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Measures of Alienation from Work Process in Academic Libraries in the Information Age

Zorian M. Sasyk
Minnesota State University, Mankato

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By

Zorian M. Sasyk

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Zorian M. Sasyk

This thesis has been examined and approved by the following members of the student's committee.

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Dr. Paul Prew, Advisor

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Dr. Afroza Anwary, Committee Member

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Jessica Schomberg, Committee Member

Abstract

Measures of Alienation from Work Process in Academic Libraries in the Information Age

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This thesis examines how alienation from work process, or work alienation, varies among work area specializations in academic libraries. Rooted in Marxist theory, the study utilizes the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire mapped to specific measures of alienation as a survey tool to measure the relative alienation of library workers at Master's level universities in the United States. Data collected is analyzed utilizing descriptive statistics, including cross-tabulations. Findings of the study indicate that there is some variation in work alienation among library work classifications and work areas, with higher alienation found for paraprofessionals, administrators, and library workers in multiple areas or roles. The conclusion discusses possible explanations for the results from the sociological and library science occupational literature, including role ambiguity, role overload, and job autonomy.

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CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

The profession of librarianship invokes images of stern, bespectacled, white

women who have a strong commitment to public service and the community (Defrain and

Pagowsky 2014; Schlesselman-Tarango 2016). Libraries are repositories of knowledge,

literal warehouses of books both fiction and fact, from comic books to business

directories. Librarians sitting behind reference desks strive to answer literally any

question one can throw at them, from where is the restroom to what is the gross national

product of Mongolia. Librarian expertise at searching and retrieving information for

patrons is a product of their education; the vast majority of librarians in the United States

earn their Master's in Library and Information Science (MLIS) from American Library

Association (ALA)-accredited library schools. Librarianship itself encompasses a wide

array of roles, from reference librarians to catalogers to archivists. In addition,

librarianship occurs in a variety of settings, from the public library to the academic

library to the corporate or special library. In the schema of modern labor, librarians are

firmly in the tier of white-collar workers (Nauratil 1989).

However, librarianship is an example of a profession that has been increasingly

challenged in recent years by technological innovation, unstable budgets, and

administrative downsizing. Library technology such the online public access catalog

(OPAC) and the Integrated Library System (ILS) has introduced significant automation

into library operations. In addition, the rapid development of the Internet, culminating in

the now ubiquitous tools known as search engines, has reduced the role of the library as

the predominant center of information in the community. Simultaneously, public funding

for higher education and service has declined over the last two decades, resulting increasing external and internal pressures on library administrations to streamline or even reduce operations. Thus, academic libraries in particular have seen staff reductions, especially in technical services, as well as enlarged or multiple roles for library workers. In some cases, professional librarian work is being supplanted by either outsourcing to library companies such as ProQuest or OCLC or devolution to paraprofessionals (Litwin 2009). These challenges have led some to call into question the relevancy of librarians in the 21st century (Davis 2008). From a sociological point of view, they indicate the increasing possibility of work alienation, typically symptomatic of blue collar factory jobs, among librarians and library workers.

Given the challenges facing libraries and librarianship, as well as the variety of roles and forms of librarianship indicated above, this study thus seeks to measure the level and variation of work alienation among academic library staff, both paraprofessionals and librarians. The study will seek to explore the following research question:

RQ: Does the level of work alienation, as measured by job satisfaction, experienced by academic library staff differ across academic library work specializations?

Outline of Thesis

Chapter 2 begins with an overview of the Marxist conception of alienation, grounded in the writings of Karl Marx himself as well as several other sociologists of the 20th century such as Melvin Seeman (1959), Robert Blauner (1964), and Harry

Braverman (1975). After this theoretical framework has been laid out, the paper will proceed into a review of the extant literature on two main subjects: first, it will investigate various studies in sociology attempting to measure alienation; second, it will investigate the library science literature for studies concerning alienation, job satisfaction, and the effects of automation on the profession. For both topics, the various methodological strengths and weaknesses of the studies will be discussed.

This will lay the groundwork for Chapter 3, which will discuss the immediate theoretical and methodological underpinnings of the present study, rooted in the combination of Seeman's dimensions of alienation and the use of the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire survey instrument to measure alienation via the job satisfaction of academic library staff. The paper will then proceed to the methodology and research design of the study, specifically concerning the survey instrument, variables, sampling methods utilized in its distribution, its validity and reliability, and ethical concerns.

Chapter 4 contains the findings and analysis of the study, including descriptive data on the library workers sampled, general alienation scores, and relative alienation scores and subscores for each of the four measures of work alienation. Cross-tabulations of alienation scores and each of the two main independent variables, work area and work classification are presented, both at the general and subscore level. The data is then analyzed towards the goal of investigating the extent and nature of variation in work alienation across library workers in different areas and classes.

Chapter 5 provides a discussion of the results of the study, specifically how they

revealed variation in work alienation across academic library workers. Drawing on concepts enumerated in the literature review of Chapter 2, the discussion attempts to offer some possible explanations for the results. Research contributions, further research possibilities, as well as the limitations of the study are provided, ending with concluding remarks.

CHAPTER 2 - LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Background

The specific concept of alienation as relates to capitalist wage labor can be attributed to Karl Marx ([1932] 1964), although his main exposition of the concept appeared in unedited notes not intended for publication. His most direct and extensive treatise on the topic can be found in his *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, where in an essay titled "Estranged Labor", he enumerates four aspects of alienation: alienation from products of labor, alienation from process of production (work), alienation from species-being (humanity), and alienation of man from man (others). For the purposes of this paper, we are most concerned with his second aspect of alienation, alienation from work:

> The relation of labor to the *act of production* within the *labor* process. This relation is the relation of the worker to his own activity as an alien activity not belonging to him...as an activity which is turned against him, independent of him and not belonging to him. Here we have *self-estrangement*, as previously we had the estrangement of the *thing*. ([Marx 1932] 1964:111-112)

In a capitalist society, the worker is not only alienated from what they produce, but also alienated from the very actions and methods of the work itself. The worker on the assembly line cannot control the pace of their work, of the conveyor belt that is an endless stream of new parts to be spot welded in the exact same manner. Nor does this worker necessarily understand how their work of spot welding that specific component fits in with the larger end product. Perhaps most significantly, that worker has little or no say or agency in what they work on, how they work on it, or why they work on it.

Marx's concept of alienation features prominently across much of his work (Marx 1977:77), and thus in much subsequent Marxist sociological thought. However, it most often appears in its more general form, combining all of the aspects of alienation elucidated by Marx. It is only in the mid-20th century that work emerges specifically focused on alienation from process, referred to throughout this paper as work alienation. The three most seminal works in this regard are Melvin Seeman (1959), Robert Blauner (1964), and Harry Braverman (1975).

One of the most influential works on alienation in the 20th century, Seeman (1959) laid the conceptual groundwork for much of the later empirical studies of work alienation. It is important to note that Seeman conceives of work alienation in a much more specific sense then Marx, limiting and defining it to the experience in the workplace. In the paper, Seeman attempts to define alienation as a multi-dimensional concept, consisting of five dimensions: powerlessness, meaninglessness, normlessness, isolation, and self-estrangement. These five concepts were nominally interrelated, but Seeman sought to demonstrate they were distinct enough to warrant individual investigation: "...I have attempted, first, to distinguish the meanings that have been given to alienation, and second, to work toward a more useful conception of each of these meanings" (Seeman 1959: 791).

Powerlessness

Powerlessness is "the expectation that one's behavior cannot determine outcomes or reinforcements sought" (Seeman 1959:784),

Normlessness

Normlessness is "a situation where there is a high expectation that socially unapproved behaviors are required to achieve goals." The term of this measure originates from Emile Durkheim's idea of *anomie*, as indicated by Seeman himself. However, Seeman's definition, and thus the definition utilized in this study, is much narrower in scope (Seeman 1959:787-788).

Meaninglessness

Meaninglessness is "the low expectation that satisfactory predictions about future outcomes of behavior can be made" (Seeman 1959:786).

Self-estrangement

Self-estrangement is "working only for the money; real interests lie outside of work;" essentially, it is extrinsic work motivation (Seeman 1959:789-790).

As will be seen below, Seeman's dimensions of alienation provided the basis for many subsequent studies' attempts at constructing measures of alienation.

Soon after Seeman (1959), Robert Blauner (1964) produced a seminal and comprehensive study of alienation in industrial labor that centered on the study of three stages of industrial production: batch production, mass production, and continuous process production. Utilizing Seeman's dimensions of alienation as the basis of his survey instrument, Blauner measured the alienation of workers in three industries representative of the three stages of production mentioned above. Blauner found that the level of alienation of workers in the three stages of industries formed an inverted "u-curve": lower alienation was associated with the craft-guild batch production stage, as well as the latter stage and automated continuous-process. In contrast, high alienation was associated

with mass production, such as the assembly line. Blauner concluded that although most industrial work at the time was still in the mass production stage, the introduction of automation to industrial processes (continuous-process) would reduce work alienation by removing the drudgery and monotony of the assembly line with the presumably more "enlarged" job of monitoring automated processes spanning multiple components of assembly.

Harry Braverman (1975) directly challenges this rosy view of the effects of automation on work alienation. Braverman (1975) posits that instead of resulting in "job enlargement" and reducing worker alienation, increasing automation in production processes merely serves the interests of capitalists. "Despite the variety of means used in all innovations we have been describing, their unifying feature...is the progressive elimination of the control functions of the worker...and their transfer to a device which is controlled...by management from outside the direct process. It is this which dominates the new place of the worker in the production process..." (Braverman 1975:212). Capitalism's endless pursuit of higher productivity at lower costs drives capitalists towards higher and more sophisticated levels of automation, utilizing fewer and fewer workers who are either overworked or occupy roles where they are merely monitors minimally engaged with machines that do all the work for them. Both situations lead to heightened work alienation. (Braverman 1975:220,224-227).

Studies and Measures of Work Alienation

Measures of alienation as a concept

Following Seeman (1959), researchers carried out a number of studies to either

test the reliability and validity of Seeman's multi-dimensional definition of alienation, or to test its relation to other concepts, especially job satisfaction. Neal and Retting (1967), Zeller et al. (1980), and Lefkowitz and Brigando (1980) each performed their own factor analyses on some, or all of Seeman's dimensions of alienation (in the forms of commonly used questions or survey instruments mapped to the dimensions). Each study generally upheld the reliability and validity of the concepts as distinct measures of alienation. However, Lefkowitz and Brigando (1980), in addition to measuring the inter-dimensional validity of the measures of alienation, also sought to determine the level of convergence of the concept of alienation with that of job satisfaction. The authors found that … "discrimination *between* alienation and satisfaction measures was no greater than that *among* satisfaction and *among* alienation" (Lefkowitz and Brigando 1980:115,128).

Studies of alienation, both societal and work

Since Seeman (1959) there have been dozens of studies conducted attempting to measure alienation in some form, whether generalized or work-specific. The easiest way to categorize them is by whether they follow Seeman's dimensions of alienation and whether they measure generalized or work-specific alienation. Concerning the latter category, only a few of the oldest studies (Clark 1959, Dean 1961, Seeman 1967) measure alienation in the context of wider society. Clark (1959:851) neither mentions Seeman nor utilizes his dimensions, although he interestingly finds evidence of a relationship between alienation and satisfaction, possibly foreshadowing Lefkowitz and Brigando (1980). It also found negative correlations with alienation for age and work tenure (Clark 1959:851). Dean (1961) references Seeman and three of his dimensions,

powerlessness, normlessness, and social isolation, but constructs them as subscales for his survey instrument; the study found a slight positive correlation between alienation and social status, as well as a slight negative correlation with age (Dean 1961:757-758). Interestingly, Seeman (1967) does not directly utilize his own dimensions of alienation, but rather utilizes a questionnaire derived from Blauner (1964) based on them. Seeman's study analyzes work alienation's effect on personal life, and suggests that work alienation has little correlative effect on wider societal alienation (Seeman 1967:283-284).

Pearlin (1962) was one of the earliest alienation studies to focus directly on work alienation. Pearlin, following Clark (1959) acknowledges the importance of studying work alienation within a social system, such as nurses within a single hospital system. Pearlin found that work alienation was negatively correlated to positional disparity in authority structure, limited opportunities for advancement, and low levels of social interaction with coworkers (Pearlin 1962:325). Aiken and Haige (1966) pursue a similar strategy, albeit with a focus on the organization as the unit of analysis. Measuring alienation alongside other variables pertaining to work formalization, the authors were able to suggest a relationship between highly centralized or formalized work organizations and higher levels of work alienation (Aiken and Hage 1966:497-499,506-507). Chisholm and Cummings (1979) also utilizes Seeman's dimensions of alienation at the organizational level of analysis, as well as Hull et al. (1982). The latter also sought to test Blauner's "u-curve" hypothesis on alienation, utilizing data from over 110 New Jersey factories, as well as retrained printers. Shepard (1970) sought to investigate the relationship between job specialization and alienation and job satisfaction. The author

used an index of job satisfaction, along with three indexes of work alienation

(instrumental work orientation, self-evaluative involvement in work, and commitment to

organizational goals), to study populations that represented each of the three phases of the

man-machine relationship (control room operators from an oil company, assembly-line,

and maintenance craftsmen from an automobile plant). The study suggests a strong

negative relationship between job specialization and alienation (Shepard 1970:210-213,

216-219). Vallas (1988) investigates the impact of technology on work alienation,

studying unions representing communications workers in two Northeast states, as well

some longitudinal data to measure upgrading and deskilling trends in communications

industry over time. The study suggests automation has differential effects both within and

between occupational categories; specifically, automation highly effected clerical

workers, leading to their deskilling and higher levels of work alienation (Vallas

1988:168-170). Finally, Shantz et al. (2015) utilizes a unidimensional measure of work

alienation based on Nair and Vohra (2009), measuring, in addition to alienation,

autonomy, task variety, task identity, and social support at work. Their study suggests

task variety and task identity are negatively related to alienation.

Alienation and Job Satisfaction within Libraries

Alienation as a concept has not been directly addressed in the library science

literature, with the exception of Nauratil (1989) in her book *The Alienated Librarian*. The

book, despite its age, provides a comprehensive analysis of how librarianship, as a

bureaucratized profession, is prone to high work alienation, echoing Pearlin (1962) and

Aiken and Hage (1966). Although Nauratil (1989) offers many reasons and insights into

the causes of alienation among librarians and library staff, perhaps her most insightful

comment is the following, in regard to effects of austerity management and automation:

> Librarians, deprived of the traditional job security of public employment, forced
> to relinquish substantial portions of their professional autonomy in furtherance of
> goals determined unilaterally by top management, and increasingly pressed to
> accelerate their productivity - in short, [they are] subject to all the tyrannies of the
> industrial speedup without the rewards...The experience of work alienation under
> these circumstances is almost inevitable... (Nauratil 1989:68).

Even in Nauratil's work, work alienation in libraries is often relabeled or restated

as "burnout." This may reflect both the more recent scholarship of librarianship as well

the relative decline in alienation scholarship overall in the last two decades. Thus, in

moving from the sociological literature explored above to the library science literature, a

shift in focus is necessary from alienation *per se* to possibly correlated or convergent

concepts, such as burnout, role stress and ambiguity, and job satisfaction.

Several examples of the study of job satisfaction within libraries exist, each

often focusing on specialized work areas such as technical services (cataloging and

acquisitions) or public services (reference). Lim (2008) focuses on library informational

technology roles, Sewell and Gilbert (2015) focus on public services, Leysen and

Boydston (2009) focus on catalogers, and Sellberg (2011) focuses on technical services.

Ritzen-Kem (2000) stands out as a seminal work, not only because the study sought to

measure job satisfaction across library area specializations and correlate to a number of

variables including work behavior and area, but also due to the nature of its survey

instrument for job satisfaction, the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ), which is

a well-established tool with high reliability and validity across disciplines (Ritzen-Kem

2000:27,40,45-46). Ritzen-Kem (2000) found correlations between level of job

satisfaction of librarians and the type of work behavior they represented (concentrator,

energizer, inducer, and producer), with the former two displaying higher levels of job

satisfaction and the latter two displaying lower levels of job satisfaction. (Ritzen-Kem

2000:60).

Aspects of Braverman's thesis on the alienating effects of automation and

increased efficiency are visible across the library literature, especially in regards to the

subdivision of library labor known as technical services. As early as 1992, Harris noted

the effects of automation on catalogers:

> The routinizing of library work through automation has had a major impact on
> the activities of cataloguing librarians… this loss of control has come about
> largely because of the widespread use of cataloguing networks or bibliographic
> utilities… through such services, libraries need no longer do original
> cataloguing on site for most materials. Instead, they can simply purchase the
> cataloguing records they need, already prepared… This reallocation of resources
> moves the control over technical services work away from cataloguers and
> toward administrators and systems analysts. (Harris 1992:10-11)

Grenci (2000), in an overview of three presentations by technical services

librarians on the topic of deprofessionalization, identifies the increasing trends of

professional librarian work being moved to paraprofessionals, as well as the increased

reliance on "...private, for-profit businesses that have taken over functions once

performed by the library", such as original cataloging and resource discovery (Grenci

2000:55-56). Calhoun (2003) discusses the widespread and transformative restructuring

that the Technical Services unit at Cornell University Library had to institute to

"...become more productive, and not just incrementally but dramatically so...change is

needed that will allow technical services to do more work with fewer people, with fewer

librarians" (Calhoun 2003:285). In a survey of technical services managers at 112 public university libraries, Wells (2004) shows that 62.8 percent of the managers' units had lost positions in recent years, with 72.7 percent reporting lost librarian positions and 52.3 percent indicating lost paraprofessional positions, despite the units often being in states of technical and organizational transition (Wells 2004:20,29).

A few other works in library science hint at alienation via their analysis of job stress and role ambiguity. Job stress is defined by Shupe and Pung (2011) as consisting of three components: role ambiguity, role overload, and role conflict, and they argue that contemporary librarianship increasingly invokes such traits. "...the expanding, changing role of the librarian...brings challenges, as libraries develop ways to recruit and select librarians and help them acquire the necessary knowledge and skills to navigate their new role... [as well as] role-related stress, brought about by role ambiguity and an increased workload." (Shupe and Pung 2011:409-410). In a follow-up study, Shupe et al. (2015) demonstrated in a survey of 60 librarians that role ambiguity and role overload were significantly negatively correlated with job stress, burnout, and job satisfaction (Shupe et al. 2015:267-268). Farler and Broady-Preston (2012), utilizing a mixed-method approach comprised of interviews and self-completed questionnaires, found that 29 percent of library staff at a British library experienced job stress more than once a week, in addition to reports of role ambiguity and burnout (Farler and Broady-Preston 2012:230,234).

The goal of this study is to measure and compare the level of work alienation experienced within academic libraries, in the face of continuous technological change and increasing administrative pressures to reduce, automate, and outsource previously

specialized services. Seeman's five dimensions of alienation will serve as the basic

measures of work alienation. Their quantitative shortcomings will be addressed by

mapping them to specific questions within the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire, a

well-respected survey instrument for work satisfaction. The author believes this approach

provides a method to isolate alienation due to work while simultaneously presenting an

easily replicable and therefore highly valid design.

CHAPTER 2 – METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

Design

This study utilized a survey-based design to collect data from a number of academic library staff from medium-sized universities, representing both professionals and paraprofessionals as well as various library functional work specializations. The survey instrument collected demographic data central to analysis, such as gender, race, age, employment length, work area, work classification, unionization, education, etc. In addition, the survey gathered institutional data, to the extent that could be accomplished without threatening the anonymity and privacy of the respondents.

Sampling Design

The research design included a multi-stage sampling method to achieve a representative sample of academic library staff. The Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education (2017) website served as a starting point to generate a large list of universities and thus academic libraries. The Carnegie Classification website allows for the generation and downloading of lists of higher education institutions based on either preset or customizable criteria, such as enrollment, types of degree programs predominantly offered, or areas of focus. For the purposes of this study, the author generated a custom report based on selecting the criteria of small, medium and large Master's Colleges and Universities, producing a total of 758 institutions. Per the Carnegie Classification website, Master's Colleges and Universities are "institutions that awarded at least 50 master's degrees and fewer than 20 doctoral degrees during the update year" (Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education 2017). The author then

divided this list between public and private institutions, (resulting in two lists of 273 public and 485 private institutions, respectively) and then divided it again based on regions of the United States (Great Lakes/Plains, North Atlantic, Southeast, and West/Southwest). The American Library Association's annual Librarian Salary Survey provided the regional definitions for each state. Finally, the author selected every fifth university from each randomized university type list, by region. From the selected universities' library websites, the author collected staff contact information in the form of emails, which ultimately became the distribution list for the survey instrument. It is worth noting here that despite the sampling methodology focusing on institutions, the actual unit of analysis in this study was still the individual respondent, contacted from the distribution list.

The author acknowledges both the ethical concerns of privacy and identity involved in this method, as well the limitations of such a sampling method in terms of response rate. Ethical concerns are addressed more fully in the below section on Data Collection. In terms of limitations, the multi-stage method attempted to generate a sample of library staff as representative as possible, in terms of type of institution, geography, and class (staff vs. librarian). However, since the sample was artificially limited based on certain Carnegie Classification criteria such as degree-granting and size and research-level to medium-sized Master's schools, it cannot be generalized to academic libraries in general. This was intended: there is such variety and differences in resources, including staffing levels, among university libraries based on size and research role, that it did not seem productive to compare alienation and job satisfaction across all tiers of Carnegie

Classification. Furthermore, the study could be easily replicated utilizing a sample population reflective of libraries at either much smaller or much larger institutions.

Variables

Variables in this study were divided into two categories: Demographics and job satisfaction. The variables for demographics included the following: occupational tenure, library area specialization, union membership, work classification, faculty status (conditional on selecting librarian), and tenure (conditional on having faculty status). The variables for job satisfaction included four of Seeman's dimensions of alienation: powerlessness, normlessness, meaninglessness, and self-estrangement.

Each of these four variables were operationally defined by being exclusively mapped to several of the twenty factors corresponding to questions of the MSQ survey instrument. Thus, powerlessness was operationally defined by answers on MSQ question labeled with the factors of creativity, independence, variety, authority, working conditions, and responsibility. Normlessness was operationally defined by answers corresponding to moral values, company policies and practices, advancement, and coworkers. Meaninglessness was operationally defined by answers corresponding to ability utilization, supervision-human relations, security, supervision-technical, and activity. Finally, self-estrangement was operationally defined by answers corresponding to social service, social status, compensation, recognition, and achievement. Thus, an answer on the Likert scale responses to any questions mapped to powerlessness would indicate a higher or lower level of powerlessness.

Survey Items

The central instrument of the survey consisted of the long-form version of the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ), which measures job satisfaction. This surveys contains one hundred short questions, with 5-point Likert scale responses. Each of the questions correspond to one of twenty factors of job satisfaction, as exhibited by Table B. Each question was mapped to one of four of Seeman's dimensions of alienation: powerlessness, meaninglessness, normlessness, and self-estrangement. This was accomplished by mapping each of the twenty MSQ job satisfaction factors to one of the four dimensions of alienation (see Table A). The numeric results of each group of 5 questions corresponding to the twenty factors was summed, and an average score produced which corresponded to level of job satisfaction. From this, average scores for each of the four alienation measures were also produced for each respondent, thus providing a quantification of each respondent's alienation.

Method of Data Collection

The survey instrument was constructed utilizing the online survey tool Qualtrics, which was then sent to each email address on the distribution list generated by the sampling method. Emails to individuals included a link to the Qualtrics survey. The Qualtrics software allows for the collection of all survey response data in one place, and includes tools allowing for basic statistical analysis as well as for the export of collated data for further analysis either manually or via statistical software such as SPSS.

The largest ethical concerns of this project involve the privacy of the individuals being targeted for the survey instrument via email. Regardless of what method utilized to contact individual academic library employees, sentiments of personal intrusion are a real

possibility. However, as far as could be determined in the author's review of library occupational research, there are no better ways of representatively sampling both librarians and paraprofessionals simultaneously. For instance, if the study only focused on librarians, the survey instrument could have been distributed to library professional list-servs, or lists of members of library professional organizations could possibly have been obtained towards the same end. However, paraprofessionals and other non-librarian academic library staff do not participate in professional organizations to the same extent as librarians; thus, they are much harder to target for surveying purposes.

Another concern is that by the very nature of email, the information gathered by participants' responses could potentially be enough to identify them. Second, the responses given in the demographic section of the survey instrument could in theory be used to identify individuals. Identity concerns were addressed by refraining from asking demographic questions concerning the name of the institution where individuals worked. This data was felt the most dangerous in regards to respondent identification, especially if that individual was from a small institution or a library with a small staff size.

CHAPTER 3: FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Descriptives

Through the aforementioned sampling method, 1600 participants were selected to receive email messages with a link to the MSQ Survey in Qualtrics. Of the 1600 contacted, 343, or 21.4 percent responded; of these 343 responses, 188 or 11.5 percent were completed surveys. The findings and analysis of this study are taken from these 188 valid survey responses.

Descriptive data on the participants of the survey are shown in Table F, based on responses from the Demographic questions section at the end of the questionnaire. By gender, 36 or 19.15 percent of participants were male, 142 or 75.53 percent were female, and 10 or 5.32 percent selected "prefer not to respond". By age, 18 or 19.57 percent of participants were between 20-29, 41 or 21.81 percent were 30-39, 50 or 26.60 percent were 40-49, 34 or 18.09 percent were 50-59, and 36 or 19.15 percent were 60 and over. Racially, the sample population was 78.19 percent white, 3.72 percent African American, 4.70 percent Hispanic/Latino, 1.60 percent Asian/Pacific Islander, 3.72 percent multi-racial; 6.91 percent or participants preferred not to specify their race/ethnicity. Concerning what area of the library participants worked in, 91 or 48.40 percent worked in Public Services, 40 or 21.28 percent worked in Technical Services, 29 or 15.43 percent worked in Administration, and 26 or 13.83 percent worked in another area which they specified in the following response. Regarding work classification, 56 or 29.79 percent of participants were paraprofessionals, 100 or 53.19 percent were librarians, 20 or 10.64 percent were administrators, and 10 or 5.32 percent indicated other classifications

specified in the following response. 24.47 percent of participants were a member of a union, while the majority or 72.87 percent were not. Of the 100 participants who indicated they were classified as librarians, 59 percent held faculty status, 38 did not, and 3 preferred not to respond; of the 59 faculty librarians, 27.12 percent held tenure status, 71.19 percent did not, and 1 preferred not to respond.

Work Alienation Scores: General

A general work alienation score was generated for each participant by summing all 100 of their responses to the MSQ questionnaire, with the highest score possible being 500 (answering Very Satisfied or 5 on each question). Table G shows some general descriptive data about the alienation scores. The mean score for all participants was 313.76, with a standard deviation of 77.59. A comparison of means test was run for two of the independent variables most pertinent to the study's research question, library work area and library work classification. The mean alienation score of library work areas was: 308.71 for Public Services, 317.25 for Technical Services, 335.69 for Administration, and 301.62 for participants who indicated Other. The mean alienation score of library work classifications was: 303.75 for Paraprofessionals, 318.99 for Librarians, 329.50 for Administrators, and 286.1 for participants who indicated Other. Table H shows a comparison of means table combining both variables, showing the mean score for the fifteen possible combinations of work area and work classification for participants.

These tables show relatively small differences in average work alienation scores across work areas and work classifications. Within work areas, administration had the highest mean scores, and therefore lowest measured work alienation, while participants

who selected their area as Other had the lowest scores, and thus highest measured work alienation. Within work classifications, administrators had the highest mean scores and lowest work alienation, while participants who classified as Other once again had the lowest scores and highest measured work alienation.

The general work alienation scores presented thus far are based directly on the MSQ Questionnaire; they are absolute measures of work alienation that are essentially percentages. Percentage scores can easily be calculated by dividing a participant's summed total score by 500. The same can be applied to mean scores; for instance, the mean percentage score of all respondents is 62.75 percent. According to the MSQ documentation, this number indicates that academic library workers have low job satisfaction; in the context of this study, this number indicates high work alienation. However, as stated in the research question, this study seeks to determine whether work alienation differs across academic library work specializations (i.e. work area and work classification). We turn to cross-tabulations in the next subsection to further explore this relative work alienation.

Work Alienation Scores Across Work Areas and Work Classifications

To further investigate relative work alienation among academic library workers, participant work alienation scores were categorized into 1 of 5 "score groups", representing ranges corresponding to the five levels of satisfaction Likert Scale on the MSQ questionnaire. The ranges consisted of the following: 0-175 (most alienated), 176-250 (more alienated), 251-325 (neutral), 326-400 (less alienated), 401-500 (least alienated). These "Score Groups" were then utilized as the new dependent variable in two

cross-tabulations, one for work area and one for work classification. These cross-tabulations can be seen in Tables I and J.

In Table I, the row percentage under each work area shows the percentage of library workers in each Score Group. By looking at the two lowest Score Groups, that is, the percentage of library workers with scores between 0 and 250, and then summing them, one can get a more precise indication of the level of relative work alienation per work area. For instance, Table I shows that 19.38 percent of Public Service workers featured scores indicating higher levels of alienation; Technical Services workers showed 22.5 percent, Administration showed 6.9 percent, and Other showed 23.07 percent. Across all work areas, 19.89 percent of workers had scores of high relative work alienation.

Table J does the exact same thing for Work Classification, producing indications of the level of relative work alienation per work classification. The percentage of library workers in each work-classification with scores indicating high relative alienation were: 25 percent of paraprofessionals, 17 percent of librarians, 15 percent for administrators, and 30 percent for Other. Across all work classifications, 19.89 percent of library workers had scores of high relative work alienation.

Work Alienation Sub-Scores: Seeman's Measure of Alienation

As discussed above, the most discrete indicators of relative work alienation in this study relate to scores mapped via the MSQ to four of Seeman's measures of alienation; normlessness, meaninglessness, powerlessness, and self-estrangement. Scores for each measure were generated for each participant by summing the scores of responses

to questions mapped to each measure, respectively. Similar to the relative work alienation measured by the general MSQ score, scores for each measure of alienation were grouped into one of five "score groups", once again representing ranges corresponding to the five levels of satisfaction of the Likert Scale on the MSQ questionnaire. However, since the number of questions mapped to each measure was slightly varied, the ranges varied as well. Regardless, one can get a sense of the specific measure of high relative alienation by once again looking at the summed percentage of the lowest two score groups. Like the relative work alienation measured by the general MSQ score above, each measure of alienation's "score groups" were used as dependent variables in cross-tabulations against the independent variables library work area and library work classification.

For the alienation measure normlessness, 8.79 percent of works in the public service work area experienced high levels of relative normlessness, with figures of 10 percent for technical services, 3.45 percent for administration, and 15.39 percent for Other. The average percentage of high levels of normlessness across all areas was 9.14 percent. The percentage of high levels of normlessness across library work classifications was as follows: 8.93 percent for paraprofessionals, 7 percent for librarians, 10 percent for administrators, and 30 percent for Other. The average percentage of high levels of normlessness across all work classifications was 9.14 percent.

For the alienation measure of meaninglessness 9.9 percent of participants in the public services work area experienced high levels of relative meaninglessness, with figures of 7.5 percent for technical services, 6.9 percent for administration, and 19.2 percent for Other. The average percentage of high levels of meaninglessness across all

areas was 10.2 percent. The percentage of high levels of meaninglessness across library

work classifications was as follows: 14.3 percent for paraprofessionals, 7 percent for

librarians, 15 percent for administrators, and 10 percent for Other. The average

percentage of high levels of meaninglessness across all work classifications was 10.2

percent.

For the alienation measure of self-estrangement, 7.7 percent of participants in

the public services work area experienced high levels of relative self-estrangement, with

figures of 12.5 percent for technical services, 6.9 percent for administration, and 15.3

percent for Other. The average percentage of high levels of self-estrangement across all

areas was 9.7 percent. The percentage of high levels of self-estrangement across library

work classifications was as follows: 12.5 percent for paraprofessionals, 8 percent for

librarians, 15 percent for administrators, and 0 percent for Other. The average percentage

of high levels of self-estrangement across all work classifications was 9.7 percent.

Finally, for the alienation measure of powerlessness 7.7 percent of participants

in the public services work area experienced high levels of relative powerlessness, with

figures of 2.5 percent for technical services, 6.9 percent for administration, and 15.4

percent for Other. The average percentage of high levels of powerlessness across all areas

was 7.5 percent. The percentage of high levels of powerlessness across library work

classifications was as follows: 7.1 percent for paraprofessionals, 6 percent for librarians,

15 percent for administrators, and 10 percent for Others. The average percentage of high

levels of powerlessness across all work classifications was 7.5 percent.

Compared to the general scores of relative high alienation, the relative scores of

the specific alienation measures were much lower, often in the single digits. Only one of the alienation measure score averages, for meaninglessness, was over 10 percent. Overall, alienation measure scores were higher for the work areas of Administration and Other, as well as the work classifications of Other. Paraprofessionals had higher alienation scores in all measures than librarians, while public services and technical services workers were almost even. These differences in alienation scores trends across areas and classifications mirror those found in the general alienation scores.

Overall, the variation in measured work alienation of the library worker respondents were small but noticeable across work areas and work classifications. General alienation scores show that work alienation was highest for workers in the Other work area category, followed by Public Services, then Technical Services, and lowest amongst Administration. Similarly, the general scores show alienation across work-classifications was highest among the Other category, followed by Paraprofessionals, then Librarians, with the lowest scores amongst Administrators. Do the relative alienation subscores based on Seeman's measures of alienation support the findings of the general scores?

In Table K, we see the averages across the four measures of the 40th percentile scores for each work area and work classification. Without getting into the individual 40th percentiles scores for each measures across both variables, Table K allows us to see if the subscores follow the general scores. Indeed, we find across work areas that alienation is highest among Other, then Public Services, then Technical Services, with lowest relative alienation among Administration. Across work classifications, relative alienation is

highest among Administrators, then Paraprofessionals, then Other, with Librarians having the lowest alienation. The measures of alienation sub-scores averages rank the same for work areas, but are significantly different for work classifications. Specifically, the Administrators category had a high general alienation score (329.5), but also high rates of high relative alienation across the measures of alienation subscores (13.75 percent average, 10 percent Normlessness, 15 percent in Meaninglessness, Self-estrangement, and Powerlessness).

Comparisons between two sets of work areas and work-classifications, public services-technical services and paraprofessional-librarian, are worth examining in greater detail as they represent the majority of respondents (69.68 percent in Work Areas and 82.93 percent in Work Classifications, respectively). As already noted above, Paraprofessionals consistently were shown to have higher levels of alienation than librarians, in general scores (25 percent vs 17 percent), average percent subscores (10.71 percent vs. 7 percent), and across all subscores. In particular, Paraprofessionals experienced higher levels of Meaninglessness and Self-estrangement then Librarians (14.30 percent vs 7 percent, 12.50 percent vs 8 percent, respectively). In contrast, little variation in levels of alienation existed between library workers in public services and technical services, regardless of general score (21.98 percent vs. 22.5 percent), average percent subscore (8.52 percent vs. 8.13 percent), and across all subscores. However, some variation was apparent in the measures of Self-estrangement and Powerlessness, with Public Services workers demonstrating higher levels of Powerlessness (7.70 percent vs 2.50 percent) and Technical Services workers demonstrating higher levels of Self-

estrangement (12.50 percent vs. 7.70 percent).

CHAPTER 4: DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to investigate whether work alienation experienced by academic library workers varied across work areas and work classifications. By utilizing the MSQ job satisfaction questionnaire and mapping its questions to Seeman's measures of alienation, and then distributing the survey to library workers at Master's level universities across the United States, a quantitative assessment of work alienation within these librarians was attempted. Both general scores as well as subscores based on the measures of alienation were generated from survey responses, and then cross-tabulated with the research question variables of work area and work-classification for easy comparison.

Discussion

Cross-tabulations of both the general scores and subscores of work alienation against work area and work specialization demonstrated that variation did exist among academic library workers across these variables. Before further discussion of these results, however, it must be noted that although variation existed, it was not found to be statistically significant, due to a variety of factors. First, the size of the various N's of work area and work classification were not normally distributed, with high N's for one half of the categories (Paraprofessionals, Librarians, Technical Services, Public Services) and low N's for the other half (Administrators, Other, Administration, Other). Thus, standard parametric tests for significance such as ANOVA were not applicable. Second, based on the large standard deviations found for means in each of the above categories (see Table H), it was clear that there was greater variation within the categories then

between categories. This precludes the ability to conclude statistical significance from the results.

Within work areas, the Other category exhibited the highest work alienation across both general and subscores, while the Administration category exhibited the lowest work alienation. Public services and technical services, the two largest work areas by number of respondents, exhibited roughly similar levels of work alienation, albeit in between the extremes of the aforementioned areas. Within work classifications, results were less consistent between general scores and subscores: the Other category exhibited the highest levels of work alienation as measured by general score, while Administrators exhibited the highest levels of work alienation as measured by subscore. Paraprofessionals exhibited higher levels of work alienation then librarians across both levels of measurement. Due to the descriptive nature of the data analysis (cross-tabulations), as well as the non-normally distributed nature of the data itself, the statistical significance of this variation cannot be determined. However, it is still worth investigating in some detail possible explanations for the observed variation, grounded in both the sociological literature on alienation as well as the library science literature on job satisfaction and burnout.

Marxist explanations

As discussed in the literature review, work alienation was conceived by Marx as primarily an affliction of the blue-collar working class, such as workers on an assembly line. Capitalists, in their pursuit of cutting costs for the sake of the profit motive, reduced the complexity of individual labor to a few, repetitive tasks without context, eroding

workers' claim to wage power via specialization. Whenever feasible, jobs and processes were automated, reducing the number of workers as well as further separating them from the means of production via new roles as "monitors" of machines (Braverman 1975:220-222). These monitoring roles over "continuous processes" either led to increased job complexity (overseeing machines doing what used to be the work of several workers) or a further reduction in worker engagement with process. In either case, higher work alienation is likely; in Seeman's measures, the former leads to powerlessness and the latter leads to self-estrangement.

In an academic library work environment, we are dealing with a white-collar office setting, not a factory. Following Braverman (1975) and Fraser (2002), however, work alienation can still occur along the lines Marx predicted. Shrinking government financial support of higher education leads to flat or reduced budgets, necessitating staff reductions; simultaneously, new technology increasingly automates clerical, technical, and even professional work. Less library workers of all classifications and in all work areas are expected to maintain and even expand library service levels, often utilizing technology that rapidly changes. This affects different work areas and work classifications differently, as found by Vallas (1988) and demonstrated, in part, by the variations in high alienation found by this study.

For instance, as noted in the results, paraprofessionals had higher levels of work alienation then professional librarians. Paraprofessionals often perform clerical or technician work, whether it be manning a circulation desk and checking out materials to the public, processing newly purchased books, or invoicing new orders. They often (but

not always) are supervised by either managers or librarians, who often also determine

their job duties and workloads. In contrast, librarians as professionals generally (but not

always) perform more "involved" work, such as reference services, collection

development, original cataloging, and instruction. They also generally have larger work

autonomy to perform these duties and roles, with less direct supervision. As staffing is

reduced, paraprofessionals are asked to be "crosstrained" in more areas (i.e. public

services and technical services), regardless of previous experience or skills. In addition,

paraprofessional job duties such as secretarial work, book processing, copy-cataloging,

and even checking out materials may become automated with technology.

Paraprofessionals, more often than not, have little say in such developments, due to their

general lack of job autonomy. The ultimate outcome of this is the powerlessness form of

work alienation, as seen in the higher alienation scores for paraprofessionals. In contrast,

the rate of work alienation among librarians is generally lower, despite similar forces of

downsizing and automation affecting librarians. This is due to librarian job autonomy as

well as tasks that cannot easily be automated, such as teaching instruction and performing

reference consultations. Librarians can more easily resist these adverse work conditions

due to job autonomy; this follows the findings of the alienation studies of Pearlin (1962),

Shepherd (1970), and Vallas (1988), which all found that clerical level work, low job

autonomy, and low job specialization were correlated to higher alienation.

An interesting finding of this study was the high rates of work alienation for

administrators. In Marxist theory, administrators would be equivalent to management or

even capitalists, vis a vis the "proletarian" paraprofessionals or "middle-class" librarians.

One would surmise that in such roles where they controlled or dictated the work of others or even the entire organization, administrators would be the least susceptible to forms of alienation such as meaninglessness, self-estrangement, and powerlessness. However, as noted above, administrators had the greatest rates of high work alienation in these three measures across all work classifications. There are several possible explanations for this. First, from a Marxian perspective, library administrators may experience work alienation due to being far removed from actual work processes that are actually carried out by paraprofessionals and librarians; this disconnect may lead to a decrease in intrinsic work motivation, resulting in work self-estrangement. Another Marxian explanation may be that library administrators are often themselves responding to external pressures on the library when carrying out the reorganizations, downsizing, and outsourcing that paraprofessionals and to a lesser extent librarians find potentially alienating. Especially in the context of public universities funded by the state, where often budget decisions are made by the legislature, delivered to the university, and then impact the library, administrators may feel the quality of their management makes little difference. Ultimately, this may lead to the feelings of powerlessness and meaninglessness seen in this study.

Across work areas, it is interesting to note that outside of library workers who identified as "Other", levels of high work alienation were relatively low for Public Services, Technical Services, and Administration. Specifically, the rates for the first two are worth exploring in more detail, as they are the traditional bipartite divisions of work in libraries. Technical Services demonstrated higher levels of normlessness (10 percent)

and self-estrangement (12.50 percent), but a very low level of powerlessness (2.50 percent). As noted above, Technical Services generally involves more process-oriented work based in an office setting; workers most often sit at desks on computers, working with highly specialized software for library tasks such as cataloging, managing electronic resources, or ordering and invoicing of library resources. Work is very process-oriented, often with several processes done by several people within a larger unit workflow. Such work can often be tedious clerical work (entering paper orders or invoices manually into the acquisitions module of an integrated library system), but also can often be quite specialized and involve complex problem solving skills (fixing record batch loads or electronic resource access issues) (Zhu 2012:136-137). The tedious nature of much technical services work may explain the higher level of self-estrangement; higher levels of technical specialization may explain the low levels of powerlessness, as technical services workers often need to understand the immediate effects of their tasks within the context of larger interrelated workflows. In other words, the low levels of powerlessness in technical services workers in this study approximates the "continuous process" end of Blauner's inverted U-curve. This specialization may also give them more authority to determine and control their work, as well as mitigate against administrative intervention.

Burnout, role ambiguity, and role overload

As has been already noted above, the "Other" category in both work area and work classification demonstrated the highest levels of work alienation, almost regardless of score level or score type. It bears mentioning that within the context of the survey, respondents who selected "Other" as their answer in response to the work area or work

classification question were prompted to enter their answer in a text box. This allows some insight into what "Other" means beyond "not" being the three other enumerated options. For instance, for work area, the following were entered responses for the other category: subject academic librarian, both tech and public, both public and tech and archives, Systems, Electronic Resources, and Interlibrary Loan. Indeed, many of the responses indicated library workers who identified or belonged to multiple work areas. Similarly, the following are a few of the "Other" responses for work classification: archivist, non-library professional, have an MLIS but job title not librarian, librarian and administration, and supervisor (which occurred four times). Once again, we see instances of multiple roles and muddied classifications.

   "Other" respondents may be experiencing role ambiguity due to these various "hats" they have to wear across library work areas and classifications. Role ambiguity occurs "...when employees are unclear about their specific responsibilities or the boundaries of their job" (Shupe and Pung 2011: 410). As mentioned above, the library work areas defined for this study entail different kinds of library work, ranging from interacting with the public dynamically at a service desk (public services) to sitting alone in an office cubicle entering journal publication coverage into a database (technical services). If a library worker is expected to work across two or more of these work areas on a recurring basis, and their expected roles vary significantly, they may experience role ambiguity (Shupe et al. 2015:265-266). Role ambiguity and the stress and anxiety that it produces can in turn lead to alienation. For instance, using a work area response from the study mentioned above, someone who works in technical services, public services, and

archives may find themselves over the course of one day working a public service desk, copy-cataloging books, and digitizing print materials. If seen through the lens of work duties, ambiguity quickly ensues when one has to navigate conflicting unit meetings, projects, and expectations. A library worker in this position may quickly begin to feel powerlessness and meaninglessness; indeed, 15.40 percent and 19.20 percent, respectively, of library workers in "Other" work areas felt high levels of these measures of alienation.

Role overload may provide another explanation for the high levels of alienation among library workers in "Other" work areas and work-classifications. Role overload is experienced by a worker when their work becomes overwhelming due to it being very hard, very rapid, of long duration, or requiring skills or resources beyond their ability or situation (Shupe and Pung 2011:410). Several situations in academic libraries could lead to role overload. For instance, a library worker who previously only worked or specialized in one area may quickly feel overwhelmed if asked to contribute in a second, unfamiliar, area as well. Similarly, a library worker who takes on roles spanning multiple work-classifications, such as librarian and administrator, may find they simply do not have the time or skills to maintain their old duties while tackling new ones. However, they are still held, or perceive they are held accountable, for these responsibilities; the resulting internal tension leads to stress, burnout, and possibly alienation in the form of powerlessness (Shupe et al. 2015:265-266). This is demonstrated once again in the high percentage subscores for powerlessness for both the work area (15.40 percent) and work-classification (10.00 percent) of "Other".

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

As stated before, the purpose of this study was to measure work alienation among academic library workers to see if alienation varied based on work area or work classification. Academic libraries, as generally white collar work environments, differ markedly from the commonly blue collar, factory-type settings featured in many studies on work alienation. However, research such as Nauratil (1989), Fraser (2002), Vallas (1988), and Archibald (2009) indicate that alienation is an increasingly salient occurrence in white-collar office settings, with academic libraries being no exception. Library workers may be prone to alienation for a variety of reasons; automation, budget reductions leading to downsizing, tedious work, high levels of semi-structured interaction with the public at service points, outsourcing, and rigid class distinctions among paraprofessionals, librarians, and administrators.

Taking as a starting point that work alienation and job satisfaction are correlated concepts (Leftkowitz and Brigando 1980), this study utilized the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) as a means to generate "scores" of alienation of surveyed academic library workers. The hundred questions of the MSQ were each mapped to one of four of Seeman's measures of alienation, producing an additional level of "subscore" measurement. The study found that work alienation did vary across work areas and work-classifications; specifically, paraprofessionals were more alienated then their librarian coworkers, Technical Services and Public Services workers showed little variation in levels of alienation, and workers that classified their work areas and/or work-classifications as "Other" had the highest levels of both general and relative work

alienation.

Contributions

      This study contributed in several ways to both the sociological and library science literature. First, it developed a new methodology of measuring work alienation, based on a structured combination of Seeman's measures of alienation and the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire. This methodology, based on the convergent validity of work alienation and job satisfaction, allows for the relatively easy generation of scores of alienation for survey respondents; these basic scores can be recoded or manipulated for further statistical analyses. In addition, the measure subscores provide the opportunity for more granular investigation of work alienation, especially combined with demographic variables such as work area and work classification in cross-tabulations. Altogether, the methodology of this study makes it easily replicated, not only in libraries, but for other occupational settings as well.

      Second, the study contributes fresh research on work alienation to the field of sociology, in an occupation that has never been studied in that regard other than Nauratil (1989). As noted previously, the study of alienation within the sociology literature has declined in the last two decades; the current study contributes a refreshed approach to measuring and studying the concept, particularly in a white-collar setting. In particular, the findings of this study take into consideration the effect of continued and even increased technological change in the 21st century. Whereas previously alienation studies such as Blauner (1964) and Hull et al. (1982) focused on technology and blue collar workers, this study demonstrates the potential of automation among white collar workers

to cause work alienation as well. This was demonstrated by the high work alienation of paraprofessionals and library workers who work in more than one area.

Finally, this study provides useful occupational data for both the library profession as a whole as well as for academic library administrators or decision makers. Librarianship and libraries in general have been in a state of prolonged transformation over the last two decades, due to rapid expansion of the Internet and the increasing proliferation of library materials in digital format, such as e-books, e-journals, and article databases. These technological changes have affected the informational seeking behavior of library patrons, which has in turn affected how they utilize the library and what services they expect from it. The shifts and changes libraries have had to make in this environment have had a significant effect on the duties and responsibilities of workers. Administrators and library decision-makers would benefit from the results of this study indicating how work alienation varies across the library workplace. It could inform future organizational restructuring decisions, and potentially help avoid creating work roles and duties conducive to work alienation, such as job ambiguity and overload.

Further Study

The findings of this study only set the stage for further research into work alienation in academic libraries. Not all the demographic variables collected for this study were analyzed for the sake of brevity in this paper; further descriptive analysis via cross-tabulations of both general and subscores vis-a-vis variables like age, union membership, and librarian faculty status would greatly enhance the picture of work alienation across the library workplace. The author intends to carry out this further analysis as the subject

of future research.

Another avenue for potential investigation is replicating the study utilizing libraries at both larger and smaller Carnegie classification universities. The synthesized findings of such studies combined with the present study would allow for broader generalizations of explanations of the variations in work alienation within academic libraries. Additional variables could be studied for possible influences on work alienation, such as institution size and budget.

Finally, more advanced statistical methods could be utilized to analyze the data of this study or replications of it. T-tests, ANOVAs, and regression analysis could be performed, given the proper transformation of the raw survey results in SPSS. Such analyses would improve upon the results of this study in two ways. First, statistical significance or lack thereof could be demonstrated for variation in alienation across the variables studied. Second, the use of multiple linear regression could demonstrate which of the many variables available in this study were most closely tied to higher levels of work alienation.

Limitations

There are several limitations to the findings of this study. First, the variation in work alienation across library workers indicated by this paper are only generalizable to library workers at medium-sized, Master's level universities in the United States; they are not indicative of all academic library workers. As noted in the previous section concerning further study, university and library size, as well as research-level, may have an effect on variation in work alienation at larger or smaller institutions. Furthermore,

only descriptive statistical analysis was utilized on the data of this study; thus, the findings make no claim to statistical significance. Another limitation of this study was the relatively low response survey response rate of 11.5 percent. This low rate can be attributed to the email distribution method utilized to disseminate the survey to the randomly sampled list of 1600 library workers. Email distribution was deemed by the author as the only practical method of distribution, due to sample size and the need for data analysis. Mail distribution and manual data entry of responses were not feasible for this project.

Over 150 years ago, Karl Marx first wrote about the alienation of the worker within the then emerging capitalist mode of production. Since then, many sociologists, including Blauner, Seeman, and Braverman have further developed the idea, often in the context of industrial society at the time. The concept of alienation, as a literature review on the subject shows, has proven notoriously hard to define, let alone measure empirically. Seeman's multi-dimensional definition, based on the five measures of meaninglessness, powerlessness, normlessness, self-estrangement, and isolation, has been widely adapted by studies of work alienation in sociology. At its core, work alienation involves a gap, a disconnection between a worker and their work that is primarily situationally induced. This study demonstrates that within the context of the white-collar environs of academic libraries, work alienation not only exists but varies across library work areas and work classifications, from paraprofessional to librarian and from public services to administration. Acknowledging the presence of alienation in the library workplace, the question for future research and library administration alike is the

following: what can be done about it?

APPENDIX

Table A: MSQ Questions and their Corresponding Factors

Number	Survey Item	Factor	Alienation measure
1	The chance to be of service to others	Social Service	Self-estrangement
2	The chance to try out some of my own ideas	Creativity	Powerlessness
3	Being able to do the job without feeling it is morally wrong	Moral values	Normlessness
4	The chance to work by myself	Independence	Powerlessness
5	The variety in my work	Variety	Powerlessness
6	The chance to have other workers look to me for direction	Authority	Powerlessness
7	The chance to do the kind of work I do best	Ability Utilization	Meaninglessness
8	The social position in the community that goes with the job	Social Status	Self-estrangement
9	The policies and practices toward employees of this company	Company policies and practices	Normlessness
10	The way my supervisor and I understand each other	Supervision-Human relations	Meaninglessness
11	My job security	Security	Meaninglessness
12	The amount of pay for the work I do	Compensation	Self-estrangement
13	The working conditions (heating, lighting, ventilation etc) on this job	Working conditions	Powerlessness
14	The opportunities for advancement on this job	Advancement	Normlessness
15	The technical know-how of my supervisor	Supervision-Technical	Meaninglessness
16	The spirit of	Coworkers	Normlessness

	cooperation among my coworkers		
17	The chance to be responsible for planning my work	Responsibility	Powerlessness
18	The way I am noticed when I do a good job	Recognition	Self-estrangement
19	Being able to see the results of the work I do	Achievement	Self-estrangement
20	The choice to be active much of the time	Activity	Meaninglessness
21	The chance to be of service to people	Social Service	Self-estrangement
22	The chance to do new and original things on my own	Creativity	Powerlessness
23	Being able to do things that don't go against my religious beliefs	Moral values	Normlessness
24	The chance to work alone on the job	Independence	Powerlessness
25	The chance to do different things from time to time	Variety	Powerlessness
26	The chance to tell other workers how to do things	Authority	Powerlessness
27	The chance to do work that is well suited to my abilities	Ability Utilization	Meaninglessness
28	The chance to be somebody in the community	Social Status	Self-estrangement
29	Company policies and the way in which they are administered	Company policies and practices	Normlessness
30	The way my boss handles his/her employees	Supervision-Human relations	Meaninglessness
31	The way my job provides for a secure future	Security	Meaninglessness
32	The chance to make as much money as my	Compensation	Self-estrangement

	friends		
33	The physical surroundings where I work	Working conditions	Powerlessness
34	The chances of getting ahead on this job	Advancement	Normlessness
35	The competence of my supervisor in making decisions	Supervision-Technical	Meaninglessness
36	The chance to develop close friendships with my coworkers	Coworkers	Normlessness
37	The chance to make decisions on my own	Responsibility	Powerlessness
38	The way I get full credit for the work I do	Recognition	Self-estrangement
39	Being able to take pride in a job well done	Achievement	Self-estrangement
40	Being able to do something much of the time	Activity	Meaninglessness
41	The chance to help people	Social Service	Self-estrangement
42	The chance to try something different	Creativity	Powerlessness
43	Being able to do things that don't go against my conscience	Moral values	Normlessness
44	The chance to be alone on the job	Independence	Powerlessness
45	The routine in my work	Variety	Powerlessness
46	The chance to supervise other people	Authority	Powerlessness
47	The chance to make use of my best abilities	Ability Utilization	Meaninglessness
48	The chance to rub elbows with important people	Social Status	Self-estrangement
49	The way employees are informed about company policies	Company policies and practices	Normlessness
50	The way my boss	Supervision-	Meaninglessness

	backs up his/her employees with top management	Human relations	
51	The way my job provides for steady employment	Security	Meaninglessness
52	How my pay compares with that for a similar jobs in other companies	Compensation	Self-estrangement
53	The pleasantness of the working conditions	Working conditions	Powerlessness
54	The way promotions are given out in this job	Advancement	Normlessness
55	The way my boss delegates work to others	Supervision-Technical	Meaninglessness
56	The friendliness of my coworkers	Coworkers	Normlessness
57	The chance to be responsible for the work of others	Responsibility	Powerlessness
58	The recognition I get for the work I do	Recognition	Self-estrangement
59	Being able to do something worthwhile	Achievement	Self-estrangement
60	Being able to stay busy	Activity	Meaninglessness
61	The chance to do things for other people	Social Service	Self-estrangement
62	The chance to develop new and better ways to do the job	Creativity	Powerlessness
63	The chance to do things that don't harm other people	Moral values	Normlessness
64	The chance to work independently of others	Independence	Powerlessness
65	The chance do something different every day	Variety	Powerlessness
66	The chance to tell people what to do	Authority	Powerlessness

67	The chance to do something that makes use of my abilities	Ability Utilization	Meaninglessness
68	The chance to be important in the eyes of others	Social Status	Self-estrangement
69	The way company policies are put into practice	Company policies and practices	Normlessness
70	The way my boss takes care of the complaints of her/her employees	Supervision-Human relations	Meaninglessness
71	How steady my job is	Security	Meaninglessness
72	My pay and the amount of work I do	Compensation	Self-estrangement
73	The physical working conditions of the job	Working conditions	Powerlessness
74	The chances for advancement on this job	Advancement	Normlessness
75	The way my boss provides help on hard problems	Supervision-Technical	Meaninglessness
76	The way my coworkers are easy to make friends with	Coworkers	Normlessness
77	The freedom to use my own judgments	Responsibility	Powerlessness
78	The way they usually tell me when I do my job well	Recognition	Self-estrangement
79	The chance to do my best at all times	Achievement	Self-estrangement
80	The chance to be on the go all of the time	Activity	Meaninglessness
81	The chance to be of some small service to other people	Social Service	Self-estrangement
82	The chance to try my own methods of doing the job	Creativity	Powerlessness
83	The chance to do the job without feeling I am cheating anyone	Moral values	Normlessness

84	The chance to work away from others	Independence	Powerlessness
85	The chance to do many different things on the job	Variety	Powerlessness
86	The chance to tell others what to do	Authority	Powerlessness
87	The chance to make use of my abilities and skills	Ability Utilization	Meaninglessness
88	The chance to have a definite place in the community	Social Status	Self-estrangement
89	The way the company treats its employees	Company policies and practices	Normlessness
90	The personal relationships between my boss and his/her employees	Supervision-Human relations	Meaninglessness
91	The way layoffs and transfers are avoided in my job	Security	Meaninglessness
92	How my pay compares with that of other workers	Compensation	Self-estrangement
93	The working conditions	Working conditions	Powerlessness
94	My chances for advancement	Advancement	Normlessness
95	The way my boss trains his/her employees	Supervision-Technical	Meaninglessness
96	The way my coworkers get along with each other	Coworkers	Normlessness
97	The responsibility of my job	Responsibility	Powerlessness
98	The praise I get for doing a good job	Recognition	Self-estrangement
99	The feeling of accomplishment I get from the job	Achievement	Self-estrangement
100	Being able to keep busy all the time	Activity	Meaninglessness

Table B: MSQ Factors Mapped to Seeman's Measures of Alienation

Factor	Alienation measure
Ability Utilization	Meaninglessness
Supervision-Human relations	Meaninglessness
Security	Meaninglessness
Supervision-Technical	Meaninglessness
Activity	Meaninglessness
Moral values	Normlessness
Company policies and practices	Normlessness
Advancement	Normlessness
Coworkers	Normlessness
Creativity	Powerlessness
Independence	Powerlessness
Variety	Powerlessness
Authority	Powerlessness
Working conditions	Powerlessness
Responsibility	Powerlessness
Social Service	Self-estrangement
Social Status	Self-estrangement
Compensation	Self-estrangement
Recognition	Self-estrangement
Achievement	Self-estrangement

Table C: Variables

Variable	Concept Defined	Operational Definitions	
Demographic	a) Age b) Occupational Tenure c) Library Work Area d) Classification e) Gender	a) Years old b) Years at current workplace c) Public Services, Technical Services, Administration, Other d) Paraprofessional, Professional (Librarian), Administrator, Other e) Male, Female	
Job satisfaction	a) Powerlessness – "The expectation that one's behavior cannot determine outcomes or reinforcements sought" ● Authority ● Creativity ● Responsibility ● Variety ● Independence b) Normlessness – "a situation where there is a high expectation that socially unapproved behaviors are required to achieve goals" ● moral values, ● company policies and practices ● advancement ● coworkers c) Meaninglessness – "low expectation that satisfactory predictions about future outcomes of behavior can be made" ● ability utilization ● supervision-human relations ● security ● supervision-technical ● activity d) Self-estrangement – "working only for the money; real interests lie outside of work"; extrinsic motivation ● Achievement ● Compensation ● Recognition ● Social Service ● Social Status	a) Powerlessness 1 Very Dissatisfied=very low feeling of control/very high feeling of alienation 2 Dissatisfied=low feeling of control/high feeling of alienation 3 Neutral=moderate feeling of control/moderate feeling of alienation 4 Satisfied=high feeling of control/low feeling of alienation 5 Very Satisfied=very high feeling of control/very low feeling of alienation	

Table D: Sample Design: Institutions Sampled by Type and Region

Region	Public (273)	Private (485)
Great Lakes/Plains	57	123
North Atlantic	72	139
Southeast	95	126
West/Southwest	46	83

Region	Public (after sampling)	Private (after sampling)
Great Lakes/Plains	19	41
North Atlantic	24	46
Southeast	32	42
West/Southwest	15	28
Total	*90*	*157*

Table E: Regional Definition by State Groups

Great Lakes/Plains
IA
IL
IN
KS
MI
MN
MO
ND
NE
OH
SD
WI

North Atlantic
CT
DC
DE
MA
MD
ME
NH
NJ
NY
PA
RI
VT

Southeast
AL
AR
FL
GA
KY
LA
MS
NC
OK
SC
TN
TX
VA
WV

West/Southwest
AK
AZ
CA
CO
HI
ID
MT
NM
NV
OR
UT
WA

Table F: Descriptives

Characteristics	N	Percent
Age		
20-29	18	9.57%
30-39	41	21.81%
40-49	50	26.60%
50-59	34	18.09%
60 and over	36	19.15%
Gender		
Male	36	19.15%
Female	142	75.53%
Prefer not to respond	10	5.32%
Race/Ethnicity		
African American	7	3.72%
Asian/Pacific Islander	3	1.60%
White	147	78.19%
Hispanic/Latino	9	4.79%
Multi-racial	7	3.72%
Prefer not to respond	13	6.91%
Work Tenure		
0-2	56	29.79%
2-5	29	15.43%
6-10	31	16.49%
11-20	42	22.34%
21-30	19	10.11%
30 and up	8	4.26%
Prefer not to respond	3	1.60%
Area of the Library		
Public Services	91	48.40%
Technical Services	40	21.28%
Administration	29	15.43%
Other	26	13.83%
Library Work Classification		
Paraprofessional	56	29.79%
Librarian	100	53.19%
Administrator	20	10.64%
Other	10	5.32%
Union membership		
Yes	46	24.47%
No	137	72.87%
Prefer not to respond	5	2.66%
Faculty Status*		
Yes	59	59.00%
No	38	38.00%
Prefer not to respond	3	3.00%
Faculty Tenure*		
Yes	16	27.12%
No	42	71.19%
Prefer not to respond	1	1.69%

Table G: Descriptive Statistics (SPSS)

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Total Score	186	57.00	483.00	313.7634	77.58781
Valid N (listwise)	186				

Table H: Compare Means Test for Combined Work Classification and Work Area Variables

	What work classification are you? - Selected Choice	*What area of the library do you work in? - Selected Choice*	*Mean*	*N*	*Std. Deviation*
Total Score	*Paraprofessional*	*Public Services*	291.50	28.00	78.33
	Paraprofessional	*Technical Services*	309.47	19.00	74.59
	Paraprofessional	*Administration*	343.67	3.00	58.53
	Paraprofessional	*Other (Please specify)*	322.83	6.00	86.54
	Librarian	*Public Services*	320.91	56.00	76.45
	Librarian	*Technical Services*	328.89	18.00	81.70
	Librarian	*Administration*	329.40	10.00	39.40
	Librarian	*Other (Please specify)*	294.63	16.00	101.25
	Administrator	*Public Services*	345.50	2.00	45.96
	Administrator	*Administration*	338.27	15.00	81.52
	Administrator	*Other (Please specify)*	275.00	3.00	100.16
	Other (Please specify)	*Public Services*	253.80	5.00	44.39
	Other (Please specify)	*Technical Services*	296.67	3.00	61.23
	Other (Please specify)	*Administration*	336.00	1.00	NaN
	Other (Please specify)	*Other (Please specify)*	366.00	1.00	NaN

Report

	Mean	*N*	*Std. Deviation*
Total Score	313.76	186.00	77.59

Table I: Crosstab for General Alienation Score X Work Area

What area of the library do you work in? - Selected Choice * MSQ_ScoreGroup [count, row %, column %, total %].

What area of the library do you work in? - Selected Choice	MSQ_ScoreGroup					
	0-175	176-250	251-325	326-400	401-500	Total
Public Services	3.00	17.00	32.00	29.00	10.00	91.00
Row	3.30%	18.68%	35.16%	31.87%	10.99%	100.00%
Column	33.33%	60.71%	51.61%	44.62%	45.45%	48.92%
Total	1.61%	9.14%	17.20%	15.59%	5.38%	48.92%
Technical Services	1.00	8.00	12.00	15.00	4.00	40.00
Row	2.50%	20.00%	30.00%	37.50%	10.00%	100.00%
Column	11.11%	28.57%	19.35%	23.08%	18.18%	21.51%
Total	.54%	4.30%	6.45%	8.06%	2.15%	21.51%
Administration	1.00	1.00	10.00	13.00	4.00	29.00
Row	3.45%	3.45%	34.48%	44.83%	13.79%	100.00%
Column	11.11%	3.57%	16.13%	20.00%	18.18%	15.59%
Total	.54%	.54%	5.38%	6.99%	2.15%	15.59%
Other (Please specify)	4.00	2.00	8.00	8.00	4.00	26.00
Row	15.38%	7.69%	30.77%	30.77%	15.38%	100.00%
Column	44.44%	7.14%	12.90%	12.31%	18.18%	13.98%
Total	2.15%	1.08%	4.30%	4.30%	2.15%	13.98%
Total	9.00	28.00	62.00	65.00	22.00	186.00
	4.84%	15.05%	33.33%	34.95%	11.83%	100.00%
	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
	4.84%	15.05%	33.33%	34.95%	11.83%	100.00%

Chi-square tests.

Statistic	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)
Pearson Chi-Square	14.06	12	.297
Likelihood Ratio	13.22	12	.353
N of Valid Cases	186		

Table J: Crosstab for General MSQ Score X Work Classification

What work classification are you? - Selected Choice * MSQ_ScoreGroup [count, row %, column %, total %].

What work classification are you? - Selected Choice	MSQ_ScoreGroup					
	0-175	176-250	251-325	326-400	401-500	Total
Paraprofessional	2.00	12.00	18.00	17.00	7.00	56.00
Row	3.57%	21.43%	32.14%	30.36%	12.50%	100.00%
Column	22.22%	42.86%	29.03%	26.15%	31.82%	30.11%
Total	1.08%	6.45%	9.68%	9.14%	3.76%	30.11%
Librarian	5.00	12.00	34.00	37.00	12.00	100.00
Row	5.00%	12.00%	34.00%	37.00%	12.00%	100.00%
Column	55.56%	42.86%	54.84%	56.92%	54.55%	53.76%
Total	2.69%	6.45%	18.28%	19.89%	6.45%	53.76%
Administrator	2.00	1.00	7.00	7.00	3.00	20.00
Row	10.00%	5.00%	35.00%	35.00%	15.00%	100.00%
Column	22.22%	3.57%	11.29%	10.77%	13.64%	10.75%
Total	1.08%	.54%	3.76%	3.76%	1.61%	10.75%
Other (Please specify)	.00	3.00	3.00	4.00	.00	10.00
Row	.00%	30.00%	30.00%	40.00%	.00%	100.00%
Column	.00%	10.71%	4.84%	6.15%	.00%	5.38%
Total	.00%	1.61%	1.61%	2.15%	.00%	5.38%
Total	9.00	28.00	62.00	65.00	22.00	186.00
	4.84%	15.05%	33.33%	34.95%	11.83%	100.00%
	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
	4.84%	15.05%	33.33%	34.95%	11.83%	100.00%

Chi-square tests.

Statistic	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)
Pearson Chi-Square	8.73	12	.726
Likelihood Ratio	10.16	12	.602
N of Valid Cases	186		

Table K: Summary Chart, with MSQ Gen Score and Measures Subscore 40% Percentile across Work Classification and Work Area

	WORK CLASSIFICATIONS				WORK AREAS			
	Paraprofessional	Librarian	Administration	Other	Public Service	Technical Serv	Administration	Other
Normlessness	8.93	7.00	10.00	11.00	8.79	10.00	3.45	15.39
Meaninglessness	14.30	7.00	15.00	15.30	9.90	7.50	6.90	19.20
Self Estrangement	12.50	8.00	15.00	0.00	7.70	12.50	6.90	15.30
Powerlessness	7.10	6.00	15.00	10.00	7.70	2.50	6.90	15.40
	10.7075	7	13.75	9.075	8.5225	8.125	6.0375	16.3225
MSQ General	25	17	15	30	21.98	22.5	6.9	23.17
Compare means	303.75	318.99	329.5	286.1	308.71	317.25	335.669	301.62
Percent General Score	0.6075	0.63798	0.659	0.5722	0.61742	0.6345	0.671338	0.60324

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