Mary made an allegedly incorrect decision (see point B [Analysis #2] in figure 2, below). On the given facts, either diagnosis is plausible. In an actual case, a manager would continue to monitor the situation in order to conclude which diagnosis best fit the circumstances. In all such analyses, however, the intersect of Smith's management style and Lee's work maturity in figure 2 departs from the optimal diagonal, which means that the plot explains and predicts conflict. Moreover, an important feature of figure 2 is that the probable severity of the conflict can be seen by measuring the distance of the intersect from the diagonal. This distance represents the incongruity of the situation.

Possible Resolutions of the First Scenario

As noted earlier, conflict resolution involves "developing a match" between manager and subordinate, thereby bringing the point of intersection between the values of the management style variable and the work maturity variable in our graph as close to the diagonal as possible. In the first scenario, either Smith's management style or Lee's work maturity, or both, should be modified so that they fit together at either the S1/M1 or S2/M2 or S3/M3 or S4/M4 intersect.[9] If there is no movement closer to the diagonal through these points, the potential for conflict remains. Under analysis number one of this scenario, we must either lower the higher value of Lee's level of work maturity (to point C in figure 2) or raise the low value of Smith's management style (to point D in figure 2). If the former, a fit *is* achieved but at the cost of putting Mary Lee's work maturity at an M1 level. Henceforth, Lee will "do what she's told," with a consequent stifling of job satisfaction and organizational creativity. This is indeed a frequent way of resolving such conflict (1) because the solution confirms the ascendancy of the
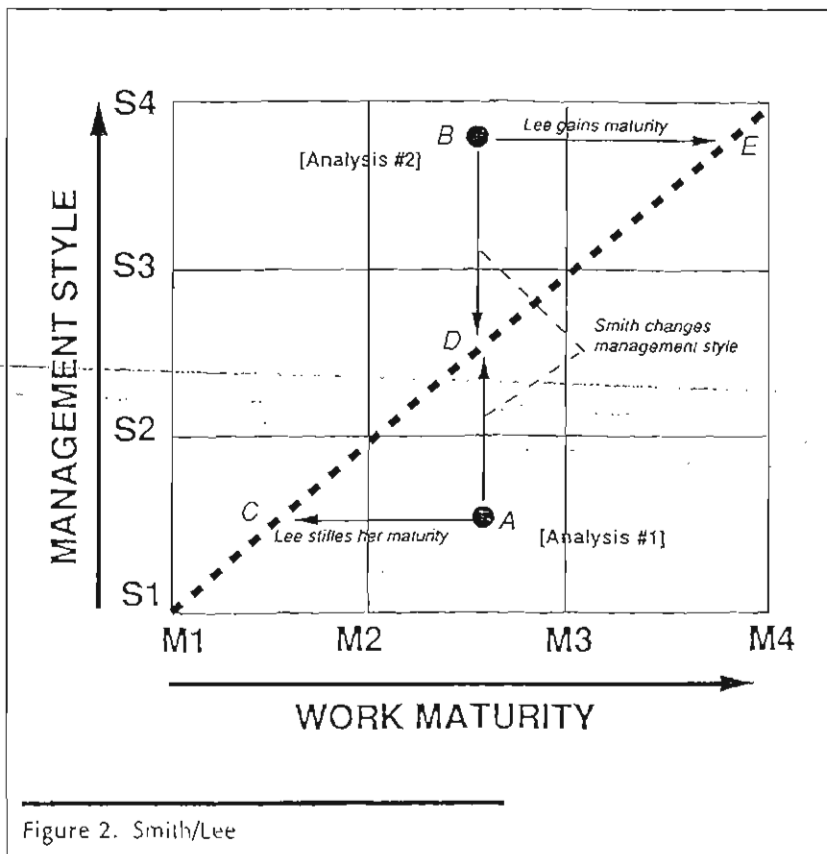

Figure 2. Smith/Lee

hierarchy, and (2) because it is also the consequence of "doing nothing" (unless, of course, doing nothing leads Mary to resign).

Unfortunately, an attempt to raise Cora Smith's management style may be more difficult than an attempt to reduce our expectation of Mary Lee's work maturity. Not only is administrative status involved, but there is also the added complexity that Smith's S1 style is appropriate *when she is dealing with M1 work maturity*. While we are not trying to eliminate Cora's S1 style completely, we hope to add range and flexibility to her management style. This is not easy, but it is an essential component of effective management.

If analysis number two is the correct diagnosis for this situation, then either Smith should adapt her management style to drop back to an S2 or S3 style (again intersecting the diagonal at point D in figure 2), or Lee's work maturity must increase (to point E in figure 2). As in the first analysis, the optimal approach under the second analysis is to alter the manager's style rather than the employee's work maturity. Indeed, under this second analysis, it would probably

be unrealistic to expect Lee to gain a higher level of work maturity until she has had more experience in the job.

Second Scenario: Conflict at Pace

Helen Grant, head of interlibrary loans (ILL) at the Pace Public Library, and Martin Small, head of circulation at Pace, do not get along. They disagree over the loan periods for materials lent on ILL. They disagree over the hours their departments should be open. Indeed, they disagree fundamentally about the value of ILL. According to Small, a library should be self-sufficient and not use ILL. Grant contends that libraries should share resources whenever possible and that ILL is a major part of library service. At the Pace Public Library, for example, ILL's share of the common facilities is totally inadequate and Grant needs much of the space now-occupied by the circulation department. Small agrees that the desk space is inadequate but feels that circulation is being squeezed, not ILL. Each department head feels understaffed and both discourage interdepartmental cooperation. Both agree on one thing: the Director's wish to downsize by sharing resources between the two departments is unworkable. They go to the Director's office to offer their views on the proposed merger, but before they can speak, the Director preempts the meeting by asking them to explain a public disagreement that they had earlier that day.

The Underlying Theory

Often people with different goals find themselves in conflict. The probability of conflict increases if the individuals concerned work in close proximity and need many of the same resources. In other words, as Richard Eggleton discussed many years ago, competition for limited resources, interdependence of activities, and antithetical goals all increase the probability of conflict.[10]

The purpose of this article is to discuss the approaches to solutions, whereas Eggleton's model was designed to focus on the genesis of problems. Therefore, we must start by reducing the complexity of his graphical model. Geometrically, this can be accomplished by taking the sums of two of his three axes and combining them into one, because two of the three axes in Eggleton's model, "activity interdependence" and "resource sharing," are structural decisions taken by management. On the
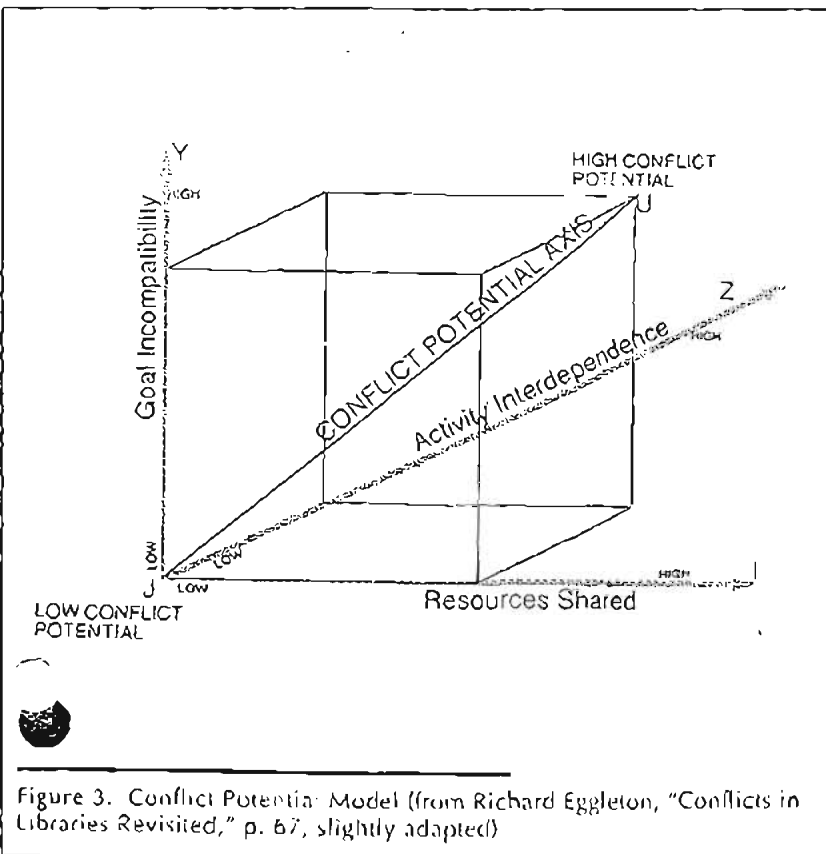

Figure 3. Conflict Potential Model (from Richard Eggleton, "Conflicts in Libraries Revisited," p. 67, slightly adapted)

other hand, the third axis, "goal compati-
bility," represents a factor which involves
the employee as a prerequisite. Conceptu-
lly, then, a new factor can represent the
degree of "activity interdependence"
(Eggleton's Z axis) and the degree of
"resource sharing" (Eggleton's I axis):

*new factor = activity interdependence + re-
sources shared*

This "new factor" can form a single
axis for our new diagrammatic repre-
sentation. However, we must further
adapt Eggleton's model to allow us to
use it in conflict resolution, since it was
originally designed to predict conflict.
Therefore, we decided to make the axes
that we will use reverse the direction of
one of Eggleton's axes. Whereas Eggleton
graphed "activity interdependence" from
low to high and "resource shared" from
low to high (refer to figure 3), we prefer
to concentrate on the combination of ac-
tivity independence and resource inde-
pendence as the factor we call "job inde-
pendence." Here, we use the goal axis as
our X axis, and move the management-
controlled "job independence" to the Y
axis, just as the management-controlled
variable of "management style" was
aphed on the Y axis in the previous
Blake-Mouton model discussed above.

This adaptation of Eggleton's repre-
sentation indicates that harmony will in-
crease (and, conversely, conflict will de-
crease) as job independence and goal
compatibility increase. The diagonal in
our new, two-dimensional representation
becomes an indicator of "harmony" (see
figure 4) whereas Eggleton showed a
"conflict potential axis" running from
point J to point U in his three-dimen-
sional representation (see figure 3). This
approach is now more accessible to a
manager who is looking for solutions to
particular situations. The analysis is
shown in a form identical to the form pre-
sented above for using situational man-
agement theory (figures 1 and 2).

It is easier to determine in a particu-
lar situation whether the variables in-
volved invoke analysis under one or the
other model: factors involving manage-
ment style and employee work maturity
can be considered and the implications of
adjusting behavior along those lines
aluated; then factors involving job in-
dependence and goal compatibility can
be considered and the implications of
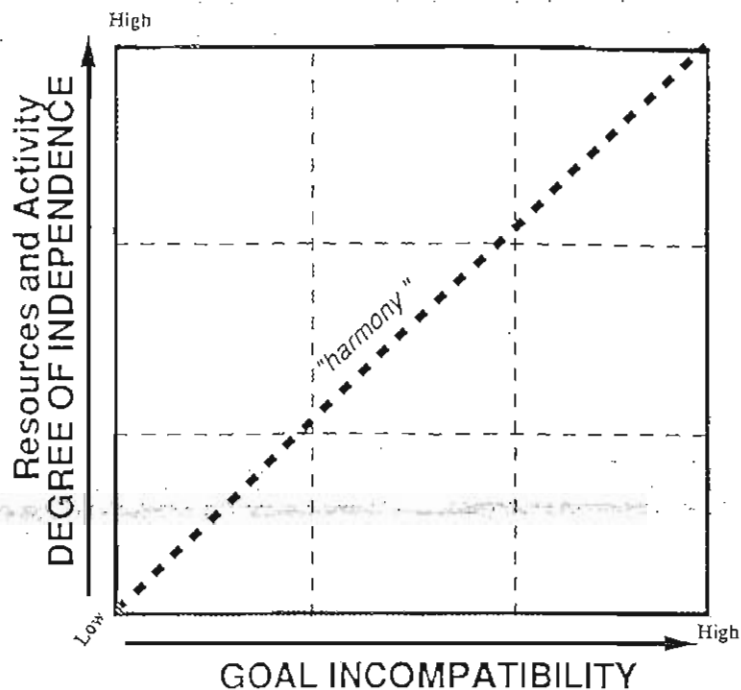changes along these lines predicted using

Figure 4. Conflict Resolution Potential

the same type of analysis.[11] We suggest
that this type of consideration can give
practitioners a clearer indication of the
probable outcomes of their actions in a
particular situation, thus making the use
of management theory easier.

Possible Resolution of the Second
Scenario

The Director assumes that this is a situ-
ation of interpersonal conflict: a problem
of conflicting personalities. However,
without condoning public tantrums, we
suggest that the evidence obtained by
plotting the Grant/Small variables sug-
gests that the Director is in error (see fig-
ure 5).

If we are correct in our interpretation
of figure 5, the theoretical construct un-
derlying this case is important to the Di-
rector. Since personality conflict is not, as
she thought, the underlying problem at
the library, the departure or relocation of
either Small or Grant will not resolve the
problem. Instead the Director must ad-
dress the broader issues of conflicting
goals and resources. Moreover, figure 5

Harmony will
increase (and)
conversely,
conflict will
decrease as job
independence
and goal
compatibility
increase.

provides the Director with a clear sense of direction by relating present and ideal states.

As figure 5 shows, whether or not there is a natural antipathy between Small and Grant, the probability is that they will be unable to work together harmoniously. Their activities and resources are highly interdependent and their level of goal incompatibility is high. As she plots Small and Grant's situation on the graph, the Director should realize that to move the department heads towards resolution, one must either increase their individual independence in terms of activities and resources or enhance the degree to which their goals are mutually compatible. Either approach will keep their relationship on the diagonal ("harmony") and reduce the conflict between them.

The Context of the Third Scenario

The third case presented here concerns the fictional Franklin Green and draws on the very real finding of Eldred Smith who noted that, among lower-ranking librarians, the frustration of professional values and aspirations frequently leads to apathy, alienation, and hostility.[12]

5. Grant/Small
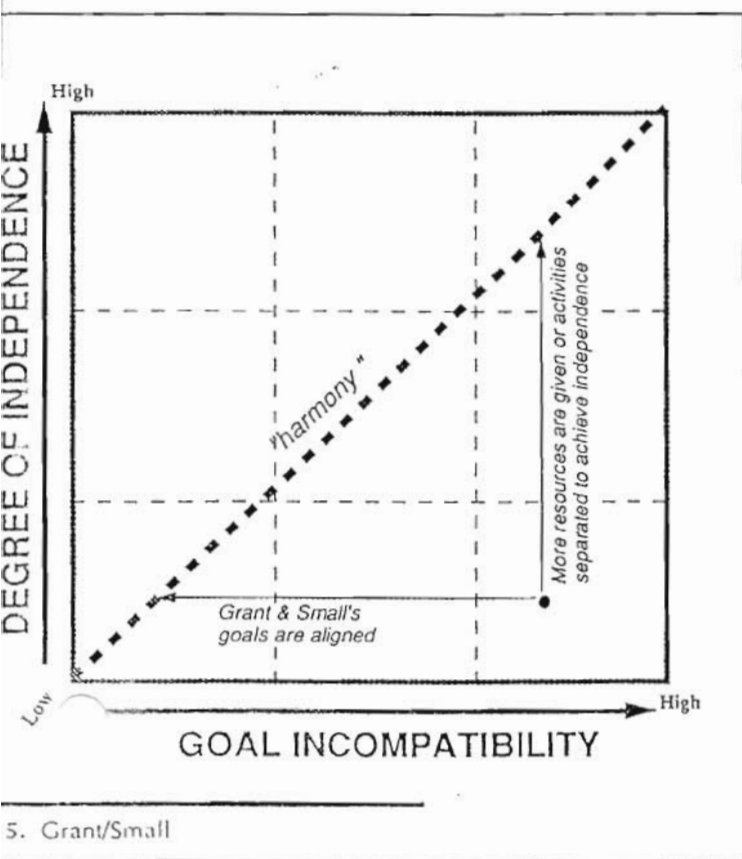
Franklin Green joined the staff of Universal University Library with two graduate degrees: a Master of Arts in political science and also a very recent M.L.S. Universal had, for years, tended to promote internally and its staff, with an average age of fifty-two, was conditioned to accept the status ladder of a rigid hierarchy. Green thought new librarians were treated as organizational nonentities, with no foothold at all on the decision-making ladder. Not surprisingly, possessing neither rank nor seniority, Green resented the library's exclusive focus on these two attributes when assessing the merits of contributions made. Green began to make fewer contributions to decision-making discussions.

In scaling back his contributions to decision-making discussions, Green unwittingly began to demonstrate the Expectancy Theory of Victor Vroom.[13]

Vroom's Expectancy Theory

Vroom postulates two levels of motivation outcomes: a first-level outcome (FLO) involves organizational expectations and a second-level motivation outcome (SLO) involves personal and social expectations. Vroom's formula[14] to explain this relationship may be simplified as follows:

FORCE = VALENCE x EXPECTANCY x INSTRUMENTALITY

- FORCE is motivation to FLO.
- VALENCE is desire for SLO.
- EXPECTANCY is perceived probability that action A will lead to FLO.
- INSTRUMENTALITY is perceived probability that FLO is related to SLO.

Plotting the Third Scenario

The valence element of this equation is a matter of the employee's own psychology.[15] Indeed, Vroom himself wrote of his work that "[t]his book has been directed toward filling in part of the middle ground between the science of psychology and technologies for influencing human behaviour."[16] However, management can certainly play a role in shaping the employee's perceptions of the work environment, and, therefore, play a role in the expectancy and instrumentality variables in the Vroom equation. Figure 6 illustrates the relationship between the variables in Vroom's thesis that can be used to assist managers in diagnosing motivational problems. The level of the

employee's desire for related second-level outcomes (SLO) can be plotted along the X axis. The library's attempts to create motivational force toward organizational outcomes (FLO) can be plotted along the Y axis. The other two variables in Vroom's equation are directly related to the values of FLO (it will be recalled that expectancy is the perceived probability that action A will lead to FLO) and SLO (expectancy, again, is the perceived probability that FLO is related to SLO). The slope of the diagonal *line q* in figure 6 is the value of the product of the value of the expectancy and instrumentality levels in any situation. Mathematically, this value must lie between 0 and 1 (and can never be negative).

It is possible, however, as illustrated by point A in our figure 6, for situations to be discovered upon analysis to lie above our diagonal *line q* in figure 6. Such cases must represent situations where the organization's attempts to use positive motivation to achieve FLO are frustrated. For example, an organization may try to create improved job performance (a first-level outcome). A particular employee, however, may view a promotion as involving more additional responsibility than the employee wants, or the employee might feel that the additional hours of work would interfere with family and/or friendships. The employee's lack of interest in promotion (a second-level outcome) will undermine the motivational effect of organization's attempt to promote the first-level outcome. Indeed, if the library insists on promoting the reluctant employee, the employee's performance in that position will not be positively motivated, but rather, the performance will be motivated negatively by such concerns as a fear of job loss. This is the type of situation represented at point A in figure 6. It is important that a library manager distinguish this type of situation from a situation involving positive motivation. In this type of case, the incongruence between the institution's motivation structure and the employee's own values will cause the employee to experience conflict and stress.

On the other hand, returning to the scenario presented involving Green, the library wants to engender professional conduct in its librarians—a first-level outcome. In hiring Green, it has an opportunity to achieve that objective because Green has come into the library with a
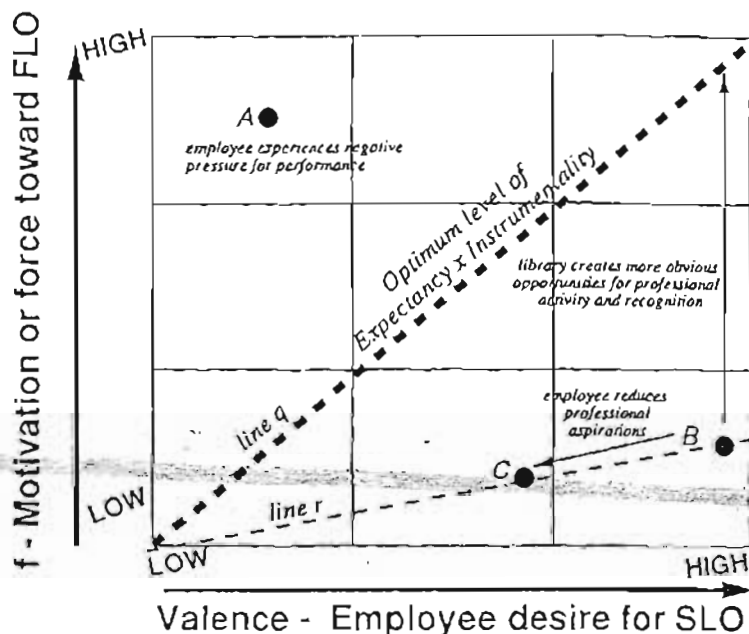

Figure 6. From Vroom's Motivation Theory

strong desire for professional recognition—a second-level outcome. This means that the values of SLO and FLO are positively related and, therefore, the value of the product of expectancy and instrumentality will fall on or below *line q*. Green's positive attitude gives a positive valence factor. However, the rigid hierarchy in the library is giving Green the perception that his attempts at professional contributions to decision making are not considered to be professional conduct. This means that the expectancy value in the formula is reducing the possible motivational force toward the first-level objective (FLO). Moreover, the scenario seems to suggest that Green is being given the impression in the library that his professional conduct, the desired first-level outcome, will not lead to professional recognition (the second-level outcome) and therefore, the value of the instrumentality variable will also be lower than optimal. The values of these two variables, expectancy and instrumentality, are directly related to the degree of success in the attempts to achieve first-level outcomes. The slope of the line combining expectancy and instrumentality for Green is less than optimal because Green's perceptions of his organizational

environment are leading him to conclude that the probabilities of direct relationships between his actions and FLO (expectancy) and between FLO and SLO (instrumentality) are both less than optimal. In graphic terms, this would mean that the slope of the actual representation in this case of the product of instrumentality multiplied by expectancy would be less than one and, therefore, the graphic representation of the line on which this situation would be plotted must fall below the optimal *line q* in figure 6—perhaps at *line r*, as illustrated.

From the current scenario, at least two possible futures for Green and the library can be postulated. On one hand, it is possible that, given time, Green's aspirations could fade. However, from an institutional point of view, this is not the best outcome.

If point B on *line r* represents the values of the relationship between Green's desire for SLO (along the X axis) and the force or motivation toward the library's FLO (along the Y axis), then it can be seen that Green's reduced desire for SLO (caused by his loss of professional aspiration) will move the point of intersection between the X and Y variables back along *line r*, perhaps to point C, shown in figure 6. This will necessarily reduce the value of the motivation force toward FLO (the value of Y in this situation), which will make it more difficult for the library to achieve that FLO.

This version of the future has high costs in the long term, then, both for the organization and the employee, although it does avoid the conflict inherent in situations that fall above the diagonal in figure 6, such as point A (discussed above). Indeed, while conflict between Green and other employees may be minimized and some progress toward institutional goals still achieved, the distance from the optimum level of expectancy times instrumentality is not reduced (that is, the gap between *line q* and *line r* is not closed). Such a gap (which represents the degree of misperception on the part of the employee of the relationship between the institution's goals and the employee's personal goals, or of misperception of the possible effect of the employee's own actions on the institution's goals, or of misperception of both) often lies at the root of the much-discussed problem of employee burnout.[17]

On the other hand, what would the implications be for the library if, instead of forcing a new employee like Green to lower his expectations, the organization took steps to ensure that the expectations of employees were clearly matched by an understanding by employees of the ways that they can contribute to the institution's goals (optimal expectancy) and an understanding and respect in the institution of the relationship between organizational and personal professional goals (optimal instrumentality)? In terms of motivational analysis, such a change would clearly be the optimal solution for the employee and the organization (bringing the situation from point B on *line r* to a point on *line q* in figure 6) since maximum compatibility between the employee's desire for second-level outcomes (personal and social) and the institution's efforts to achieve first-level outcomes would be achieved.

In considering this model, it may be well to recall that personal needs can only be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Therefore, the appropriate remedy for conflict over the defined status of professionals, which has beset the organization's relationship with Green, may be solved through changes instituted organization-wide, but only an individual solution is necessary to solve the case. An organization-wide change may create more problems than it solves unless a case-by-case, cumulative analysis indicates that all employees to be affected will benefit. It is suggested that recognition of professional status is, perhaps, at its highest priority for employees when the attainment of that status is freshest. Therefore, it may be most important that the library recognize this status in its newest professionals, while for more seasoned veterans other priorities and attitudes may be more personally important. This is, perhaps, why the traditional recognition of valuable service through promotion in supervisory rank sometimes backfires, because the employee's needs are not really being met through the increased burden of responsibility
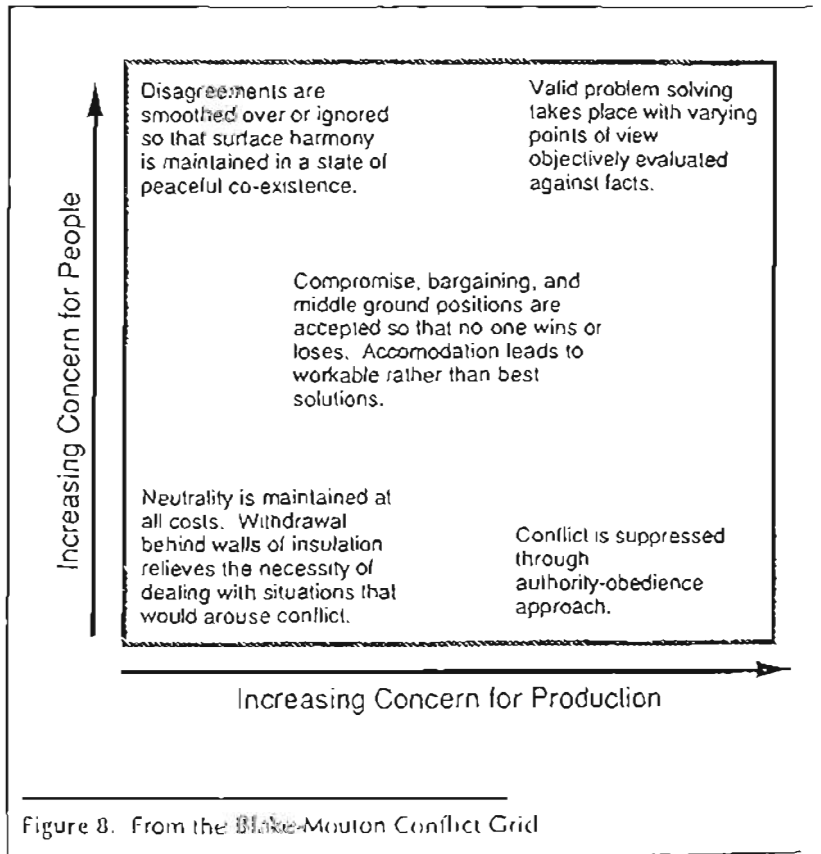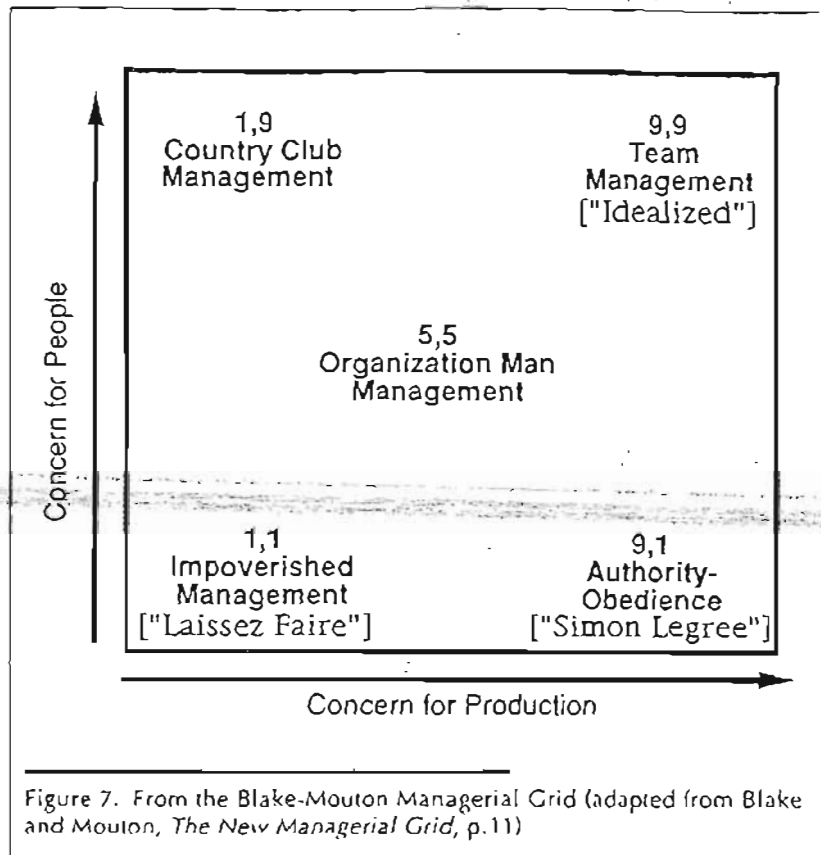
To return to our earlier theme, this graphic rendering of Vroom's theory, in the same form as the first two theories, makes thinking about the possible applicability of this motivational analysis in a particular situation easier, as one can also conveniently compare the possibility of a

~situational management approach, or an .ggleton-type solution.

Conclusion

We have discussed three different origins of organizational conflict—mismatches between management style and work maturity, problems of goal incompatibility and resource and activity independence, and less-than-optimal congruence between organizational and personal motivators. But the three cases are enough to demonstrate five propositions: first, that conflict always involves two or more variables; second, that the variables can be represented graphically; third, that compromise positions can be plotted along a (0,0) to (n,n) axis; fourth, that existing relationships can be plotted and their intersects shown in relationship to an ideal position and to various possible compromise positions; and fifth, that the means of "improving" an existing relationship (i.e., of moving the intersect toward the diagonal or compromise, and then along the diagonal toward the n,n corner) is explicit in a correctly labeled graph. In the presented cases, details are absent; but in a true scenario they should be documented, quantified, synthesized, and plotted. In the final scenario, for example, the relevant second-level outcome should be carefully defined and measured, and reduced to a single signifier: What is important to the employee? What are the employee's personal and vocational ambitions? On a scale, how important are such factors as professional status, money, friends, family, and hobbies? Averaged out, such values might provide an indicative "SLO value." Similarly, what is the "FLO value" of the library? What is the management prepared to offer its employees to try to achieve optimal expectancy and instrumentality levels (one response might be "unlimited voluntary overtime")? How does the organization attempt to motivate? How does it reward achievement?

In their initial management grid (mentioned at the beginning of this article), Blake and Mouton postulated a productivity axis and a personnel axis. They then plotted four opposing management styles: a 9,1 ("Simon Legree") style, which stresses production at the expense of personnel; a 1,9 ("Country Club")

Figure 7. From the Blake-Mouton Managerial Grid (adapted from Blake and Mouton, *The New Managerial Grid*, p.11)

Figure 8. From the Blake-Mouton Conflict Grid

style, which places human relations ahead of production; a 1,1 ("Laissez Faire") style, which is interested in neither production nor personnel; and a 9,9 ("Idealized") style, which attempts to optimize both production and human relations (see figure 7).

Blake and Mouton believed that "a 9,1-oriented manager strives to be powerful, to control, and to dominate. He is driven to win and to prove himself capable of mastering all, submitting to nothing and no one."[18] "A 9,1-oriented manager believes the attitudes and feelings of subordinates are of the utmost importance. When relationships are accepting, he feels emotionally secure."[19] "He rarely generates conflict, but when it does appear, either between himself and others or between others in his presence, he tries to soothe bad feelings."[20] As for a 1,1-oriented manager, "[t]hough he has emotionally resigned and retreated into indifference, ... [his] motivation is to stay in the system .... He expects little and gives little."[21] "The positive motivation of a 5,5-oriented manager is to belong .... He does this by seeking his sense of direction by finding out what the majority thinks or does and embedding himself within it."[22] Finally, "The

9,9 theory of management presumes an inherent connection between organization needs for production and the needs of people for full and rewarding work experiences."[23] As also discussed at the outset of this article, Blake and Mouton then developed a conflict grid (see figure 8). "The 9,9 approach to conflict rests on the assumption that, although conflict is inevitable, it is resolvable. The key is how conflict is managed."[24]

If the axes of the original Blake-Mouton Conflict Grid are reversed, and a diagonal taken through those elements (in either the original or the reoriented graph, because the location of these elements does not change when the axes are reversed) that represent the avoidance of conflict, the resulting representation in its presentation appears in figure 9.

This reorientation aligns the "Increasing Concern for Production" with the organizational variables in our previous three analyses and the "Increasing Concern for People" with the personal variables in the previous analysis. In terms of the problems developed in our scenarios, in the first scenario Smith can choose a number of paths to resolve the current dysfunctionality between her management style and Lee's work maturity, as discussed above. However, the results of Smith's choices in the longer term are particularly highlighted when analyzed according to figure 9. If she maintains her current approach to the situation, exercising her authority directly, the resulting conflict suppression is predicted by figure 9. If she can work to change her management style to participative or delegating, she will achieve a position either of compromise or of problem-solving with Lee, either of which will bring their relationship to one that avoids conflict.

For the Director in the second scenario, who is trying to bring about a resolution of conflict between Grant and Small, figure 9 gives some helpful insight into one possible solution. It is unlikely in these times of restraint that the Director will have the luxury of considering increased resource and activity independence as a solution, as that could almost certainly be achieved only through an infusion of scarce resources. Therefore, the Director more likely will want to bring Grant and Small's goals into closer alignment with each other. figure 9 confirms that merely mandating

Conflict is suppressed through authority-obedience approach.

Valid problem solving takes place with varying points of view objectively evaluated against facts.

Compromise, bargaining, and middle ground positions are accepted so that no-one wins or loses. Accomodation leads to workable rather than best solutions.

conflict is avoided

Neutrality is maintained at all costs. Withdrawal behind walls of insulation relieves the necessity of dealing with situations that would arouse conflict.

Disagreements are smoothed over or ignored so that surface harmony is maintained in a state of peaceful co-existence.
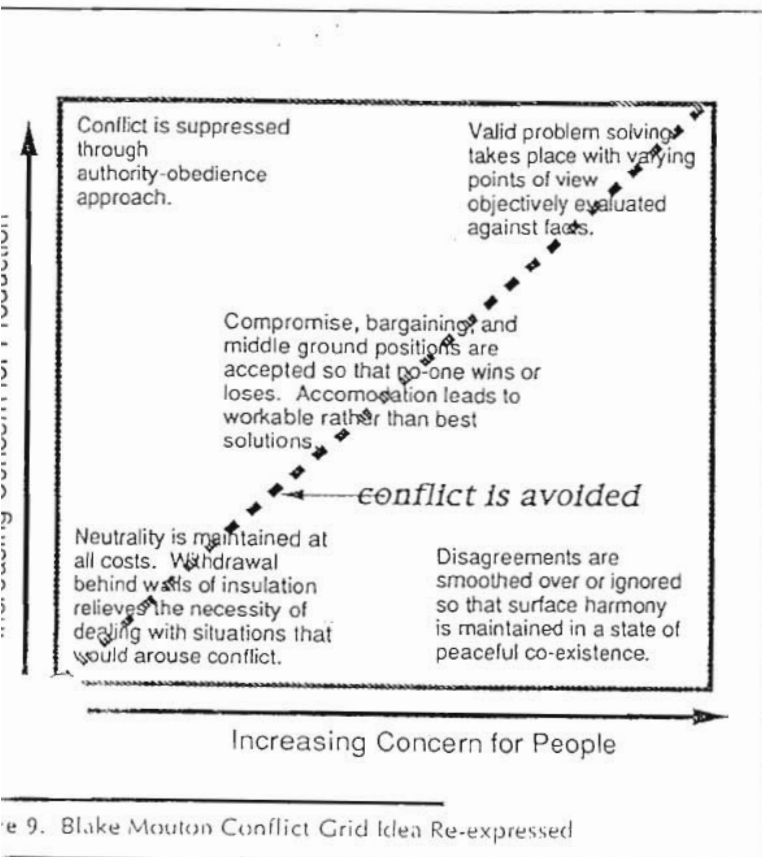
Increasing Concern for People

Figure 9. Blake Mouton Conflict Grid Idea Re-expressed

that conflict cease and goals be re-aligned will be ultimately ineffective. The Director must work with both em-ployees to achieve compromise or prob-lem solving. How he or she goes about doing that may depend upon an analy-sis of the work maturity levels of each employee, which brings in the point that, although this was not done for this illustrative discussion, analyzing all problems on all four systems will achieve a well-rounded management approach.

Finally, figure 9 illustrates the weak-ness of the oppressive atmosphere at the library in the third scenario. Whether Green's professional aspira-tions continue to be unmet at the li-brary, or even if Green's aspirations are reduced, surface harmony is main-tained. However, such circumstances do not optimize Green's motivation to-ward the library's goals. Where the li-brary's level of motivation toward insti-tutional goals is matched by the employee's desire for related second-level outcomes, optimum levels of expec-tancy and instrumentality will be achieved. Where neither the employee nor the organization place particular value on certain related outcomes, con-flict will be avoided but little will be achieved because little was sought, which would be consonant with the neutrality position on the Blake-Mouton grid reworked in figure 9. On the other hand, with paired high moti-vation toward institutional goals and employee desire for personal and social expectations, it would be anticipated that high problem-solving would be achieved in order to achieve goals. Moreover, the situation of negative pres-sure toward institutional goals illus-trated at point A in figure 6 can be mapped directly onto the authority-obedience conflict suppression in the Blake-Mouton grid as reworked in figure 9.

This final discussion demonstrates, both intuitively and theoretically, that these four theories are directly related and, indeed, validate and reinforce each other (see figure 10).

Moreover, taken together they pro-vide an analytic tool that can enable library managers to achieve organiza-tional objectives without compromising organizational efficiency in the long term.
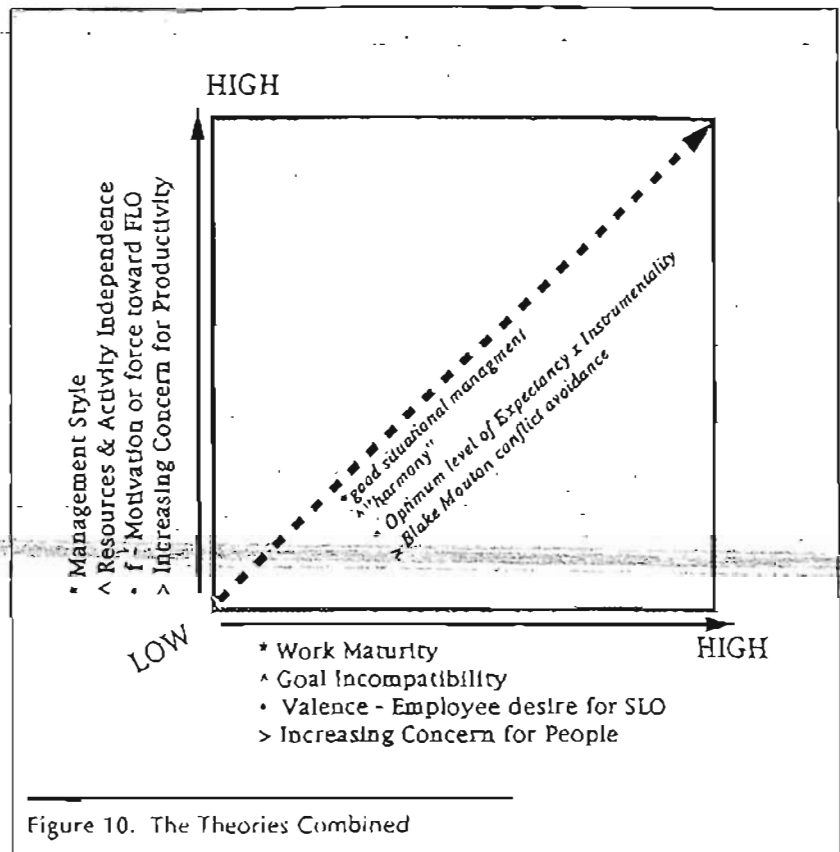

Figure 10. The Theories Combined

The figure shows a square diagram. Y-axis labeled LOW to HIGH with: • Management Style, < Resources & Activity Independence, f • Motivation or force toward FLO, > Increasing Concern for Productivity. X-axis labeled LOW to HIGH with: * Work Maturity, ^ Goal Incompatibility, • Valence - Employee desire for SLO, > Increasing Concern for People. A diagonal dashed arrow points up-right labeled "good situational managment", "harmony", "Optimum level of Expectancy x Instrumentality", "Blake Mouton conflict avoidance".

References and Notes

1. One notable exception is Carol B. Alfred, "The Anatomy of Conflict: Some Thoughts on Managing Staff Conflict," *Law Library Journal* 79 (Winter 1987). 7–32. More recently, Jonathan A. Lindsey published "Using Negotiation Theory, Conflict Management, and Assertiveness Theory in Performance Evaluation," *Library Administration & Management* 4 4 (Fall 1990): 195–200; and William Fisher and Glen Kowe published "Conflict Man-agement," *Library Administration & Man-agement* 5:3 (Summer 1991): 145–50.

2. Robert Rogers Blake and Jane Srygley Mouton, *The New Managerial Grid: Strate-gic New Insights into a Proven System for In-creasing Organization Productivity and Individual Effectiveness, Plus a Revealing Examination of How Your Managerial Style Can Affect Your Mental and Physical Health* (Houston: Gulf Publishing, 1978), 102.

3. Robert Rogers Blake and Jane Srygley Mouton, *The Managerial Grid: Key Orienta-tions for Achieving Production Through Peo-ple* (Houston: Gulf Publishing, 1964).

4. Robert Rogers Blake and Jane Srygley Mouton, *Grid Approach to Conflict Solving* (Rockville, Md : BNA Communications, 1974), plus leader's guide.

5. They are perhaps more widely remembered for their "Managerial Grid." It is discussed, for example, in Robert D. Stueart and Barbara B. Moran, *Library and Information Centre Management*, 4th ed. (Englewood, Colo.: Libraries Unlimited, 1993), 215–16, citing Robert R. Blake and Jane S. Mouton, *The Managerial Grid*, op. cit.

6. The authors are grateful to the reviewers who made a number of very helpful editorial suggestions.

7. Paul Hersey and Kenneth H. Blanchard, *Management of Organizational Behaviour: Utilizing Human Resources*, 3d ed. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1977). The authors make no apologies for the date of this resource. Certain theories are seminal. For example, this work is cited in recent texts such as Stueart and Moran, op. cit., 212.

8. Note that, although the levels of work maturity have a psychological component, they are described *only* within a work context. Psychological profiles per se are not part of situational management theory and are, in any case, beyond the capability of most managers.

9. Case studies tend to oversimplify. In the first scenario, Lee's level of work maturity should be assessed over a much longer period of time, although Smith's predominant management style can probably be more quickly evaluated.

10. Richard Eggleton, "Conflict in Libraries Revisited," *Libri* 29 (March 1979): 64–77.

11. While, in theory, Eggleton's three variables can be readily plotted, in practice a library would be best equipped to plot this conflict profile if it had effective job descriptions and a comprehensive resource inventory. The question of goal compatibility assessment might be aided by well-defined institutional objectives, if these were in fact mirrored by the employees in question.

12. Eldred Smith, "Do Libraries Need Managers?," *Library Journal* 94 (February 1, 1969): 502, 504.

13. Victor H. Vroom. *Work and Motivation* (New York: Wiley, 1964).

14. Vroom's original formula takes the following form:

$$V_j = f_j [\sum_{k=1} (V_k I_{jk})] (j = 1...n)$$
$$f_j \ O; iI_{jj} = O$$

where

V_j = the valence of outcome j

I_{jk} = the conized instrumentality

$(-1 \ æ \ I_{jk} \ æ \ 1)$ of outcome j for the attainment of outcome k.

Vroom, op. cit., 17.

The formula has been variously simplified. Stueart and Moran show it as

FORCE (MOTIVATION) = VALENCE X EXPECTANCY X INSTRUMENTALITY

See Stueart and Moran, op. cit., 207.

15. Personal growth may be thought of in terms of yet another theoretical construct: that of the late, great Abraham Maslow. See Abraham Maslow, *Motivation and Personality* (New York: Harper, 1970), particularly Chapter 4: "A Theory of Human Motivation."

16. Vroom, op. cit., 288.

17. This analysis fits exactly with the findings of Nancy Birch, Maurice P. Marchant, and Nathan M. Smith in "Perceived Role Conflict, Role Ambiguity, and Reference Librarian Burnout in Public Libraries," *Library and Information Science Research* 8 (January–March 1986): 53–65. See also Jack A. Siggins, "Job Satisfaction and Performance in a Changing Environment," *Library Trends* 41(2) (Fall 1992): 299–315.

18. Blake and Mouton, *The New Managerial Grid*, op. cit.,16.

19. Ibid., 41.

20. Ibid., 57.

21. Ibid., 58.

22. Ibid., 75.

23. Ibid., 95.

24. Ibid., 102.

Photo Highlight from ALA Annual Conference, San Francisco

Renette F. Jones (right), recipient of the first LAMA Cultural Diversity Grant, accepts her award from LAMA President William Summerhill and Past-President Carol Lin at the LAMA President's program during the ALA Annual conference. Jones is communications librarian at the University of Kentucky in Lexington.