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BURNOUT: A MULTI-DIMENSIONAL STUDY OF ALIENATION

AMONG SOCIAL SERVICE WORKERS IN

THE WILLAMETTE VALLEY

by

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TO THE OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH:

The Advisor approves the practicum of Sally Carignan, John Deihl, Judy Harris, Jay Jones, Bonnie Rothman, Sabrina Ullmann, Beth Weinberg-Gordon, Phyllis Weter, Patricia Whitty, and Loretta Wilson, presented June 12, 1981.

John F. Longres, Advisor

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

INTRODUCTION

In recent years there has been a growing surge of interest and recognition in the prevalence of "burnout" among social service workers. Burnout has been defined as to "fail, wear out, or become exhausted by excessive demands on energy, strength or sources" (Freudenberger, 1975, p. 73). From this definition, one can ascertain that this depletion of capacities is of critical concern to both the workers and administrators in the social services and the clients whom they serve.

The manifestation of burnout has been reported to be that of cynical and negative attitudes and involves a loss of concern and unresponsiveness to the problems and needs of others--an emotional withdrawal (Daley, 1979). This subjective description of burnout bears a striking and undeniable resemblance to the psychological aspects of Marx's theory of alienation. Thus, to the writers of this study, burnout describes the subjective experience of alienation and the ways in which estrangement from self and others (two aspects of alienation according to Marx) are expressed. Burnout thus seems limited in its utility for understanding this phenomenon, while Marx's theory of alienation encompasses not only the psychological dimensions of burnout, but the structural aspects as well. Therefore, the concept

of alienation will be utilized in this study in an attempt to further knowledge in this area by using the more relevant and encompassing theory of alienation as it applies to the work place.

In a profession such as social work, where one is responsible for dealing with the ills of society and meeting the needs of other individuals, such emotional detachment and estrangement from others is antithetical to the purpose of the field and eminently destructive to those seeking and needing assistance. With the current push for accountability, factors such as burnout or alienation from one's work become of crucial importance. In addition, burnout leads to a high rate of absenteeism and job turnover (Minihan, 1980). This too decreases cost effectiveness and the quality of service, matters of extreme concern in a field designed to serve the needs of individuals in society and to do so on limited funds and resources.

Thus, alienation is of paramount importance to the field of social services and can no longer be ignored or relegated to a back seat in terms of study and research. Current literature in the field of social work deals only with the subjective expression of alienation; it has omitted linking the psychological with the social-structural aspects of alienation: indeed, with linking burnout to alienation itself. This study proposes to begin to fill this gap. What conditions in the structure of the work place and/or

society cause or are correlated with the expression of alienation? It is this question which we endeavor to pursue.

CHAPTER I

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In this review of the literature, we will focus primarily on the empirical research which emphasizes the social structural contexts of work alienation with the hope of identifying some of the common structural causes of work alienation. However, because of the vast amount of literature on the "burnout syndrome" of social service workers, we find it difficult to ignore the studies describing the subjective experiences of alienation; therefore, we will briefly discuss this existing literature. Our discussion will focus on the following areas:

(1) Existing literature dealing with the "burnout" syndrome

(2) Theoretical literature dealing with the question of whether alienation is primarily a subjective psychological phenomenon or a social-structural condition

(3) Empirical studies of work alienation

THE BURNOUT SYNDROME--THE SUBJECTIVE
EXPRESSION OF ALIENATION

Burnout has been used to describe a number of affective states and behavioral phenomena which in the past have been identified with job dissatisfaction and/or stress.

Pines and Maslach (1978, p. 233) have defined burnout for

social service workers:

> . . . as a syndrome of physical and emotional exhaustion, involving the development of negative self-concept, negative job attitudes and loss of concern and feeling for clients.

Edelwich and Brodsky (1980, p. 14) define burnout as:

> . . . a progressive loss of idealism, energy, and purpose experienced by people in the helping profession <u>as a result of the conditions of their work</u>. (Italics ours.)

Daley terms it a "reaction to job-related stress" (1979,

p. 375).

While the definitions of burnout are many and varied,

most authors agree that it is an affective state due to

work-related stress and that it unfolds as a process with

a progression of stages. Daley (1979) relates the stages

of burnout to that of human behavior under stress. First

there is an "alarm state" where an individual's energies

are all expended in an effort to manage stress. This state

may be likened to that of detached concern identified by

Maslach (1976). Finally, this stage may give way to exhaustion in which adaptive coping abilities break down.

Edelwich and Brodsky (1980) refer to the dynamic process of burnout as stages of disillusionment. These stages

are (1) enthusiasm, (2) stagnation, (3) frustration, and

(4) apathy. This process of disillusionment is not viewed

as inevitable or as a strict linear progression. Thus, the

cycle can be interrupted at any point with an appropriate

intervention, although the last stages are seen as more re-sistant to intervention than the beginning stages.

Burnout has been seen to be a particularly acute prob-lem for those in protective services (Daley, 1979), child care work (Freudenberger, 1977), and those working with chronic mental patients (Mendel, 1979). In a recent study among child welfare workers (Lawton & Magarelli, 1980), 96 percent of the social workers viewed their jobs as stressful with 64 percent of these workers claiming stress-related health problems due to their work. In addition, 73 percent of these people plan to quit their jobs, 53 percent within one year. This study exemplifies the prevalence of worker burnout within the field of social work.

The effects of burnout are felt by the worker and the clients s/he serves as well. Symptoms of burnout include cynicism, negativism, inflexible and rigid thinking, an emo-tional distancing from the client, boredom with one's work, a sense of helplessness and hopelessness, and frequently the home life of the worker deteriorates (Freudenberger, 1977). Burnout has been seen as a key factor in low worker morale, absenteeism, and high job turnover; furthermore, burnout has been correlated with alcoholism, mental illness, marital conflict, and suicide (Maslach, 1976). In addi-tion, many stress-related health problems such as ulcers, headaches, insomnia, and depression are correlated with the burnout syndrome (Lawton & Magarelli, 1980). Thus, the

impacts of burnout are many and varied, resulting in a nega-
tive effect upon the social service worker, the agency and
clients s/he serves, and on society as well.

All of these symptoms are affective, behavioral,
and/or physical responses to the conditions of one's work.
As Schacht has stated, alienation from one's work can mean
any or all of the following:

> . . . (1) dissatisfaction with one's job, (2) experi-
> ence of work as not being intrinsically rewarding,
> (3) experience of being insufficiently self-directed,
> meaningful and self-expressive.   (1971, p. 171)

From this perspective (of alienation from one's work),
burnout can be seen as the subjective or psychological as-
pect of alienation. As stated by Maslach:

> For social welfare workers, one of the major signs
> of burn-out was the transformation of a person with
> original thought and creativity on the job into a
> mechanical, petty, bureaucrat. (1976, p. 18)

This manifestation of burnout fits well with Schacht's de-
piction of work alienation. To the burned-out or alienated
worker, work has become unfulfilling and meaningless; thus,
work has lost its value. Since "the value of work, as a
contributor to our well-being, is a function of its ability
to provide opportunities for achievement and growth," these
conditions for fulfillment would appear to be lacking in the
structure of the work place, thus resulting in alienation
from one's work and the subjective experience of burnout
(Muldoon, 1980, p. 113).

Although definitions of burnout refer to the conditions of one's work (Edelwich & Brodsky, 1980), most of the solutions sought have been focused upon an individual rather than a structural level. Yoga, physical exercise, classes in stress management, furthering one's education, worker support networks, times out, job sharing and rotation, and staff retreats are often cited as remedies for burnout (Pines & Maslach, 1978; Daley, 1979). Edelwich and Brodsky (1979) suggest utilizing concepts from Reality Therapy and Rational Emotive Therapy. They encourage the worker to:

> . . . work from an acknowledgement of existing conditions rather than an idealized reconstruction of the helping relationship, social service institutions, or society as a whole. (Ibid., p. 30)

The stress here is upon accepting reality (or the status quo) and assuming responsibility for oneself. This is a sad conclusion after their hopeful definition of burnout resulting from the conditions of one's work: one should resign oneself to the conditions "as is."

In these modes of intervention directed primarily at the individual, the fault or blame for burnout is placed upon the individual worker. Although these remedies may reduce the expression of burnout, they ignore the core causal sources, and thus are only surface or "tip of the iceberg" solutions. These antidotes:

> . . . imply that the worker is the major target of change and that if these tactics alone are implemented, worker burn-out will be prevented and better

> services to people will follow. Exclusive reliance
> on interventions oriented only to the worker may re-
> sult in a blaming-the-victim attitude--the worker
> as the victim. (Minahan, 1980, p. 87)

Indeed, since the inability to achieve their objectives and
a belief in an inability to control their activities or
the work place itself are factors associated with burned-
out workers (Minahan, 1980), personal remedies would seem
to only alleviate the expression of burnout, while objec-
tive conditions of the work place and society, the roots of
alienation, would go unchecked.

Christine Maslach states that:

> Steps can be taken to reduce the occurrence of burn-
> out because many of its causes are rooted not in the
> permanent traits of people, but in specific social
> and situational factors that can be changed. (1976,
> p. 22)

Therefore, rather than personal remedies which take a
blaming-the-victim stance, an objective approach in ascer-
taining the conditions of the work place and/or societal
conditions which are correlated to worker alienation and
burnout, is needed to unmask the sources of burnout and ef-
fective interventions to prevent its occurrence.

ALIENATION: A SUBJECTIVE EXPERIENCE OR A SOCIAL-STRUCTURAL CONDITION?

In contemporary social science the concept of aliena-
tion can be traced back:

> . . . to the philosophy of history and theory of
> alienation established by Karl Marx and the theory
> of anomie developed in twentieth century sociology
> from Emile Durkheim's work. (Ludz, 1976, p. 31)

Marx's theory of alienation, which relies heavily on the work of Hegel, is primarily used for empirical studies of work alienation. It was in Karl Marx's writing in 1844, Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts, that the concept of alienation became an empirical-sociological concept rather than merely a philosophical-theoretical concept. Durkheim's theory of anomie and Marx's theory of alienation are frequently seen as interchangeable. For our purposes in this study, alienation will primarily refer to Marx's own definition of work alienation as the "surrender of one's control over one's product and labor" (Schacht, 1971, pp. 91-92). Anomie, a concept frequently confused with alienation, according to J. Horton, focuses on the "relationship between individuals and the constraining forces of social control" and "concentrates on culture or culture transmitted in social organizations" (Ludz, 1976, p. 6).

Marx describes four dimensions or aspects of alienation and these are: (1) from the objects produced, (2) from the work process, (3) from self, and (4) from other men. According to Finifter, the four aspects described by Marx are not "separable and independent dimensions of alienation, but are seen as links in a complex chain of development" (1972, pp. 3-4). For Marx, work was the most important activity for man. He described work as "life activity" because "through work man creates his world and as a consequence he creates himself" (Israel, 1971, p. 37).

Schacht (1971) gives a detailed description of the dimensions of alienation and examines the classical literature (Marx and Hegel) and modern literature (primarily Horney and Fromm). He concludes that alienation is a "multidimensional" concept and that there is a lack of uniformity in the uses of alienation among sociologists. In regard to work alienation, Schacht states that alienation can mean all or some of the following:

> (1) dissatisfaction with one's job,
> (2) experience of work as not being intrinsically rewarding,
> (3) experience of being insufficiently self-directed, meaningful, and self-expressive. (Ibid., p. 171)

Because alienation can mean many different things to different researchers, Schacht maintains that to operationalize the concept, there must be "objective criteria for the phenomena" (Ibid., p. 200).

The debate concerning whether alienation is primarily a subjective state of individual consciousness or an objective condition of society has persisted in sociologicalempirical literature. Marx, himself, incorporated both "objective" and "subjective" perspectives in his theory of alienation, according to Ludz (1976, p. 29), and Archibald (1976, pp. 64-65). Marx, however, stressed the objective conditions that influenced the worker because Marx always took into account the "historical moment." Man, for Marx, cannot be viewed as separate from the society in which he lives. Schaff explains that the point of departure for

Marx's theory of alienation was based on Marx's own obser-
vations of "market relations in the developing capitalist
society" (1970, p. 107). In a Marxian analysis, the eco-
nomic relationship is basic because the "subjugation and
exploitation of man by man" is the source of alienation
(Schaff, 1970, pp. 105-123).

Finifter maintains that Marx found it necessary not
to merely rely on the subjective, expressed dissatisfactions
of workers because:

> . . . presumably, many have been socialized to expect
> no more than they actually received; therefore, felt
> content and did not subjectively experience dissatis-
> faction or alienation and this he referred to as
> "false consciousness." (1972, p. 6)

Israel describes false consciousness as occurring when the:

> . . . alienating processes are either so effective,
> or have been going on continuously for such a long
> period, that one no longer experiences them on a cog-
> nitive level. (1971, p. 80)

Seeman was among the first to attempt to isolate the
aspects of Marx's theory of alienation to allow empirical
study. He treated the five variants of alienation--power-
lessness, meaninglessness, normlessness, isolation, and
self-estrangement--from the "personal standpoint of the
actor" and with a "focus chiefly upon the ideas of expecta-
tion and value" (1959, p. 784). Thus, alienation was viewed
as a subjective or psychological state of the individual.

Archibald (1976) attempts to resolve the subjective-
objective issue by examining more objective behavioral in-
dicators of work alienation. He arrives at four dimensions

which are similar to Marx's dimensions. They are as follows:

> (1) Detachment dimension: "they are indifferent to, not involved with, or detached from the object."
> (2) Means-Ends: "to the extent that they approach the object at all they use only a few of its characteristics to achieve only a few, egoistic, narrowly utilitarian ends."
> (3) Control-Purposiveness: "the object is not under their conscious control, and they act toward it as if this were the case."
> (4) Feelings: "they have certain feelings (e.g., powerlessness or misery) about the object." (Ibid., p. 65)

EMPIRICAL STUDIES ON WORK ALIENATION

The theoretical literature on alienation has dealt primarily with the alienating social conditions and processes. Empirical studies on work alienation have traditionally dealt with individual attitudinal or subjective measures. This is a paradox because the empirical approach allows for describing and defining alienation more objectively, while the theoretical or philosophical approach is usually based on the subjective value judgments of the theorists.

Marx's analysis of alienated labor holds that particular aspects of factory work necessarily lead to feelings of alienation in a capitalist system of economic organization. Marx did not concern himself with how the kind and extent of alienation may vary as a result of differences among factory organizations or types of industry. However, industrial production under capitalism has evolved in a number

of ways and industrial production differs in many structural
features.

Blauner (1964) attempts to analyze how different pat-
terns of industrial organization affect alienation from
work. Blauner, in Alienation and Freedom, focuses on the
nature of the work process. He was concerned with the
various levels of technology in industries. Blauner used
a lengthy questionnaire to collect data from three thousand
blue-collar workers in sixteen different factory industries.
Alienation for Blauner consists of a "general syndrome" con-
sisting of both subjective feeling and objective conditions.
His definition of work alienation is as follows:

> Alienation exists when workers are unable to control
> their immediate work processes, to develop a sense of
> purpose and function which connects their jobs to the
> overall organization of production, to belong to inte-
> grated industrial communities, and when they fail to
> become involved in the activity or work as a mode of
> personal self-expression. (Ibid., p. 15)

Blauner's work is a vital contribution to the study
of work alienation because he did not concern himself
merely with the psychological adjustment of the worker, but
also made an effort to examine structural causes of aliena-
tion so that solutions to alienation could be undertaken.
However, a shortcoming of Blauner's work is that he failed
to incorporate Marx's idea of the "ownership of production"
and contends, with Weber, that "bureaucracy rather than cap-
italism is the more general cause of alienation from work"
(Archibald, 1976, p. 69).

What was Marx's view of bureaucracy? Hasenfield and English summarize the Marxist conception of bureaucracy as:

> . . . the state itself through which the dominant social class exercises its power and domination over other social classes. Therefore, bureaucracy for Marx is only one instance of the general process of aliena- tion. (1974, p. 25)

Work alienation can also be affected by certain per- sonal characteristics of workers. Because the personal characteristics may interact with the actual working condi- tions and consequently influence the relationship between working conditions and alienation, studies of work aliena- tion cannot ignore the possible influence of individual personal characteristics.

Leonard Pearlin (1962) examines how authority rela- tionships and other structural conditions of a large federal mental hospital are related to alienation from work. How- ever, he specifically examines how personal characteristics affect workers' feelings about their work. According to Finifter, Pearlin demonstrates:

> . . . clearly that psychological characteristics and aspirations of individuals must be taken into account in assessing the degree to which specific work condi- tions are alienating. (1972, p. 105)

Miller (1972), in his study of scientists and engi- neers of a major aerospace company concerned himself pri- marily with how professional socialization experiences and professional values affect reactions to work environments. He was not as concerned about power and control over work tasks and the work situation as was Pearlin (1962), but

rather emphasized the degree of ego and personal involvement that the worker has over his work. He concludes that those workers who choose extrinsic incentives over intrinsic incentives may be considered alienated from their work.

But individual personal characteristics are not the only variables which explain the relationship between the work situation and alienation from work. Values and norms may also be variables that influence the relationship. Zurcher, Meadow, and Zurcher (1972) did a cross-cultural study of value orientations, role conflicts, and alienation. This study involved Mexican and American banks because it provided the researchers with accessible as well as comparable bureaucratic organizations from which to draw subjects Their findings concluded that cultural groups and values influence individual reactions to the work situation.

The context of the studies of Pearlin (hospital), Miller (aerospace manufacturing), and Zurcher et al. (bank) are essential conditions and structures found in all bureaucratic organizations. Hence, it leads to the question of whether bureaucracy in and of itself leads to work alienation. In recent decades, the increase of the bureaucratization of organizations and the simultaneous increase in the professionalization of work have resulted in numerous studies concerning the nature of professional-bureaucratic relationships. Even though our study will not focus on the issue of

whether bureaucracy in and of itself causes alienation, we do find that we cannot ignore this area.

Three basic structural elements that have been identified as "intrinsically problem generating" are "hierarchy of authority, specialization of tasks, and functions and rules and regulations" (Braeger & Halloway, 1978, p. 8). Hall (1968) identified similar dimensions which, in a continuum, are characteristic of a "bureaucracy." Aiken and Haage (1966), Blauner (1964), Bonjean and Grimes (1970), and Neal and Rettig (1963) are only a few of many empirical studies dealing with the relationship between bureaucratization and alienation.

Murdia (1979) in her study of precarious and predictable human service organizations in India concludes that more respondents from predictable organizations (those displaying bureaucratic structures) are more alienated than respondents from precarious organizations (non-bureaucratic). She concludes that there is a "significant association between the degree of work alienation and the perception of the decision-making structure" (Ibid., p. 174).

And, in addition to the vast amount of literature dealing with bureaucratization and alienation, there is also a vast amount of literature concerning the conflict between professional self-direction and bureaucracy (Finch, 1976; Hall, 1968; Billingsley, 1974; Wasserman, 1971; Green, 1966; Pruger, 1973). A study by Morrisey and Gillispie from the

University of Washington suggests that the relationship
between:

> . . . professionalism and bureaucracy is not simple
> and direct as presumed in much of the literature,
> but rather that the technology of an organization
> greatly affects the kinds of rules and procedures
> that may affect professional autonomy.   (1973, p. 330)

How the growth of industrialization has affected work
and workers' feelings of work was studied by Braverman
(1974). In his work Labor and Monopoly Capital, he shows
how technology and science successfully bring the process
of production under the control of management, and how
capitalist management has encouraged division and subdivi-
sion of labor. He uses a Marxian analysis to show how the
division of labor leads to workers' loss of control over
the product and process of labor, as well as how the sepa-
ration of mental and manual labor occurs.

Thomson, in a study conducted at the University of
Michigan, attempted to examine whether "it is possible to
operationally define some of the theoretical concerns of
Marx and Braverman," and to examine the differences and sim-
ilarities between clerical workers and other occupational
categories (1979, p. 7). Using survey data based on a na-
tional random sample of 1,496 workers, she attempted to ex-
amine the nature of work rather than the subjective or
psychological experiences of workers. Respondents were
requested to respond to the objective conditions of their
work in regard to "extent of control, creative and

spontaneous activity, use of mental processes and job ac-
tivities which are highly rationalized" (Ibid., p. 6). The
study confirmed Thomson's hypothesis that the nature of
clerical work involves activities that are more similar to
the factory worker than that of a "new thriving middle
class" (Op. cit.).

Naik (1978) was also interested in "white-collar
workers." In her study of 101 employees of the banking
industry in India, her findings are as follows:

> The data obtained show that there was hardly any re-
> lationship between the alienation scores and such
> bio-data variables as the length of service in the
> bank, years spent in the present department, or the
> years of prior experience. Age of the employees bears
> a negative relationship to work alienation only; with
> the exception of the factor pertaining to job satis-
> faction from pay, all other job satisfaction shows
> a negative relationship to work alienation. (Ibid.,
> p. 247)

Tudor replicated previous empirical research in the
area of job complexity and feelings of powerlessness. His
study involved a "nationally representative sample of
native-born, non-agriculturally employed white males,"
interviewed in 1960 and 1964 (1972, p. 597). Tudor's find-
ings were that lack of occupational complexity is related
to feelings of powerlessness for a minority of the work
force; the relationship is weaker for lower income occupa-
tional categories. He contends that variables such as "edu-
cation or income rather than job complexity may really ex-
plain the extent to which lower income men feel alienated"
(Ibid., p. 602).

In contrast to researchers who maintain that techno-
logical conditions are a source of work alienation, Gold-
thorpe (1966) concludes that social conditions determine
workers' feelings of alienation. His study of workers at
the Vauxhall car factory in Luton, England was comprised of
respondents who all worked on the conveyor belt and who all
expressed dissatisfaction with their work. He maintained
that all the workers had a "purely instrumental attitude"
toward their work because they did the work merely to satis-
fy needs outside of work (Ibid., p. 119). Goldthorpe con-
cluded that the workers were alienated even before they
sought the job; therefore, the roots of alienation must be
sought:

> . . . in those aspects of the wider society which
> generate their tremendous drive for economic advance-
> ment and disregard for the costs of this through the
> impoverishment of their working lives. (Ibid., p. 119)

Neal and Seeman (1964) examine the relationship be-
tween organizational membership and powerlessness. They
found that there is a weak relationship between powerless-
ness and organizational membership for individuals who have
experienced "upward mobility" or success. They also found
that the white-collar workers perceived a worker associa-
tion as an instrument of social personal mobility; the man-
ual worker perceived it as a source of group and economic
security. Hence, it appears that, in a capitalist system,
the drive for status and/or achievement may dull an aware-
ness or consciousness of alienation from one's work.

Kohn (1976), however, hypothesizes that neither the explicit or implicit consequences of capitalism nor bureaucracy are the primary sources of alienation in this industrial society. His study is particularly interesting for our own research because he attempts to link the social-structural and psychological factors in his study of U.S. males employed in civilian occupations. He maintains that occupational self-direction is of major importance to workers, but that occupational self-direction may be sacrificed by workers in favor of job security in a time of economic uncertainty; the conditions of society or the "historical moment" cannot be ignored. Kohn utilizes a Marxist paradigm and concludes the following:

> In this large-scale capitalist economy, the type of control that is most important for alienation, though, is control, not over the product, but over the process, of one's work. Ownership, hierarchical positions, and division of labor have less effect on workers' feelings of alienation than do closeness of supervision, routinization, and substantitive complexity. (Ibid., pp. 126-127).

Kohn also argues that positive and negative experiences are carried over into other non-occupational realms. He disagrees with Melvin Seeman's conclusion in this regard. Seeman (1967) studied work alienation in respect to the potential personal consequences that may result if work is not intrinsically satisfying. His study centered around a sample of males in commercial and seafood occupations in Malmo, Sweden. Seeman's findings were that alienation experienced at work did not have serious social consequences

and is not generalized into other areas of social life.
Seeman did not attempt to explore Marx's theory that aliena-
tion from work is tantamount to alienation from self and
from humanity (Finifter, 1972).

In our review of the literature concerning work
alienation we have not found a study focusing on social
service workers that attempts to bring the structural and
psychological factors together as Kohn so successfully
managed to do in his study. We do know that the structure
or form of social service organization is not the only
variable which may be the source of structural alienation
for social service workers. Brager and Halloway (1978) and
Galper (1975) maintain that the conflicts in the larger so-
ciety also have an impact on social workers and organiza-
tions. They maintain that the social service field is
greatly affected by conflicting ideologies and values. Even
though our country supports social service programs, there
still exists a great deal of ambivalence in society concern-
ing the spending of tax monies for social service programs.
Social service workers not only have to deal with societal
ambivalence about providing social servcies, but they also
have to deal with the contradictions in the mandates given
them by social service organizations. Social workers are
not only called upon to provide services to the needy, but
are also implicitly mandated to function as "social control
agents" for the larger society--to keep certain members of

society in line. Social service workers also are beset
with problems stemming from the conflicting ideologies
within the social work profession itself; therefore, after
being socialized into the profession, they learn that not
all members of the profession share the same values about
the role of social service work in our society.

OBJECTIVE OF STUDY

In this study, we are primarily interested in examin-
ing how the structure of the work place and societal factors
contribute to the subjective experience of alienation. More
specifically, we want to explore the relationship between
the objective conditions of the work place and the subjec-
tive experiences of alienation. Secondly, in keeping with
a Marxist paradigm, we want to focus on the social-
structural conditions and examine whether economic-
sociological processes (societal factors) rather than the
organization of the work itself leads to feelings of aliena-
tion and dissatisfaction with work for social service
workers.

Geyer and Schweitzer state that:

While the distinction between subjective and objec-
tive alienation is often drawn in theory (Schacht,
Archibald, Ludz), one of the challenging tasks which
remains is to specify conceptually, and demonstrate
empirically, the exact nature of the linkage between
them. (1976, p. xxiii)

This stated challenge is the focus of our study. It is our
hope to begin to formulate the distinction between

subjective and objective alienation and the connection be-
tween them, and to identify variables which may influence
or impede the subjective expression of alienation.

In line with the above objectives, we propose the
following hypotheses:

Hypothesis #1: We will find more structural and
societal alienation than subjective alienation.

Hypothesis #2: There will be an association between
structural/societal alienation and subjective alienation.

Hypothesis #3: The social "reality" variables are
likely to influence the relationship between the structural
and societal variables and our measures of subjective
alienation.

CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGY

Survey methods were selected to investigate the rela-
tionship between the objective working conditions of social
service workers and their subjective expression of burnout
and alienation. Through these methods, we were interested in
the relative influence of the structure of the work place,
societal conditions, and social reality on the subjective
experience of alienation. To this end, we selected a sample
and developed a questionnaire for mailing.

THE VARIABLES EXAMINED

Because of time constraints, limited funds, and a
desire for a large sample, it was decided that a mailed
questionnaire should be developed. Such a questionnaire
has limitations. One has to be concerned with length. One
must ask questions that are easily answered, and thus it is
difficult to include content that goes beyond a superficial
analysis of the research issues. One is always concerned
with the fact that the return rate will not be as good as
with some more face-to-face approaches. These considera-
tions were weighed against our goals, and the decision to
develop a concise but meaningful questionaire was made.

Because of the novelty of our theoretical orientation, there were no previously developed instruments available to test our hypotheses. It therefore became necessary to develop such an instrument. The statements in the questionnaire were derived from a variety of sources, but are primarily a result of our ideas and attitudes about alienation and work (Maslach, 1976; Archibald, 1976; Schacht, 1971; Hall, 1968; Braverman, 1974). The first section of the questionnaire asked for general personal information. The second section listed a series of statements about the structural aspects of work, including statements regarding societal and social reality factors which influence work. The third section concerned the respondents' subjective experience of burnout. The questionnaire also contained a cover letter and a space for comments.

This study, however, did not focus on all the variables operationalized in the questionnaire. Four types of variables were analyzed: structural, societal, social reality, and subjective, using several statements from each type of variable. The examples given are the statements upon which we did our analyses as these variables were highly indicative of alienation after the initial coding of the data.

The first set of variables with which we are concerned are those that deal with structural aspects of the work situation. These included measures of bureaucracy and measures

of societal alienation, both of which have been examined by other researchers (Sherman & Wenecour, 1980; Muldoon, 1980; Archibald, 1976). The concept of structural alienation is an attempt to measure the objective work conditions of social service workers. Following Braverman (1974), Archibald (1976), and others, we attempted to measure at the structural level such concepts as powerlessness, meaninglessness, social isolation, and alienation from production, from other workers, and from the self. To do this, we asked the respondents to answer statements such as the following: "unclear expectations," "access to administration," "learn new things." Respondents were given a series of eighteen such statements to which they responded on a 6-point Likert-type scale. The range was from "very descriptive" to "very "non-descriptive." This technique, while not completely free of subjective bias, is similar to techniques used by Thomson (1979) in testing Braverman (1974). (This is possibly the only way that structural variables are measurable when utilizing survey techniques.) These measures are at the heart of the study and will serve as the independent variables. It is our belief that subjective alienation will not be admitted unless alienation at the structural level is evident. Because we also believed that social workers could experience burnout as a function of the pressures of being a welfare organization in a capitalist society, we have included nine statements measuring such things

as the choice workers had over clients, severity of the eco-
nomic problems their clients were faced with, the stability
of funding resources, and the resources and support avail-
able in the community. These variables are referred to as
societal alienations and are treated as independent vari-
ables.

In addition, respondents were asked to evaluate the
social reality factors (variables) of their work, such as
their pay and position with regard to existing market condi-
tions and the opportunities for advancement. These state-
ments were also measured on a 6-point Likert-type scale from
very descriptive to very non-descriptive. The social real-
ity variables are treated here as an intervening variable
since they are likely to influence the relationship between
our structural and societal variables and our measures of
subjective alienation.

Because the questionnaire was being sent to private
practitioners who, by definition, do not work in bureaucra-
cies and agencies, a "not applicable" category was included
in our scale of possible responses. Our findings did in-
deed suggest that private practitioners mostly used this
response.

The final set of variables dealt with the subjective
experience of burnout and alienation. Respondents were
asked such statements as the following: "My job is strictly
a means to an economic end"; "Too many people dictate how my

work is to be carried out"; "I get tired of listening to other people's problems"; "If I had to do it over, I would choose this job/career over again." On a 6-point Likert-type scale, ranging from "completely agree" (CA) to "completely disagree" (CD), workers responded to twenty-six attitude statements. These statements, in keeping with the Marxist perspective, especially relied on the suggestions of Archibald (1976). Thus, our statements tried to measure detachment, controlled purposiveness, means/ends, and feeling. The responses were coded according to the degree of alienation, a score of "1" being a non-alienated response.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

In doing the analysis of the relationship between the four types of variables, we used gamma. We were testing for the strength of association between the structural, societal, and subjective variables. These are zero-order correlations. Further, we examined whether these associations became weaker or stronger when controlled for by the social reality variables. These became the second-order correlations.

GAMMA

The statistic which will be used for the results of our research is the gamma coefficient. Comparing the rank orders of variables for each respondent on one scale (e.g.,

structural alienation), we are attempting to predict the rank order of variables for each respondent on another scale (e.g., subjective alienation).

Gamma measures the strength of association between pairs of variables ranked on an ordinal scale. Therefore, gamma may be interpreted as a measure of proportional reduction in error. For example, we have predicted that a social service worker who ranks high on our measures of structural alienation will also rank high on our measures of subjective alienation. Gamma measures the likelihood of error in this prediction. A gamma of .75, for instance, tells us that ranks of pairs of variables will consistently be in predicted order in 75 percent of the cases and inconsistent in 25 percent of the cases. A negative gamma tells us that the predicted order of ranked pairs is reversed. Using the same example, with a negative association we would find 75 percent of the cases having high structural alienation to also have a low rank on the subjective scale.

Gamma thus shows consistency in rank. The proportionally consistent responses can be in the predicted rank order (A = High, B = Low), or can be consistent in the reverse order (B = High, A = Low).

Tests of significance will not be used in this study. Instead, we will rely on simply describing the gamma according to the degree of association evident in the result. In general, we have arbitrarily selected .25 as a point below

or above which relationships may be described as weak or strong. Gammas below .25 will be described as indicative of little or weak association. Gammas at or around .25 will be seen as showing moderately strong association. Gammas well above .25 will be referred to as indicative of a strong relationship.

SENT SAMPLE

Our sample was obtained through a variety of means. The private practitioners were culled from the pages of the Registry of Clinical Social Workers of the State of Oregon. We also asked people for names of those social workers they knew in private practice, and we sent fifty-five questionnaires to this group. We contacted the Oregon Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers for their current mailing list, and from this list we eliminated faculty from Portland State University, retired workers, students, and those not residing in the Willamette Valley or the Portland metropolitan area. Questionnaires were mailed to 699 people on this list.

We were also able to obtain the names of all those people currently employed at the metropolitan offices of Adult and Family Services and the Children's Services Division. From these lists, we eliminated all those who were not in some significant way involved with clients, and thus 509 questionnaires were then hand-delivered or mailed. We

also hand-delivered or mailed 181 questionnaires to social service workers in a variety of agencies throughout the metropolitan area. We also gathered as an accidental sample the names of forty-five social service workers who have advanced degrees but who are not members of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW), and these people also received questionnaires.

Thus, a total of 1,489 questionnaires was hand-delivered or mailed out.

RETURNED SAMPLE

The overall return rate on our sample was a very acceptable 38.5 percent. Of the 1,489 questionnaires sent out, 573 were returned. Of these, 30 could not be used largely because the respondents were either retired or unemployed. An additional 60 came in after the cutoff date. The final number was 483.

Due to the fact that we asked that a worker's place of employment be kept confidential, it was impossible to determine from which specific segment of our sent sample our returned sample was derived. Two hundred sixty-three of the respondents had master's degrees or higher. One hundred thirty-two had bachelor's degrees or had done some graduate work. The other eighty-eight respondents fell below this educational level. One hundred thirty-five respondents were male, 305 female; forty-three chose not to respond.

Although we derived some 699 names from NASW's lists, only 181 people stated that they were members of NASW. Some sixty-three, eight more than we expected, of our respondents stated that they were in private practice; however, of these, only eighteen were solely private practitioners (see Figure 1).

One hundred forty-nine of the respondents were case-workers, while one hundred stated that they were social workers or clinical social workers. Fifty-six were coun-selors, while eighty-nine people were in administrative or supervisory positions (see Table I). For 276 of the re-spondents, their chief duties involved casework. One hun-dred forty-five of the respondents' duties were supervisory, administrative, as advocates, community organizers, and teaching, or combinations thereof (see Table II). Four hundred twenty-seven of the respondents worked in agencies, 317 in public agencies and 110 in private agencies (see Table III).

Because we were assuming that social workers in agen-cies will experience much the same sort of alienation as factory workers (Braverman, 1972), it was essential for our study to have a large portion of the returned sample work in agencies, and especially in public agencies. It is diffi-cult to make strong comparisons between the sent and the re-turned samples. Too little specific data were available about the sent sample, save some data that we did not use, e.g., place of employment. We did not keep a record of the

Respondents working
in social services
86.4%

Respondents in
private practice
13.6%

Full-
time

Part-time

n = 483
nr = 20
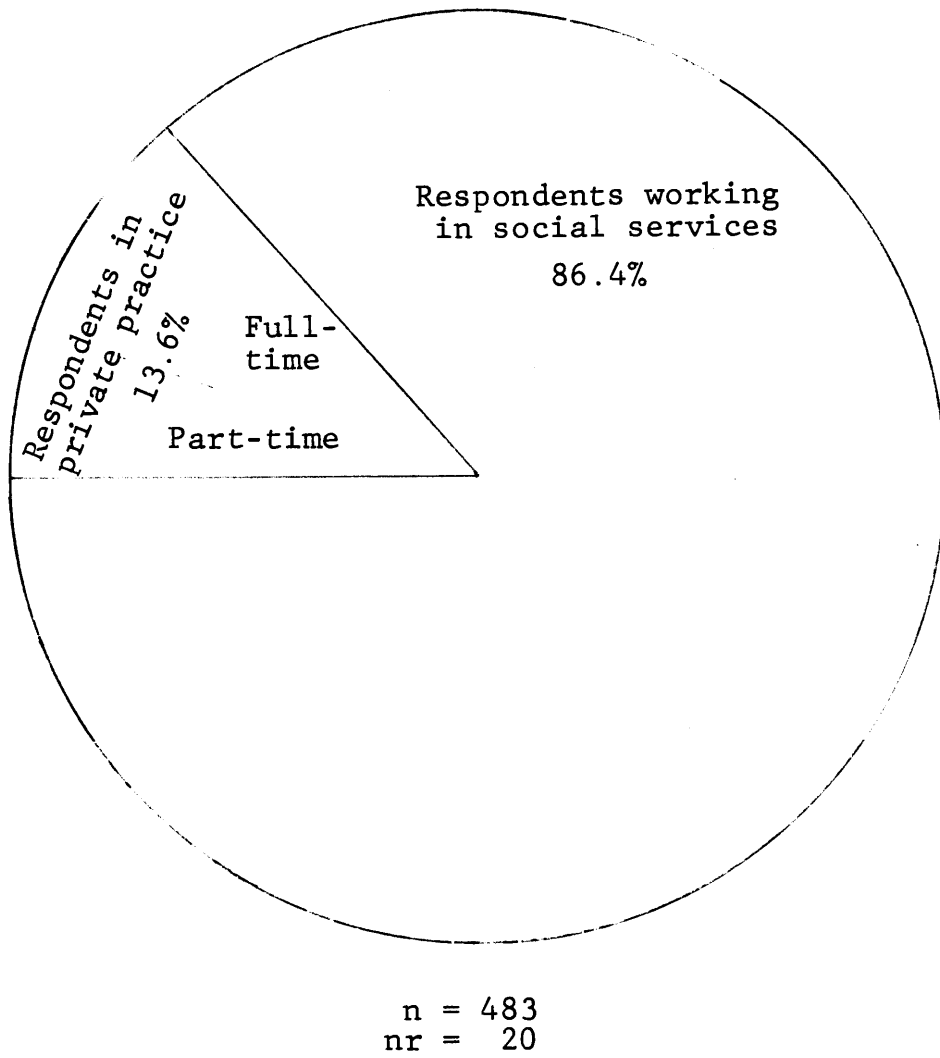
Figure 1. Respondents in private and public practice.

TABLE I

JOB TITLES OF SOCIAL SERVICE RESPONDENTS

Job Title	Number of Respondents	Percent
Caseworker	149	30.8
Social Worker/Clinical Social Worker	100	20.7
Counselor/Probations Juvenile Counselor	56	11.6
Administration/Director Program Manager	64	13.3
Supervisor	25	5.2
Other	25	5.2
NA/NR	64	13.2
Totals	483	100.0

TABLE II

CHIEF DUTIES OF SOCIAL SERVICE RESPONDENTS

Duty	N	Adjusted Frequency, in Percent
Caseworker/Counselor; Medical Eligibility; Outreach	276	33.8
Supervision	29	13.0
Administration; Bookkeeper; Program Evaluator	36	9.9
Other; Liaison; Community Organization; Advocacy, Teaching	18	8.0
Mixed (Combination of Casework and Supervision)	56	33.5
Consultation	6	1.8

TABLE III

TYPE OF AGENCY

Type of Agency	Number of Respondents	Percent
Private Agency	110	22.8
Public Agency	317	65.6
NA/NR	56	11.6
Totals	n = 483	100.0

sex of the recipients of the questionnaire, nor did we always know their level of education. Forty-seven percent of our sent sample were members of NASW, while 37.5 percent of the returned sample were. No comparison can be made on the basis of age or number of years the sample worked in social services, as we did not have this information on the sent sample.

While we attempted to address a large number of people, we do have a biased sample in that a large percentage of our respondents were selected on the basis of their working for public agencies. In trying to generalize our results to the whole population which received questionnaires, as well as to all social service workers, we believe that our results do to a certain extent apply.

We have a large N'; respondents were derived from at least two major public agencies. There are a large number of NASW members, a large percentage of MSWs (see Figure 2) and about the same ratio of male to female workers is in

the n as for the general population of social service work-
ers in Oregon (63.1 percent women to 36.9 percent men) (see
Figure 3). However, with the exception of this division
between the sexes, there is no other way to see if system-
atic bias is evident within the study. Furthermore, be-
cause our study was limited to social service workers within
Oregon and contained an accidental sample of non-NASW MSWs,
we can conclude only that our results might be applicable
to social service workers in Oregon, especially in the Port-
land metropolitan area. We cannot assume that the results
are generalizable to all social service workers. Our find-
ings will be useful for discussion and as a basis for
further study.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

There are a number of limitations within this study.
Not all the issues pertaining to burnout were studied. We
acknowledge that other variables are important, such as
educational background, place of work, union affiliation,
and personality. Further, we did not examine ways in which
workers' handling of burnout helps to combat it. These im-
portant issues are beyond the scope of this study.

A second major limitation has already been noted. The
results presented here are at best applicable to social ser-
vice workers in the Portland metropolitan area. Although
they might apply to all social service workers, we cannot

Some graduate work 4.9%

MSW/DSW/MS/MA Degree
58.0%

Less than college 4.2%

Less than BA/BS
8.6%

BA/BS Degree
24.3%

n = 483
nr = 30
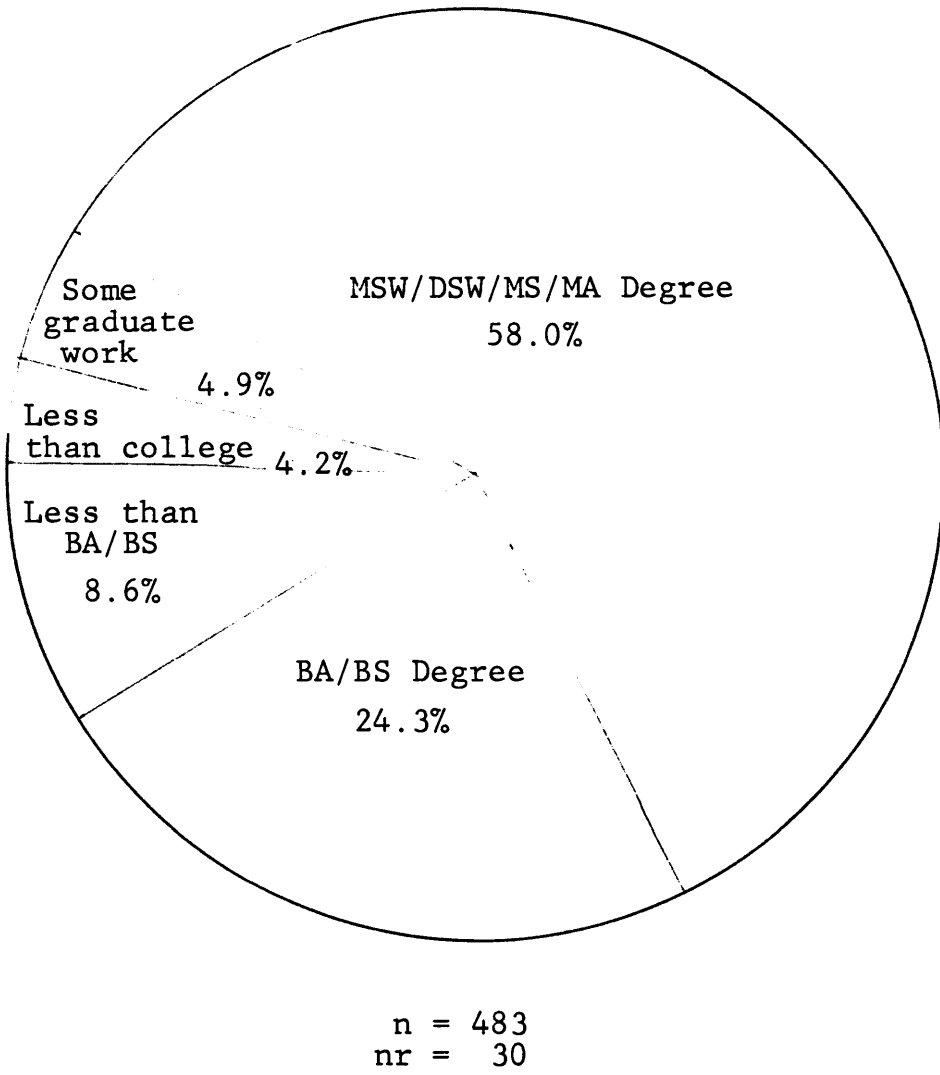
Figure 2. Education of respondents.

Gender

Male   28.0%

Female   63.1%

NR 8.9%

    0   100   200   300

Number of Respondents
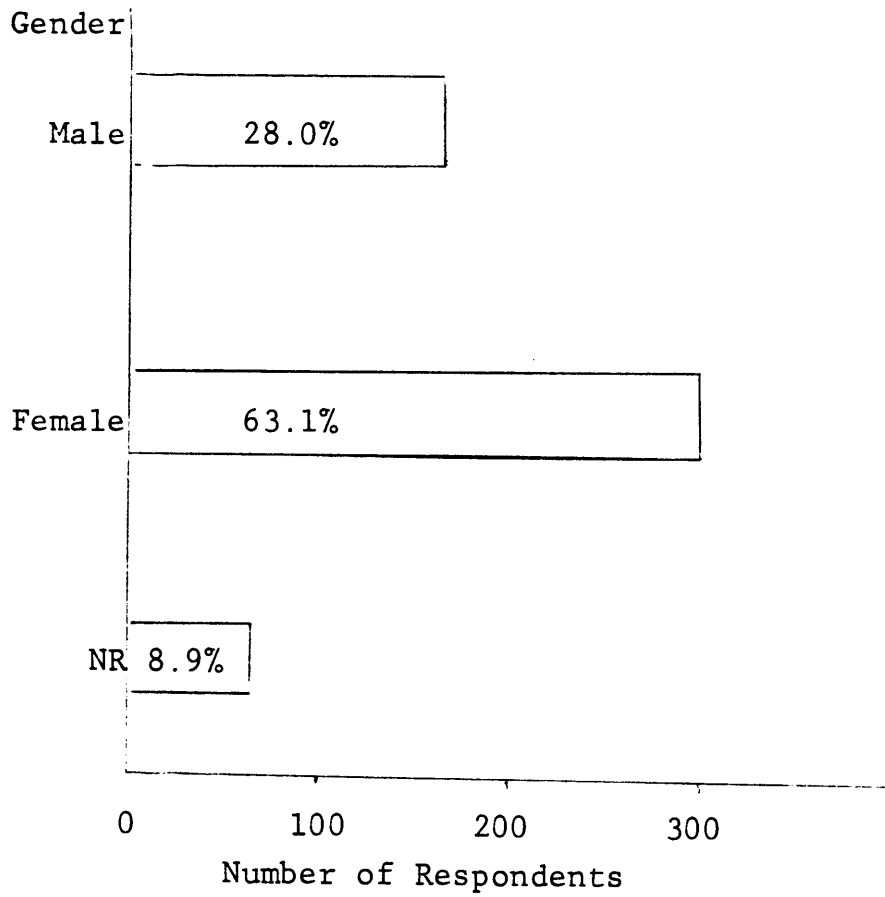
Figure 3. Gender of respondents.

assume their applicability. The results are presented be-
cause of their inherent value to the study of burnout and
to serve as a basis for further research.

ETHICAL ISSUES

When designing and implementing our survey, there were
several ethical issues to be taken into consideration.

To insure confidentiality for our respondents, we used
address labels on the questionnaires which could be removed
prior to their return. We advised the respondents of this
in a letter which was included in our questionnaire. Fur-
ther, this letter informed the respondents, to some extent,
of the nature of our study. While we did not state that our
study intended to examine burnout/alienation from a Marxist
perspective, we did say that we were looking at the way a
social worker's job was organized and his/her attitudes to-
ward the job.

In hand-delivering our questionnaires to certain agen-
cies, some members of our group encountered difficulties.
Various supervisors were suspicious, wanting to know very
specifically what our study was about and why we were en-
gaged in such an endeavor. In trying to understand the
negativity of some of the supervisors and agencies, we hy-
pothesized several things. Anti-intellectualism is deep-
rooted in our society, regardless of level of education.
This often manifests itself in mistrust of new information.

Too, there may have been a fear that this questionnaire was merely a front for gathering information for subversive use. This occurred despite the fact that we had prepared and delivered letters of introduction prior to the completion of the questionnaire. However, these people were in the minority. Most of the recipients of the questionnaire were extremely open and interested in our study.

CHAPTER III

DESCRIPTION OF THE VARIABLES

INTRODUCTION

The focus of our study is alienation: structural/
societal alienation and subjective alienation. We specifi-
cally attempt to examine how the structure of the work place
and societal factors contribute to the subjective expression
of alienation, and whether there is any association between
objective and subjective work alienation.

In this chapter we will discuss how we operational-
ized our independent variables (structural and societal
alienation), our dependent variable (subjective alienation),
and our intervening variable (social reality). We will then
describe our findings in regard to the responses to the spe-
cific variables selected and discuss what these findings may
mean regarding work in the social services.

STRUCTURAL ALIENATION

As noted in the methodology chapter, respondents were
requested to respond to phrases that describe the conditions
under which they currently are working. The eighteen items
used were designed to tap objective work conditions that
frequently exist for social service workers. We refer to

these items in our study as structural alienation variables.

In keeping with a Marxist paradigm, we attempted to include items which correspond to alienation from self, alienation from product, and alienation from others. We also incorporated items which correspond to Archibald's dimension of "detachment, means-ends, control-purposiveness, and feelings" (1976, p. 65). Dimensions of meaninglessness and powerlessness were also included (Seeman, 1959). The phrases consist of simple words such as "paper work," "flexible procedures," "participation in policy," "requires high skill," and "routine work," so as to allow the respondent to assess his/her working conditions as objectively as possible.

> Studies such as Hackman and Lawler (1971) have provided evidence that the worker's assessment of the job closely parallels the opinion of the outside observers. (Thomson, 1949, p. 6)

Because this section of our questionnaire was so packed and so rich with information, the analysis here will concentrate on three basic items that we believe are central to the concepts of alienation from work. Since Marx's own description of non-alienated work focuses on elements such as "creative activity," "control," and "relatedness to self and others," we chose three variables in our study that typify these concepts. And, because Marx viewed work as "life activity" in which "man creates his world and as a consequence creates himself" (Israel, 1971, p. 80), we were

interested in exploring whether the conditions of work for social services were conducive to self-growth.

The first variable we chose, "learn new things," refers to conditions of the job which allow social service workers to be creative, to be in tune with their "species nature," and to be enriched by their work. When a person has little opportunity to learn new things on the job, s/he is objectively alienated because, according to Marx, "personal development is limited and minds are stunted" (Archibald, 1976, p. 64). Empirical studies (Kohn, 1976; Thomson, 1979; Pearlin, 1962, for example) demonstrate that self-direction and creativity are very important components of rewarding and non-alienated work.

Being able to have influence over the actual work process and to have input into decision making are also important characteristics of non-alienated work. The second variable, "access to administration," refers to having some control or power over the process and product of one's work. Empirical studies of work alienation (Blauner, 1964; Thomson, 1979; Pearlin, 1962; Murdia, 1979) clearly demonstrate the importance of workers having access to decision making.

The third variable, "unclear expectations from others," refers to the dimension of alienation from others. Social service workers are frequently called upon to carry out conflicting directives because they are caught between serving the needs of clients and serving the interests of

the employing agency. Because the human service field is beset with an array of conflicting ideologies, individual social service workers are constantly faced with having to reconcile contradictory or unclear expectations from members of the profession, from human service organizations them- selves, and from the sentiments of American society. Deal- ing with such stress can easily lead to feelings of aliena- tion from others and from one's work.

Table IV shows the frequency distributions for the three variables chosen. The table is arranged in descend- ing order from the highest to the least alienating condi- tions.

TABLE IV

STRUCTURAL ALIENATION: FREQUENCY OF RESPONSES IN PERCENT[a]

Variables[b]	Percent High Aliena- tion	Percent Moderate Aliena- tion	Percent Low Aliena- tion	Total Percent	n
Unclear expectations from others	26.1	42.6	31.3	100	472
Lack of access to administration	21.6	36.3	42.2	100	441
Lack of opportunity to learn new things	17.0	42.8	40.0	100	482

[a]High alienation means a response of very descriptive and some- what descriptive; moderate alienation means a response of somewhat de- scriptive and somewhat not-descriptive; low alienation means a response of not-descriptive or very not-descriptive,

[b]Some items were reworded to facilitate presentation. Refer to questionnaire in the Appendix for the original wording of items.

The response to the phrases forms a consistent pattern. Most respondents indicated moderate to low structural alienation. "Unclear expectations" showed the highest amount of structural alienation; 26.1 percent of the respondents agreed with the statement. Slightly over 21.6 percent agreed that they had a lack of "access to administration." Finally, only 17 percent agreed that they lack opportunity to "learn new things" on the job.

In sum, in this section we looked at alienation as a function of the conditions under which social service workers operate. The three variables we concentrated on represented major concepts of objective work alienation as set forth by Marxist thought.

Interestingly, the respondents acknowledged that the three variables we chose to analyze play a part in how they view their work, but social service work conditions are less structurally alienating than we predicted. For instance, creativity on the job appears to be fairly characteristic of work in the social services. On the other hand, being involved in the decision-making process and having a clear indication of what is expected of them by others appears to be somewhat more conducive to structural alienation in our sample. Respectively, this is indicative of a degree of powerlessness and alienation from others. However, the majority of respondents agreed that these were conditions only somewhat descriptive of their jobs.

Why is it that these structural conditions, which previous studies have postulated to be conducive to work alienation, did not appear to be as characteristic for the respondents in our study? One explanation may be that work in the social services is basically unlike work previously studied, and that work for social services allows for more freedom, creativity, and involvement in the lives of others than does work in more highly technological and routinized division of labor fields such as factory labor or clerical work. Social service workers may derive more intrinsic satisfactions from their work as a result of their educational level and, consequently, may not be bothered by structural impediments on their jobs. Or conversely, due to their educational level and the complexity and scope possible in social service work, they may be given more autonomy than the working class. Perhaps in a semi-profession such as social service work, education and income level may be of more importance than other objective conditions of the work place (Tudor, 1972).

Another explanation may be that it is a function of the three variables analyzed. These three are reflective of an important but small part of the total work experience. For instance, we did not look at other variables like paper work, amount of routine, or the flexibility of procedures. It may be that had other structural variables been analyzed more structural alienation would have been reported.

SOCIETAL ALIENATION (INDEPENDENT VARIABLE)

Along with work conditions, conditions in the society may result in alienating circumstances. Man, according to Marx, cannot be viewed as separate from the society in which he lives; rather, he views the relationship between man and society as a reciprocal one. Man forms society and is in turn formed by society. Society, in a Marxist definition, "does not consist of individuals, it expresses the sum of connections and relationships in which individuals find themselves" (Anderson & Gibson, 1978, p. 23). In a developing capitalistic society, market relations and the competition inherent in such a society become an all-pervasive influence on the reciprocal relationship between man and society. In a Marxian analysis, the economic relationship is basic, because the "subjugation and exploitation of man by man" is the source of alienation (Schaff, 1970, pp. 105-123). It is thus by means of this reciprocal relation and subjugation that man can become alienated from his species.

In order to explain our choice of societal variables (and differentiation of these from structural variables), we must backtrack a bit. Social work, perhaps more than any other profession, is organized, funded by, and thus largely controlled by local, state, and federal government. The specific ways in which society views and treats the institution of social work are elements we have chosen to call

societal variables. We are viewing them separately from structural variables in an attempt to operationalize Marx's idea of "alienation from the species," as well as more recent literature dealing with social workers as agents of social control (see Brager & Halloway in the review of the literature).

Our decision to separate structural from societal variables is based on our desire to articulate the various sources of environmentally induced alienation. Structural alienation refers to the immediate work environment, that is, how the job is arranged. Societal alienation measures the place of social services in the society at large. In a capitalist economy, there is likely to be tension between the society and social services since the free market is believed to be self-regulating and little need is seen to help people who cannot make it on their own. Thus, social services in a capitalist society are viewed not as a required institution for the functioning of society, but rather as a safety net when other institutions fail to meet their obligations. In other words, social services in a capitalist economy are residual in nature and thereby often stigmatize the recipients of such services as well as the agencies and workers who serve them.

The variables in Table V were chosen to indicate objective sources of societal alienation. The variables "stable funding" and "limited resources" represent concrete

ways in which society can show support for social services
and for social service workers. The variables "choice of
clients" and "clients with severe economic problems" were
chosen to explore Brager and Halloway's (1978) position.
These authors and others contend that social workers are
agents of social control and deal with a population not
functioning in society, due in large part to the inherent
arrangements of capitalism.

TABLE V

SOCIETAL ALIENATION: FREQUENCY OF RESPONSES IN PERCENT[a]

Variables[b]	Percent High Aliena- tion	Percent Moderate Aliena- tion	Percent Low Aliena- tion	Total Percent	n
Choice of clients/people to work with	66.2	21.9	14.0	100	467
Clients with severe economic problems	63.7	26.1	10.2	100	459
Limited community resources	42.6	38.6	18.8	100	455
Unstable funding	31.0	45.8	23.2	100	461

[a]High alienation means a response of very descriptive and somewhat
descriptive; moderate alienation means a response of somewhat descrip-
tive and somewhat not-descriptive; low alienation means a response of
not-descriptive or very not-descriptive.

[b]Some items were reworded to facilitate presentation. Refer to
the questionnaire in the Appendix for the original wording of items.

As shown in Table V, 66.2 percent of the respondents
found "no choice of clients" descriptive of their jobs. In
response to "clients with severe economic problems," 63 per-
cent of the respondents found this highly descriptive of
their work. "Limited resources" was considered as

descriptive of their work by 42.6 percent of the respondents. Finally, "unstable funding" was found as a highly alienating factor in 31 percent of the respondents.

It is clear from these results that societal variables play a significant role in social service work and alienation among social service workers. Over 60 percent of those sampled were highly alienated in regard to choice over their clients, and clients who were beset with severe economic problems. This suggests a lack of autonomy and control over whom social services serve. Most importantly, the responses conform to Brager and Halloway's (1978) position that social workers are agents of social control and that conflicts in the larger society also have an impact on social workers and organizations. Client variables appear to be a significant aspect of societal alienation.

Lack of external support systems was also an important factor in objective societal alienation in social service workers. "Limited resources" (42.6 percent) and "unstable funding" (31 percent) illustrate that society's support for social services is minimal at best. This is indicative of Marx's concept of "alienation from the species." Many social service workers are apparently alone in their uphill struggle to help those members of society who have been excluded from the benefits of capitalism. Here we see social service workers caught in the midst of conflicting ideologies and values. The society at large condones aiding the

needy and yet is not willing to appropriate sufficient tax
monies for this express purpose. Social service workers
are indeed in the midst of the conflicts inherent in the
larger society, and thereby their work is highly conducive
to alienation, in particular, "alienation from the species."

SUBJECTIVE ALIENATION
(DEPENDENT VARIABLE)

Subjective alienation refers to the expressed con-
scious feelings and attitudes that people have about their
work. In designing the items used on the questionnaire, we
wanted to elicit responses indicating a person's feelings
and attitudes about her/his job. In formulating statements
to measure this concept, we drew on a number of sources.
From Marx we focused on the ideas of alienation from others,
from the work process, and from the product of one's labor.
Archibald (1976), following Marx, separates alienation into
four dimensions: (1) feelings of detachment from work,
(2) feeling that work is a means to an end, (3) feelings of
misery and powerlessness, and (4) feelings of self-
estrangement. Seeman (1959) views alienation in terms of
powerlessness, meaninglessness, normlessness, and self-
estrangement. From Schacht we took the idea that Marx's
categories could be operationalized as:

> . . . dissatisfaction with one's job, experiencing
> of one's work as not being intrinsicly rewarding,
> and experiencing work as being insufficiently self-
> directed, meaningful and self-expressive. (1971,
> p. 171)

Using all of these theorists, we devised statements to determine the degree of alienation subjectively experienced by social service workers. For instance, the statement, "I get tired of listening," was used to measure the concept of alienation from others, that is, clients. Similarly, the statement, "My job is strictly a means to an economic end," was used to operationalize Archibald's "means-end" category (1976). Likewise, "Too many people dictate how my work is to be carried out," is an attempt to measure powerlessness and lack of autonomy. As a final example, "If I had to do it over, I would choose this job/career over again," is an overall measure of satisfaction with the present position of employment.

Table VI shows the percentage of responses in each of the three categories indicating high, moderate, or low alienation. From all of the eighteen measures of subjective alienation, our study focused on the four already noted.

The responses to each of these statements reflect a consistent pattern. Most respondents indicated moderate to low subjective alienation. Of the four measures, the statement, "If I had to do it over, I would choose this job/career over again," evidenced the highest amount of subjective alienation; 20.2 percent disagreed with the statement. Some 16.2 percent agreed that "Too many people dictate how my work is to be carried out." Only 11 percent of the respondents agreed with the statement, "I get tired of

TABLE VI

SUBJECTIVE ALIENATION: FREQUENCY OF RESPONSES IN PERCENT[a]

Variables[b]	Percent High Aliena- tion	Percent Moderate Aliena- tion	Percent Low Aliena- tion	Total Percent	n
Would not choose career again	20.2	30.1	49.6	100	475
Tired of listening	11.9	47.8	40.3	100	477
Too many dictate	16.2	35.5	48.3	100	462
An economic end	6.5	27.5	66.0	100	477

[a]High alienation means a response of very descriptive and somewhat descriptive; moderate alienation means a response of somewhat descriptive and somewhat not-descriptive; low alienation means a response of not-descriptive or very not-descriptive.

[b]Some items were reworded to facilitate presentation. Refer to questionnaire in the Appendix for the original wording of items.

listening." Finally, very few indicated that they were only economically motivated by their jobs; 6.2 percent agreed that it was "a means to an economic end."

Most social service workers, as evidenced by only 6.5 percent of the respondents stating that the job was only "a means to an economic end," found their jobs intrinsicly rewarding. Concomitantly, 20.2 percent stated they "would not choose career again," which indicates that the majority of social service workers are satisfied with their work. Some 16.2 percent indicated that "too many dictated" their work, illustrating a feeling of alienation from management or powerlessness. However, the majority of workers feel that they have some degree of power or control over their work.

Overall, the results of our measurements indicate that there is little conscious expression of subjective aliena- tion. This is in agreement with our first hypothesis which stated that we would find more structural and societal alienation than subjective alienation.

The principle of cognitive dissonance can be an illu- minating concept in regard to the above responses to our subjective measures. Cognitive dissonance refers to a situ- ation in which a person holds onto two beliefs or cognitions which are in opposition to one another (Selltiz et al., 1976, p. 576). To understand the importance of this con- cept, we need to consider that social service workers are socialized through their profession and educational experi- ences to believe in a humanitarian and altruistic philoso- phy. However, this belief system is incompatible with allowing oneself to express alienation from others. As an example, reporting "I am tired of listening" is inconsis- tent with the professional values that one is to be warm, genuine, and empathetic with one's clients. As noted above, only 11 percent responded in the affirmative to this phrase. Herein, however, we must be cautious as numerous studies have shown (Selltiz et al., 1976) that verbal reports (or subjective measures) are poor predictors of a person's be- haviors. This fact underscores the importance of utilizing objective as well as subjective measures of alienation.

In lieu of the overall low expression of subjective
alienation, we refer to our review of the literature and
Finifter's objection to relying on subjective measures alone:

> . . . presumably, many have been socialized to expect
> no more than they actually received; therefore, felt
> content and did not subjectively experience dissatis-
> faction or alienation . . .

and this he referred to as "false consciousness" (1972,
p. 6). Perhaps, as Israel states, the "alienating processes
are either so effective, or have been going on continuously
for such a long period, that one no longer experiences them
on a cognitive level" (1971, p. 80). The question which
looms like a dark cloud over these results, is whether so-
cial service workers have so capitulated to the capitalistic
system that they no longer experience alienation in an
alienating environment.

SOCIAL REALITY

Our conception of social reality can best be under-
stood by the Marxian concept of the "historical moment."
Man, for Marx, cannot be viewed as separate from the society
in which he lives. Within man's relationship to society
Marx viewed the economic relationship as the basic source
of alienation. Thus, there are certain conditions present
in society at any given moment which greatly influence how
people view their life situations, and of these conditions
Marx saw market relations as the dominant and pervading
force. The "historical moment," at the time of this study,

is one of economic insecurity which manifests itself in conservatism and uncertainty. These forces are bound to impact how one views one's job. The reality of budget cuts in social service programs, for example, could lead to respondents feeling that they should not complain about their jobs because jobs in general are difficult to find.

As conceptualized above, it can be seen that social reality variables could play an important role in intervening and changing the relationship between our independent and dependent variables, that is, between the respondents' perception of objective work conditions (structural alienation) and the objective conditions of society (societal alienation) and their expressed feelings and attitudes about their job (subjective alienation). As stated in our third hypothesis, we believe that the current social reality of economic insecurity will serve to suppress the subjective expression of alienation from one's work.

Although there are numerous social reality variables stemming from the present "historical moment," we chose to limit our variables to those revolving around economic relationships as is central to Marx's paradigm. However, status concerns, professionalism, class consciousness, culture, and personality factors could all as well be important intervening variables. As such, our measures may be limited; yet, we feel that we are in keeping with a Marxist conception

and, given our present economic conditions, that we will have tapped the most crucial variable--market relations.

Social reality was operationalized by utilizing Dahrendorf's (1959) measures for social mobility. These measures we viewed as tapping the potential for social mobility--a salient descriptive feature of the economic relations in the marketplace and therefore, social reality as it pertains to the individual's economic relationship to a capitalist society. The three measures used for social reality in relation to one's job were "few opportunities for advancement," "as good as I can expect," and "fair salary."

If one looks at one's job as "as good as can be expected," it is likely that the respondent will express less subjective alienation. Likewise, if workers feel there are "few opportunities for advancement" and that they receive a "fair salary" (again, keeping in mind that "fair" is mitigated by the current economic situation), they may suppress their feelings of dissatisfaction and alienation.

From Table VII it appears that many of the respondents believe that they have "few opportunities for advancement" and that their job is "as good as can be expected." Over 50 percent of the respondents saw these variables as highly descriptive of their situation. On the other hand, only 18.2 percent of the respondents agreed that "unfair salary" is highly descriptive of their situation. Thus, although social service workers believe there is not a good chance

that they will advance, most believe that their salaries
are pretty fair.

TABLE VII

SOCIAL "REALITY" AND HYPOTHESIZED ALIENATION:
FREQUENCE OF RESPONSES IN PERCENT[a]

Variables[b]	Percent High Aliena- tion	Percent Moderate Aliena- tion	Percent Low Aliena- tion	Total Percent	n
Few opportunities for advancement	50.3	34.3	15.4	100	455
As good as I can expect	50.2	33.4	16.4	100	479
Unfair salary	18.2	36.5	45.3	100	479

[a]High alienation means a response of very descriptive and somewhat
descriptive; moderate alienation means a response of somewhat descrip-
tive and somewhat not-descriptive; low alienation means a response of
not-descriptive or very not-descriptive.

[b]Some items were reworded to facilitate presentation. Refer to
questionnaire in the Appendix for the original wording of items.

In sum, we found that 50 percent of our respondents,
who we hypothesize are highly alienated, feel resigned to
their jobs and do not have optimism regarding improvement.
However, that same group feels that their salaries are fair.
It is here that we see Marx's "historical moment" at play,
and how that works to inhibit one's expression of aliena-
tion. There is a sense of futility shown here that one
cannot do better and therefore must accept what s/he re-
ceives as fair. These responses attest to the significance
of current socio-political realities and how our intervening
variable could affect the relationship between the subjec-
tive expression of alienation and those objective work and

societal conditions which contribute to its expression.
Apart from more philosophic and desirable notions of social
reality, current conditions and economic exigencies can
play an important role in determining the extent to which an
individual expresses conscious feelings of alienation.

SUMMARY

In this chapter, we attempted to define and describe
our variables. As set forth in the objectives of our study,
we hypothesized that we would find more structural and so-
cietal alienation than subjective alienation. What did we
actually find?

Our respondents were quite low in expressing subjec-
tive alienation, which was as hypothesized. Alienating re-
sponses to societal measures of alienation were signifi-
cantly higher than to the subjective measures. Although
the structural measures were slightly higher in alienating
responses than subjective, they were less than we had anti-
cipated. Social reality factors appear to be a significant
variable due to the high frequency of hypothesized alienat-
ing responses. Overall, societal measures indicated the
highest level of alienation. This gives support to Brager
and Halloway's (1978) contention that social workers are
imbued in the conflicts of the larger society, and also
illustrates that Marx's conception of alienation from the
species is an important aspect of alienation among social

service workers. Social measures are followed by social
reality, structural alienation, and lastly, subjective
alienation in frequency of alienating (or hypothesized
alienation/social reality) responses.

Our data lend support to our first hypothesis that we
would find more structural and societal alienation than
subjective alienation. However, the difference between our
societal and structural measures (our independent variables)
is striking. The objective factors of the work place seem
to be of less importance to social service workers than we
anticipated, and societal factors, in terms of frequency of
alienating responses, were much more potent.

From these data, it appears that societal forces for
social service workers are a significant variable in terms
of alienation. Perhaps in view of the special nature of
social services in the society at large and its dependence
upon society sanctions and funds, social service workers
are impacted more by these variables than the immediate
work environment.

Subjective alienation was low in alienating responses,
as we had predicted. To explain the low frequency in
alienating responses, we referred to the idea of "false con-
sciousness" (Finifter, 1972, p. 6), in which people have
been "socialized to expect no more than they receive; there-
fore [they] did not subjectively experience dissatisfaction
or alienation." Furthermore, as previous studies (Selltiz,

1976) have indicated, subjective self-reports are poor predictors of behavior. This illustrates the dire need (as set forth by Marxist thought) for objective as well as subjective measures in studying alienation.

Overall, our sample was not highly alienated; however, our data support our first hypothesis: we will find more structural and societal alienation than subjective alienation. In the following chapters we will examine our second and third hypotheses, which state there will be an association between structural/societal alienation and subjective alienation, and the difference between the acknowledged structural/societal alienation and the subjective expression of alienation will be due to social reality.

CHAPTER IV

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STRUCTURAL/SOCIETAL
ALIENATION AND SUBJECTIVE ALIENATION

INTRODUCTION

The findings in Chapter III supported the hypothesis
that more structural/societal alienation will be reported
than subjective alienation. These findings are particularly
important because they not only verify that work alienation
consists of objective and subjective components, but also
they support the contention that the objective conditions
cannot be ignored in studying alienation from work.

Theoretically we have conceptualized that structural
and societal alienation will lead to the subjective experi-
ence on the part of the worker of that alienation. The pur-
pose of Chapter IV is to examine if there is indeed any
association between structural/societal alienation and sub-
jective alienation.

In working toward this end, we employed the gamma
statistic to determine the existence and the degree of as-
sociation between the certain structural, societal, and sub-
jective measures of alienation discussed in Chapter III.
The reader may recall that gamma measures the rank of one
respondent relative to another on any two variables.

Gamma is also a measure of proportionate reduction in
error.

In looking at zero-order correlations, we will refer
to gammas below .25 as indicative of little or weak associa-
tion, gammas at or around .25 as indicative of a moderately
strong association, and gammas above or well above .25 as
indicative of a strong relationship.

STRUCTURAL ALIENATION BY
SUBJECTIVE ALIENATION

At the outset of the study we predicted that a posi-
tive relationship will exist between structural alienation
and the subjective expression of alienation. Table VIII
demonstrates that this relationship certainly does exist.
The gamma coefficient between the three measures of struc-
tural alienation, and the four measures of subjective alien-
ation indicate a high positive association. Only the struc-
tural measure "learn new things" does not completely ful-
fill our prediction. While this variable is strongly re-
lated to two measures of subjective alienation, it is only
weakly related to "too many people dictate" and "tired of
listening."

As we had predicted, having access to the administra-
tion in the work place, indicative of having some control
over the process and the product of one's work, is an im-
portant characteristic of non-alienated work. Having an
opportunity to learn new things on the job and being able to

TABLE VIII

STRUCTURAL ALIENATION BY SUBJECTIVE ALIENATION:
GAMMA COEFFICIENT

Measures of Structural Alienation	Measures of Subjective Alienation	Gamma	n
Access to administration	Too many people dictate	.43	431
Access to administration	An economic end	.39	436
Access to administration	Tired of listening	.28	438
Access to administration	Choose career again	.24	433
Learn new things	Choose career again	.36	475
Learn new things	An economic end	.35	477
Learn new things	Too many people dictate	.13	462
Learn new things	Tired of listening	.11	476
Unclear expectations	Too many people dictate	.38	454
Unclear expectations	An economic end	.37	466
Unclear expectations	Choose career again	.32	465
Unclear expectations	Tired of listening	.21	468

utilize one's creativity appear to be related to whether people would be likely to choose to work in social services again and whether they see their job merely as a way to pay the bills. Similarly, when expectations of the tasks are unclear, then it is likely that these workers will express alienation from others and from their work. This supports Marx's own argument that elements such as "creative activity," "control," and "relatedness to the self and others" are essential for non-alienated work.

SOCIETAL ALIENATION AND SUBJECTIVE ALIENATION

We have also predicted that societal alienation will be associated with subjective alienation. Table IX illustrates that there is a high positive correlation between

the subjective experience of alienation and societal vari-
ables. The gamma coefficient between the societal variables
"choice of clients" and "clients with severe economic prob-
lems" and the subjective experience variables range from
.28 to .66, indicating high positive correlation. The
gamma between "limited community resources" and the subjec-
tive measures range from .16 to .25 and indicate a moderate
degree of association. On the other hand, "stable funding"
shows no association with the subjective variables; the
gammas range from -.06 to .00. Thus it would appear that
this variable has no impact upon the subjective experience
of alienation. This is consistent with the notion that
social workers are very much considered agents of social
control. Funding may be stable, but hardly adequate to im-
plement real changes; monies are only stable enough to con-
tinue maintenance of the status quo.

It is important to remember that the respondents were
answering the questionnaire prior to knowledge of the scope
and impact of President Reagan's budget cuts upon the so-
cial services. It would be interesting to examine the ef-
fects of the "stable funding" variable in future studies.

It appears that having a lack of choice over clients,
lacking available resources, and working with clients with
severe economic problems are three factors that may produce
a good deal of conscious alienation. This again is consis-
tent with the contention that social workers are agents of

TABLE IX

SOCIETAL ALIENATION BY SUBJECTIVE ALIENATION:
GAMMA COEFFICIENT

Measures of Societal Alienation	Measures of Subjective Alienation	Gamma	n
Choice of clients	An economic end	.66	461
Choice of clients	Too many dictate	.50	448
Choice of clients	Choose career again	.45	460
Choice of clients	Tired of listening	.24	462
Severe economic problems	Too many dictate	.42	440
Severe economic problems	Tired of listening	.37	455
Severe economic problems	An economic end	.37	453
Severe economic problems	Choose career again	.28	453
Limited community resources	Too many dictate	.25	440
Limited community resources	Tired of listening	.18	452
Limited community resources	Choose career again	.17	450
Limited community resources	An economic end	.16	451
Stable funding	Too many dictate	.00	450
Stable funding	Choose career again	.00	454
Stable funding	An economic end	-.05	455
Stable funding	Tired of listening	-.06	457

social control (Brager & Halloway, 1978); they are engaged in jobs that must keep nonfunctional people "in line."

Brager and Halloway further propose that alienation results from the societal conflicts that are embedded in the field of social services. Social service workers who are expected to help the needy, yet find themselves severely restricted by what services they can actually provide, find themselves as pacifiers (and as agents of social control), and thus experience alienation. Our study would appear to support this view of the function of social services in the United States.

In summary, our initial findings support the original
hypothesis that the conditions of the work place (structual)
and the conditions of the social structure (societal) are
predictive of the subjective experience of alienation from
work. These data lead us to a critical view of the trend
in social services to place emphasis upon individualized
solutions such as workshops. Moreover, these types of solu-
tions follow the paradigm of the implementation of social
services in the United States. It is the individual who is
seen as having the problem. As individuals, social workers,
as much as their clients, are victims of the same social
system, and are in the same manner held accountable for
their individual distress. It is naive thinking to assume
that the objective conditions of the world in which we live,
including the work place, do not have impact upon the in-
dividual.

Therefore, we contend that subjective alienation,
commonly referred to in the social services as "burnout,"
is not a phenomenon that stems from an individual worker's
emotional incapacity. Its etiology is clearly connected to
external circumstances. While we have not explored each
respondent's psychological makeup, we do know that person-
ality factors alone cannot account for alienation from
one's work. Further, as is apparent, the subjective experi-
ence of alienation does not exist in a vacuum, but is
strongly influenced by structural and societal conditions;

so too, these latter variables do not seem to function independently of each other. Where we can predict subjective alienation, we will see structural and societal alienation.

CHAPTER V

STRUCTURAL ALIENATION VERSUS
SOCIETAL ALIENATION

INTRODUCTION

In Chapter IV we found that the conditions of the work place (structural) and the conditions of the social structure (societal) are both predictive of the subjective expression of alienation from work.

In this chapter, we examine the relative importance of structural vs. societal in leading to feelings of work alienation. That is, are structural conditions or societal issues more predictive of the conscious expression of alienation? This will be done by (a) controlling for the four societal factors when measuring the association between structural and subjective alienation, and (b) controlling for the three structural variables when measuring the association between societal and subjective alienation.

The zero-order gammas will be compared to the second-order gammas to see how the introduction of a control variable affects the strength of association between the structural/societal and subjective alienation.

In looking at the second-order correlations, we will consider gammas that increase 5 percentage points as

indicative of an important additional proportional reduction in error regarding our prediction of the rank ordering of the independent and dependent variables. The converse is true for gammas that decrease 5 percentage points and more. If the second-order gammas go down, we can hypothesize that the control variable is responsible for changing the relationship between the independent and dependent variables.

In order to facilitate our discussion of the tables, we chose to focus on the second-order gamma coefficients that have decreased 5 percentage points. This will give us an overall perspective of the influence of the control variable on the independent and dependent variables.

STRUCTURAL VERSUS SOCIETAL

Tables X-XIII illustrate the zero-order and second-order gammas for the structural by subjective alienation and controlling for societal alienation.

Among those respondents who are in circumstances of high structural alienation, thirty-six of the forty-eight (75 percent) partial gammas are lower than their corresponding zero-order gammas. This suggests that for those who are highly alienated structurally, societal factors are at least as important as the structural measures in contributing to the subjective expression of alienation.

Eighteen of forty-eight (38 percent) of the partial gammas decrease for those who are in circumstances of

TABLE X

STRUCTURAL ALIENATION BY SUBJECTIVE ALIENATION: CONTROLLING
FOR "CHOICE OF CLIENTS"--SOCIETAL ALIENATION

Measures of Structural Alienation	Measures of Subjective Alienation	Zero Order		High Choice of Clients		Some Choice of Clients		No Choice of Clients	
		Y	n	Y	n	Y	n	Y	n
Access to administration	Tired of listening	.28	438	.20	35	.28	95	.23	297
Access to administration	Choose career again	.24	433	.06	35	.07	95	.19	293
Access to administration	Too many dictate	.43	431	.47	33	.45	95	.32	293
Access to administration	Means to economic end	.38	436	.72	35	.56	96	.24	294
Unclear expectations	Tired of listening	.21	468	.19	52	.16	96	.18	306
Unclear expectations	Choose career again	.32	465	.33	53	.36	97	.19	302
Unclear expectations	Too many dictate	.38	454	.55	44	.48	96	.24	301
Unclear expectations	Means to economic end	.37	466	.33	52	.49	97	.25	303
Learn new things	Tired of listening	.10	476	.42	54	-.07	100	.05	307
Learn new things	Choose career again	.36	475	.75	56	.29	100	.24	304
Learn new things	Too many dictate	.13	462	.09	46	.03	99	.01	303
Learn new things	Means to economic end	.35	477	.36	55	.64	101	.19	305

TABLE XI

STRUCTURAL ALIENATION BY SUBJECTIVE ALIENATION: CONTROLLING FOR
"SEVERE ECONOMIC PROBLEMS"--SOCIETAL ALIENATION

Measures of Structural Alienation	Measures of Subjective Alienation	Zero Order		Clients with Few Economic Problems		Clients with Moderate Economic Problems		Clients with Severe Economic Problems	
		Y	n	Y	n	Y	n	Y	n
Access to administration	Tired of listening	.28	438	.00	34	.40	111	.22	274
Access to administration	Choose career again	.24	433	.26	34	.13	108	.22	274
Access to administration	Too many dictate	.43	431	.50	32	.39	109	.40	272
Access to administration	Means to economic end	.38	436	.40	34	.50	110	.30	273
Unclear expectations	Tired of listening	.21	468	.11	44	.12	118	.20	285
Unclear expectations	Choose career again	.32	465	.54	44	.25	116	.25	286
Unclear expectations	Too many dictate	.38	454	.60	40	.19	113	.37	282
Unclear expectations	Means to economic end	.37	466	.53	44	.32	117	.31	284
Learn new things	Tired of listening	.10	476	.03	47	.24	119	.05	288
Learn new things	Choose career again	.36	475	.60	47	.23	117	.30	289
Learn new things	Too many dictate	.13	462	.77	40	.10	115	-.02	287
Learn new things	Means to economic end	.35	477	.80	47	.29	119	.24	287

TABLE XII

STRUCTURAL ALIENATION BY SUBJECTIVE ALIENATION: CONTROLLING
FOR "STABLE FUNDING"--SOCIETAL ALIENATION

Measures of Structural Alienation	Measures of Subjective Alienation	Zero Order		Stable Funding		Moderate Stable Funding		Unstable Funding	
		Y	n	Y	n	Y	n	Y	n
Access to administration	Tired of listening	.28	438	.66	100	.23	203	.08	130
Access to administration	Choose career again	.24	433	.44	100	.14	200	.24	129
Access to administration	Too many dictate	.43	431	.56	99	.41	200	.36	129
Access to administration	Means to economic end	.38	436	.58	100	.23	201	.45	130
Unclear expectations	Tired of listening	.21	468	.38	106	.26	206	-.06	139
Unclear expectations	Choose career again	.32	465	.47	106	.34	205	.10	138
Unclear expectations	Too many dictate	.38	454	.46	105	.40	203	.25	136
Unclear expectations	Means to economic end	.37	466	.35	106	.29	204	.50	139
Learn new things	Tired of listening	.10	476	.09	106	.17	210	.02	140
Learn new things	Choose career again	.36	475	.30	106	.40	208	.29	140
Learn new things	Too many dictate	.13	462	.14	105	.08	207	.09	138
Learn new things	Means to economic end	.35	477	.35	106	.42	208	.23	141

TABLE XIII

STRUCTURAL ALIENATION BY SUBJECTIVE ALIENATION: CONTROLLING FOR
"LIMITED COMMUNITY RESOURCES"--SOCIETAL ALIENATION

Measures of Structural Alienation	Measures of Subjective Alienation	Zero Order		Adequate Community Resources		Moderate Community Resources		Limited Community Resources	
		Y	n	Y	n	Y	n	Y	n
Access to administration	Tired of listening	.28	438	.29	76	.45	163	.10	181
Access to administration	Choose career again	.24	433	.07	76	.33	162	.25	179
Access to administration	Too many dictate	.43	431	.43	75	.45	160	.40	179
Access to administration	Means to economic end	.38	436	.31	76	.45	164	.36	179
Unclear expectations	Tired of listening	.21	468	-.11	85	.37	169	.07	191
Unclear expectations	Choose career again	.32	465	.29	85	.46	170	.18	189
Unclear expectations	Too many dictate	.38	454	.24	84	.52	162	.23	189
Unclear expectations	Means to economic end	.37	466	.44	85	.46	170	.28	189
Learn new things	Tired of listening	.10	476	-.09	86	.28	174	-.01	191
Learn new things	Choose career again	.36	475	.32	86	.35	174	.30	190
Learn new things	Too many dictate	.13	462	.02	85	.25	166	.04	189
Learn new things	Means to economic end	.35	477	.54	86	.25	175	.29	190

medium structural alienation. The basic trend is that of moderate influence in three of the four control variables (societal alienation). More specifically, the exception is "limited community resources," which has only one lower second-order gamma. This indicates that for the respondents who are moderately alienated structurally, having limited community resources is of less importance than the other three societal variables in mediating the relationship between structural and subjective alienation.

For the respondents who are in circumstances of low structural alienation, the control variables become less influential. Only twelve of the forty-eight (25 percent) of the partial gammas decrease. However, in contrast to the respondents in circumstances of moderate structural alienation, these respondents do indicate that having an insufficient number of community resources is an important factor.

In summary, the data from Tables X-XIII continue to suggest that societal issues play an important role in the conscious expression of alienation. This appears to be especially true for those social service workers who are high in the expression of alienation. The societal measures of alienation are at least as important as the structural measures in contributing to the expression of burnout/ alienation for social service workers. As our respondents become more alienated, the influence of the structural variables appears to decrease.

Tables XIV-XVI illustrate the zero-order and second-order gammas for the societal by subjective alienation. We controlled for societal measures of alienation.

These tables indicate that among those who are in circumstances of high societal alienation, thirty-one of the forty-eight (65 percent) partial gammas are lower than their corresponding zero-order gammas. For these respondents, all three of the control variables have an equally important influence on the association between the independent and dependent variables. This suggests that the structural variables are as important as the societal measures of alienation in leading to the psychological expression of alienation.

Fifty-four percent, or twenty-six of the forty-eight partial gammas, decrease in the second-order gammas for the respondents who found themselves in circumstances of moderate societal alienation. Having an opportunity to "learn new things" on the job and having clear expectations from others appear to be the two important conditions for these respondents.

Finally, for the respondents who found themselves in circumstances of low societal alienation, only twelve of the forty-eight (25 percent) of the partial gammas decrease. "Unclear expectations" is clearly the control variable which has the greatest effect on mediating the original asssociation between the dependent and independent variables. The

TABLE XIV

SOCIETAL ALIENATION BY SUBJECTIVE ALIENATION: CONTROLLING FOR
"ACCESS TO ADMINISTRATION"--STRUCTURAL ALIENATION

Measures of Societal Alienation	Measures of Subjective Alienation	Zero Order Gamma		Adequate Access to Administration		Moderate Access to Administration		Limited Access to Administration	
		x	n	x	n	x	n	x	n
Choice of clients	Tired of listening	.24	462	-.07	191	.27	164	-.01	65
Choice of clients	Choose career again	.45	460	.34	191	.50	159	.31	98
Choice of clients	Too many dictate	.50	448	.54	189	.24	159	.56	98
Choice of clients	Means to economic end	.66	461	.78	191	.56	161	.29	99
Limited resources	Tired of listening	.18	452	.25	194	.17	155	-.04	98
Limited resources	Choose career again	.17	450	.18	194	.12	151	.24	98
Limited resources	Too many dictate	.25	440	.34	192	.13	150	.25	98
Limited resources	Means to economic end	.16	451	.31	194	-.02	153	.26	99
Severe economic problems	Tired of listening	.37	455	.16	190	.50	159	-.10	98
Severe economic problems	Choose career again	.28	453	.20	190	.34	155	.08	98
Severe economic problems	Too many dictate	.42	440	.43	188	.33	154	.18	98
Severe economic problems	Means to economic end	.37	453	.56	190	.34	156	.14	99
Stable funding	Tired of listening	-.07	457	.09	200	-.08	161	.45	100
Stable funding	Choose career again	.00	454	.05	200	.04	156	-.10	100
Stable funding	Too many dictate	.00	450	.10	198	.17	156	-.03	100
Stable funding	Means to economic end	-.05	455	-.09	200	-.09	158	-.14	101

TABLE XV

SOCIETAL ALIENATION BY SUBJECTIVE ALIENATION: CONTROLLING
FOR "UNCLEAR EXPECTATIONS"--STRUCTURAL ALIENATION

Measures of Societal Alienation	Measures of Subjective Alienation	Zero Order Gamma		Clear Expectations		Moderate Clear Expectations		Unclear Expectations	
		x	n	x	n	x	n	x	n
Choice of clients	Tired of listening	.24	462	.12	155	.10	203	.45	127
Choice of clients	Choose career again	.45	460	.40	154	.44	202	.16	126
Choice of clients	Too many dictate	.50	448	.58	146	.43	198	.38	125
Choice of clients	Means to economic end	.66	461	.66	155	.59	201	.56	127
Limited resources	Tired of listening	.18	452	.04	149	.18	199	.04	127
Limited resources	Choose career again	.17	450	.07	148	.15	199	-.04	126
Limited resources	Too many dictate	.25	440	.23	142	.14	195	.04	126
Limited resources	Means to economic end	.16	451	.18	149	.02	198	.00	127
Severe economic problems	Tired of listening	.37	455	.18	155	.36	197	.34	127
Severe economic problems	Choose career again	.28	453	.30	154	.22	197	.10	126
Severe economic problems	Too many dictate	.42	440	.41	148	.31	192	.40	125
Severe economic problems	Means to economic end	.37	453	.32	155	.34	195	.28	127
Stable funding	Tired of listening	-.06	457	.21	148	.24	205	.20	128
Stable funding	Choose career again	.00	454	.27	147	-.11	204	-.17	127
Stable funding	Too many dictate	.00	450	.08	144	-.07	202	-.10	127
Stable funding	Means to economic end	-.05	455	-.29	148	-.13	203	.03	128

TABLE XVI

SOCIETAL ALIENATION BY SUBJECTIVE ALIENATION: CONTROLLING
FOR "LEARN NEW THINGS"--STRUCTURAL ALIENATION

Measures of Societal Alienation	Measures of Subjective Alienation	Zero Order Gamma		Adequate Opportunity to Learn New Things		Some Opportunity to Learn New Things		Limited Opportunity to Learn New Things	
		x	n	x	n	x	n	x	n
Choice of clients	Tired of listening	.24	462	.23	193	.12	215	-.07	85
Choice of clients	Choose career again	.45	460	.55	194	.30	213	-.01	84
Choice of clients	Too many dictate	.50	448	.57	184	.51	207	.64	85
Choice of clients	Means to economic end	.66	461	.82	193	.41	215	.49	85
Limited resources	Tired of listening	.18	452	.29	186	-.07	213	.28	82
Limited resources	Choose career again	.17	450	.22	186	.10	212	.15	81
Limited resources	Too many dictate	.25	440	.23	180	.32	207	.01	82
Limited resources	Means to economic end	.16	451	.30	186	-.06	213	.12	82
Severe economic problems	Tired of listening	.37	455	.42	191	.19	213	.36	83
Severe economic problems	Choose career again	.28	453	.38	191	.20	212	.21	82
Severe economic problems	Too many dictate	.42	440	.60	182	.31	205	.16	83
Severe economic problems	Means to economic end	.16	451	.30	186	-.06	213	.15	83
Stable funding	Tired of listening	-.06	457	.11	186	.03	215	.31	85
Stable funding	Choose career again	.00	454	-.02	186	-.02	213	-.10	84
Stable funding	Too many dictate	.00	450	-.08	183	.14	211	-.29	85
Stable funding	Means to economic end	-.05	455	.00	185	-.20	215	-.16	85

other two control variables ("access to administration" and "learn new things") play a very minor role.

Overall, the data from Tables XIV-XVI suggest that structural or organizational conditions do contribute to the experience of worker alienation. And again we find that the control variables (structural, in this case) seem to have the most influence over those respondents who find themselves in situations of high societal alienation.

SUMMARY

In conclusion, our findings in this chapter very clearly illustrate that both structural and societal factors are important in predicting the subjective experience of alienation from work. However, from our findings we cannot say that structural or societal issues are more important in predicting our dependent variable. The measures appear to be interdependent and work together rather than independent from one another. This is very consistent with the Maxian concept of the "dialectical" relationship between micro and macro structures in society. That is, the organizations or the social institutions in our society are a product of the values and norms of that society. Wagner and Cogen describe how social services are dependent upon the larger society:

> Social workers are given little power to aid clients
> vis-à-vis the institutions of society (places of em-
> ployment, schools, law enforcement agencies, etc.)
> that impact most importantly against poor and working

people . . . Social workers operate in an extremely
narrow sector of capitalist life and are given little
power to counteract the oppression of their clients.
(1978, p . 40)

Social service workers, it appears, will continue to
experience feelings of alienation because they espouse
values that are not consistent with the values of the larger
society.   It is of vital importance that social service
workers understand how the conditions of the work place and
the function of social work in a capitalist society are in-
timately connected with the political and economic structure
of society.   There are no hard and fast dividing lines be-
tween levels of social phenomena; they blend together.
Ritzer states:

Dialecticians would admit that although the real
world is a maze in flux, it is necessary to carve
it up into its component parts and analyze the cru-
cial connections among these various phenomena. This,
in fact, is exactly what Marx did in his analysis of
capitalism. (1981, p. 63)

CHAPTER VI

SOCIAL "REALITY"--AN INTERVENING
VARIABLE

INTRODUCTION

The findings in Chapter V illustrate that both struc-
tural and societal issues lead to the subjective expression
of alienation. These measures of alienation appear to be
interdependent rather than functioning independently from
one another; therefore, we were unable to say that condi-
tions of the work place are more or less predictive of the
subjective expression of alienation from work than the con-
ditions generated by societal factors. At the onset of the
study we hypothesized that the social reality variables are
likely to influence the relationship between the independent
and dependent variables. The social reality variables are:
"few opportunities for advancement," "fair salary," and
"job as good as any." These variables stem from the Marxian
view of how the conditions of society influence man's rela-
tionship to self and others. For Marx, the economic rela-
tionships in society are the basic sources of alienation.
At the time of this study the prevailing conditions are
characterized by serious economic insecurity which manifests
itself by political conservatism, and cutbacks in social

service programs. These conditions are apt to influence how one views the job and may encourage social service workers to overlook alienating factors that may be connected with the work. The extensive budget cuts in social services could contribute to the respondents feeling that they ought not express dissatisfaction with their job. Hence, we think that the current social reality of economic insecurity will serve to suppress the subjective expression of alienation.

In this chapter we will attempt to examine whether the social reality variables may explain why there appears to be more structural/societal alienation than subjective aliena-tion. We will be especially sensitive to changes in gammas of more than 5 percentage points and more specifically we will be looking at gammas that decrease by 5 percentage points or more. If the gammas decrease, the control vari-ables (social reality in this instance) are predicting the expression of alienation on the job. The social reality factors suppress the influence of other structural/societal conditions in the conscious expression of work alienation. Because of the reality of the economic conditions in our soci-ety we hypothesize that the respondents will tend to express less job dissatisfaction and will be less conscious of the alienating structural factors that logically lead to work alienation.

Tables XVII-XIX illustrate the zero-order and second-order gammas for the structural by subjective

alienation controlling for the three social reality variables.

NEGATIVE SOCIAL REALITY

Among the respondents who have a negative social reality, that is, agree that they have little opportunity for advancement, who have an unsatisfactory salary, and who are dissatisfied with their job or who do not agree that their job is as good as any, there is a decrease of 5 percent in sixteen of the forty-eight (44 percent) partial gammas. The basic trend is that of a moderate influence in two of the three variables. The exception is "unfair salary," which has only three lowered gammas to the six and seven decreased gammas for the other social "reality" variables. It is interesting that in this time of serious fiscal crisis and decrease in worker salary, social service workers still considered the pay they receive to be relatively fair. However, when we consider that our survey was conducted before the announcement of President Reagan's budget cuts, we can understand that social services may not have realized the extent of economic crisis.

AMBIGUOUS SOCIAL REALITY

A clear 50 percent of the second-order gammas decrease for the respondents who agree that they have some opportunity for advancement, are somewhat satisfied with their

TABLE XVII

STRUCTURAL ALIENATION BY SUBJECTIVE ALIENATION: CONTROLLING FOR
"FEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADVANCEMENT"--SOCIAL REALITY

Measures of Structural Alienation	Measures of Subjective Alienation	Zero Order		Adequate Opportunity for Advancement		Some Opportunity for Advancement		Little Opportunity for Advancement	
		γ	n	γ	n	γ	n	γ	n
Access to administration	Tired of listening	.28	438	.22	62	.45	152	.17	213
Access to administration	Choose career again	.24	433	.26	60	.32	152	.14	211
Access to administration	Too many dictate	.43	431	.70	62	.37	148	.37	212
Access to administration	Means to economic end	.38	436	.51	63	.45	151	.26	212
Unclear expectations	Tired of listening	.21	468	.14	69	.27	152	.14	225
Unclear expectations	Choose career again	.32	465	.43	67	.26	153	.30	223
Unclear expectations	Too many dictate	.38	454	.24	68	.41	147	.34	224
Unclear expectations	Means to economic end	.37	466	.42	70	.28	151	.38	224
Learn new things	Tired of listening	.10	476	-.03	69	.03	154	.12	226
Learn new things	Choose career again	.36	475	.38	67	.27	155	.27	226
Learn new things	Too many dictate	.13	462	-.13	68	-.02	149	.11	227
Learn new things	Means to economic end	.35	477	.19	70	.06	153	.42	227

TABLE XVIII

STRUCTURAL ALIENATION BY SUBJECTIVE ALIENATION: CONTROLLING
FOR "FAIR SALARY"--SOCIAL REALITY

Measures of Structural Alienation	Measures of Subjective Alienation	Zero Order		Satis-factory Salary		Somewhat Satis-factory Salary		Unsatis-factory Salary	
		Y	n	Y	n	Y	n	Y	n
Access to administration	Tired of listening	.28	438	.17	193	.39	162	.29	80
Access to administration	Choose career again	.24	433	.11	192	.36	162	.22	77
Access to administration	Too many dictate	.43	431	.48	190	.38	160	.37	79
Access to administration	Means to economic end	.38	436	.31	194	.51	161	.24	79
Unclear expectations	Tired of listening	.21	468	.25	211	.15	171	.32	83
Unclear expectations	Choose career again	.32	465	.41	211	.21	171	.28	81
Unclear expectations	Too many dictate	.38	454	.50	203	.24	169	.39	80
Unclear expectations	Means to economic end	.37	466	.48	212	.40	170	-10	82
Learn new things	Tired of listening	.10	476	.04	214	.19	174	.11	86
Learn new things	Choose career again	.36	475	.23	213	.38	175	.54	84
Learn new things	Too many dictate	.13	462	.06	205	.08	171	.33	83
Learn new things	Means to economic end	.35	477	.24	215	.37	174	.50	85

TABLE XIX

STRUCTURAL ALIENATION BY SUBJECTIVE ALIENATION: CONTROLLING
FOR "JOB AS GOOD AS ANY"--SOCIAL REALITY

Measures of Structural Alienation	Measures of Subjective Alienation	Zero Order		Satisfied with Job		Moderately Satisfied with Job		Dissatisfied with Job	
		Y	n	Y	n	Y	n	Y	n
Access to administration	Tired of listening	.28	438	.29	70	.32	151	.50	208
Access to administration	Choose career again	.24	433	.30	71	.35	152	.35	211
Access to administration	Too many dictate	.43	431	.25	72	.20	151	.34	213
Access to administration	Means to economic end	.38	436	.26	69	.22	151	.08	211
Unclear expectations	Tired of listening	.21	468	.31	75	.21	154	.44	223
Unclear expectations	Choose career again	.32	465	.58	77	.06	156	.45	229
Unclear expectations	Too many dictate	.38	454	.55	75	.15	155	.22	231
Unclear expectations	Means to economic end	.37	466	.47	78	-.08	155	.27	231
Learn new things	Tired of listening	.10	476	.40	76	.24	159	.30	236
Learn new things	Choose career again	.36	475	.44	78	.33	160	.23	235
Learn new things	Too many dictate	.13	462	.07	76	.10	157	.08	227
Learn new things	Means to economic end	.35	477	.12	77	.11	159	.07	236

salary and are moderately satisfied with their job. It appears that the respondents in this group tend to be equally concerned about structural and social "reality" issues.

POSITIVE SOCIAL REALITY

Seventeen of the forty-eight (47 percent) of the partial gammas decrease by more than 5 percent for the respondents who agree that they have an adequate opportunity for advancement and who are satisfied with their job and salary.

Overall, the data from Tables XVII-XIX suggest that for the respondents in each of the three categories the social "reality" issues do play an important role in depressing the conscious expression of alienation. Very interestingly, the percentage of decreased gammas is uniform for the respondents in the three categories.

SOCIETAL ALIENATION AND SOCIAL REALITY

Tables XX-XXII illustrate the zero-order and second-order gammas for the societal by subjective alienation and controlling for social "reality."

Among the respondents who agree that they have little opportunity for advancement, have an unsatisfactory salary, and who are dissatisfied with their job, the partial gammas decrease by 5 percent or more in 27 percent of the partial gammas. Having little opportunity for advancement on the

TABLE XX

SOCIETAL ALIENATION BY SUBJECTIVE ALIENATION: CONTROLLING FOR
"FEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADVANCEMENT"--SOCIAL "REALITY"

Measures of Societal Alienation	Measures of Subjective Alienation	Zero Order Gamma		Adequate Opportunity for Advancement		Some Opportunity for Advancement		Little Opportunity for Advancement	
		x	n	x	n	x	n	x	n
Choice of clients	Tired of listening	.24	462	.01	72	.38	155	.20	239
Choice of clients	Choose career again	.45	460	.42	70	.40	156	.40	237
Choice of clients	Too many dictate	.50	448	.41	71	.49	151	.54	237
Choice of clients	Means to economic end	.66	461	.88	73	.69	154	.49	238
Limited resources	Tired of listening	.18	452	.32	70	.15	150	.06	240
Limited resources	Choose career again	.17	450	.16	69	.12	151	.19	238
Limited resources	Too many dictate	.25	440	.07	69	.25	147	.24	238
Limited resources	Means to economic end	.16	451	.10	71	.19	149	.13	239
Severe economic problems	Tired of listening	.37	445	.34	70	.48	152	.17	239
Severe economic problems	Choose career again	.28	453	.27	69	.46	153	.17	237
Severe economic problems	Too many dictate	.42	440	.03	69	.71	148	.24	237
Severe economic problems	Means to economic end	.37	453	.18	71	.61	151	.20	238
Stable funding	Tired of listening	-.06	457	-.17	72	-.18	.56	-.03	244
Stable funding	Choose career again	.00	454	-.05	70	-.10	157	.07	242
Stable funding	Too many dictate	.00	450	-.14	72	-.13	152	.04	242
Stable funding	Means to economic end	-.05	455	.30	73	-.27	155	-.04	243

TABLE XXI

SOCIETAL ALIENATION BY SUBJECTIVE ALIENATION: CONTROLLING
FOR "FAIR SALARY"--SOCIAL "REALITY"

Measures of Societal Alienation	Measures of Subjective Alienation	Zero Order Gamma		Satis- factory Salary		Somewhat Satis- factory Salary		Unsatis- factory Salary	
		x	n	x	n	x	n	x	n
Choice of clients	Tired of listening	.24	462	.15	214	.15	184	.33	92
Choice of clients	Choose career again	.45	460	.43	214	.56	183	.28	90
Choice of clients	Too many dictate	.50	448	.57	206	.46	178	.66	89
Choice of clients	Means to economic end	.66	461	.68	215	.58	183	.81	91
Limited resources	Tired of listening	.18	452	.12	206	.18	180	.25	93
Limited resources	Choose career again	.17	450	.26	207	.11	179	.16	91
Limited resources	Too many dictate	.25	440	.29	201	.20	176	.25	90
Limited resources	Means to economic end	.16	451	.23	207	.07	180	.19	92
Severe economic problems	Tired of listening	.37	457	.41	210	.15	180	.38	93
Severe economic problems	Choose career again	.28	454	.32	211	.10	179	.36	91
Severe economic problems	Too many dictate	.42	450	.52	203	.26	174	.27	90
Severe economic problems	Means to economic end	.37	455	.40	211	.17	179	.65	92
Stable funding	Tired of listening	-.06	457	-.13	210	-.09	183	.05	91
Stable funding	Choose career again	.00	454	-.05	210	-.03	182	-.03	89
Stable funding	Too many dictate	.00	450	-.06	207	-.05	181	-.10	89
Stable funding	Means to economic end	-.05	455	.03	211	-.14	182	-.23	90

TABLE XXII

SOCIETAL ALIENATION BY SUBJECTIVE ALIENATION: CONTROLLING
FOR "JOB AS GOOD AS ANY"--SOCIAL "REALITY"

Measures of Societal Alienation	Measures of Structural Alienation	Zero Order Gamma		Satisfied with Job		Moderately Satisfied with Job		Dissatisfied with Job	
		x	n	x	n	x	n	x	n
Choice of clients	Tired of listening	.24	462	.10	84	.25	163	.32	241
Choice of clients	Choose career again	.45	460	.53	81	.33	163	.39	241
Choice of clients	Too many dictate	.50	448	.48	81	.58	161	.48	232
Choice of clients	Means to economic end	.66	461	.46	83	.60	164	.69	240
Limited resources	Tired of listening	.18	452	.02	83	-.16	158	.36	238
Limited resources	Choose career again	.17	450	.25	80	.13	159	.16	237
Limited resources	Too many dictate	.25	440	.10	80	.05	157	.41	230
Limited resources	Means to economic end	.16	451	.14	82	-.16	159	.39	237
Severe economic problems	Tired of listening	.37	457	.32	81	.16	159	.37	243
Severe economic problems	Choose career again	.28	454	.18	78	.23	160	.23	242
Severe economic problems	Too many dictate	.42	450	.28	78	.04	157	.59	233
Severe economic problems	Means to economic end	.37	455	.16	80	.21	160	.47	241
Stable funding	Tired of listening	-.06	457	.06	85	-.31	159	-.03	240
Stable funding	Choose career again	.00	454	.03	82	-.15	159	.01	239
Stable funding	Too many dictate	.00	450	-.03	83	-.15	160	.02	234
Stable funding	Means to economic end	-.05	455	-.01	84	-.15	160	.08	238

job appears to have the strongest influence in mediating the relationship between societal issues and the conscious expression of alienation.

An overwhelming 63 percent of the partial gammas decrease for the respondents who agree somewhat they they are able to advance on the job and that their salary and job are satisfactory. "Fair salary" and "job as good as any" are the two social reality issues that have the strongest influence in explaining why the respondents in our study tend to resist expressing more feelings of burnout and alienation from their work.

For the respondents who are basically agreed that they have opportunity for advancement on the job and who are generally satisfied with their salary and their job, the second-order gammas decrease 48 percent. Two of the three variables have a moderate influence on the zero-order correlation. The exception is "fair salary," which shows that the second-order gammas only decrease in five out of sixteen relationships. Hence, having a relatively fair salary does not explain why the respondents in this category did not express their feelings of alienation.

Overall, the data in Tables XX-XXII suggest that the social reality issues do influence the relationship between societal alienation and subjective alienation for respondents in the first two categories. They play a less influential role for the respondents who disagree that their job

provides opportunity for advancement and that their salary
and job are satisfactory. For these respondents, other
types of issues appear to influence the resistance of these
respondents to expressing their conscious feelings about
their dissatisfaction and/or alienation from work.

SUMMARY

In conclusion, our findings do support our hypothesis
that the social "reality" variables will change the rela-
tionship between the independent and dependent variables.
They provide at least a moderately strong explanation of why
there appears to be more structural/societal alienation than
the conscious psychological expression of feelings of alien-
ation from work. We recognize that there may be a number of
reasons other than social reality that may account for this
phenomenon; however, our findings support the Marxian con-
cepts of "false consciousness" and the role of the "his-
torical moment" in an individual's perceptions of his/her
work.

Marx conceptualizes work alienation as the breakdown
of the "natural interconnectedness of species-being"
(Ritzer, 1981, p. 44). That is, according to Marx, the ob-
jective conditions or the:

> . . . macro-objective structures of capitalism are
> involved in this breakdown--the market, money, com-
> modities, capital, and, most importantly, the divi-
> sion of labor and the resulting class system.
> (Ritzer, 1981, p. 61)

For these reasons, we chose to examine whether social
"reality" issues such as having opportunity to advance on
the job, having a fair salary, and considering that one's
job may be as good as one can expect in an industrial soci-
ety may suppress feelings of alienation. Finifter describes
Marx's concept of "false consciousness" as well as our con-
ceptualization of social "reality" as follows:

> Presumably, many have been socialized to expect no
> more than they have actually received; therefore,
> felt content and did not subjectively experience
> dissatisfaction or alienation. (1972, p. 6)

Therefore, we contend that social service workers are
"products" of a society that places value on competition,
economic advancement, egotistic ends, and detachment from
other human beings. Social service workers may not be un-
like other people in society in that they have been social-
ized to adapt to the alienating conditions in society.
Perhaps the "alienating processes are either so effective,
or have been going on continuously for such a long period,
that one no longer experiences them on a cognitive level"
(Israel, 1971, p. 80).

It is for the above reasons that we, unlike many of
the empirical studies on work alienation in the United
States, chose to examine how the structure of the work
place and the structure of society contribute to the con-
scious expression of alienation. And our findings do sup-
port and are in keeping with the Marxian paradigm. With

Kohn (1976), we have begun to demonstrate that the objective
and subjective aspects of alienation can be integrated.

CHAPTER VII

DISCUSSION

INTRODUCTION

> It is . . . almost as difficult to measure . . .
> feelings of discontent about work as it is to mea-
> sure other basic feelings such as pride, love, or
> hate. Most of the leading experts on work in Ameri-
> ca have expressed disappointment over the unsophis-
> ticated techniques commonly used to measure work
> dissatisfaction. (Work in America, 1973, p. 14)

There are few studies that consider the relationship
between feelings of discontent or subjective alienation of
workers and the structural conditions of the work place.
To our knowledge, our study is the first to examine, in
the context of the social services, both structural and
societal conditions and their relationship to subjective
alienation.

CONCLUSIONS

Throughout this study, we have attempted, using a
Marxian analysis, to distinguish between the experience and
expression of alienation, and the structural and societal
conditions contributing to it.

Toward this end, we employed survey research methods
to analyze the relationships between these three types of
alienation. Our research supports our three hypotheses:

first, that there is a strong relationship between societal/ structural alienation and subjective alienation; second, that societal/structural alienation is clearly more apparent in our sample than is subjective alienation; and finally, that social reality significantly influences the relationships between these types of alienation. Even with high levels of structural/societal alienation, less subjective alienation can be measured due in part to social reality factors.

That structural alienation is more evident than subjective alienation is an intriguing finding. If the structural conditions of work are so confining as to be alienating, then why do respondents not reveal a corresponding level of subjective alienation? The answers are complex and varied. The structural conditions of work (i.e., amount of paper work, autonomy, access to administration) are to a great extent mediated by the conditions of society at large (social reality) and so too the responses to that structure. Obviously other factors, other than those we designated as social reality, mediate this relationship. We can guess that variables such as education, length of time in the job, and gender could have impact. We believe that further research is necessary to examine the effect of variables such as these upon the individual's expression of alienation. Another important factor in the expression of alienation is the way(s) it can be alleviated or managed. It is quite

possible that without creative personal intervention, such as sports, nonwork-related activities, and a variety of stress reduction techniques, social service workers would experience alienation in direct proportion to the existence of alienating structural conditions. We are critical of workshops and other individual means as the only ways of reducing burnout; these methods only assuage the symptom without treating the cause. While we in no way advocate the elimination of these solutions, we would hope that the reader, as well as the social service workers concerned, would see these solutions as a beginning point from which to change the structure. Our research has led us to believe that burnout and alienation will always exist unless the conditions of work are changed. Social work as a profession suffers its alienating effects from two sides: (1) it is like any other work, given to inherently alienating characteristics, and (2) it exists within a fissure of contradictory societal and political values.

As seen in Table IV, more than half of the respondents stated that the structural aspects of work which Marx theorized were alienating, were descriptive of their jobs in social work. That such a large number of people report that these conditions exist to a moderate or high degree suggests that Braverman's ideas that white-collar jobs can no longer be completely distinguishable from blue-collar jobs, are applicable to work in the social services. While over half

are reporting that structurally alienating conditions of
work are descriptive of their jobs, this consistency is not
seen in respondents' apparent subjective alienation (see
Table VI). The efficacy of Marx's notion of false con-
sciousness is borne out.

The specific work conditions which determine an alien-
ating environment, such as paper work or any other condition
which requires attention to the mere mechanics of work or
which is in and of itself meaningless, greatly reduces a
worker's ability to be professionally effective. Our data
show that these conditions do result in detachment from
clients, co-workers, and ultimately from social work:

> But a growing number of white-collar jobs have much
> in common with the jobs of auto workers and steel
> workers. Indeed, discontent with the intrinsic
> factors of work has spread even to those with man-
> agement status. (Work in America, 1973, p. 14)

If social work is beginning to take the form of assembly
line production, then it becomes simpler to comprehend how
far removed workers can become in their professional goals
of directly helping to serve the needs of their clients.
Those respondents who are describing the conditions of
their jobs as being alienating, are also those respondents
who would not again choose to become social workers. The
gravity of this fact cannot be overemphasized. If social
work is to remain viable, and its goal of social change in-
tact, then clearly the structure of the work place must
change. If social workers are inhibited by bureaucratic

necessities, then ultimately their clients will suffer and the social order will continue in its dangerously haphazard and condemning fashion. Social workers who burn out and leave the profession may also leave the commitment to changing social and political conditions. The current trend in social work toward the attainment of legitimate professional status (through licensing) seems to ignore the basic problems evident in our findings. We would not be in opposition to this trend if it were to incorporate the fact that a majority of social workers are not in private practice, and therefore lack control over the product of their work.

While the granting of status is in and of itself an issue, it is important that social workers, in order to perhaps more effectively do their jobs, be given such legitimacy. However, this does not really resolve the matter of altering the structure of the work place. Blue-collar America has looked in the past to unions to do battle for better work conditions. Neo-Marxist social critics tell us, however, that unions have only bettered the work conditions within the factory in order to maintain the worker in his menial position. Even if one were to give unions the benefit of the doubt, and work conditions within the social services were altered, one still has not resolved the larger issues which caused the alienating conditions in the first place. The conditions of work, any work, reflect the conditions of society at large. In our study, we learned that

merely changing the technology of the work place does not eliminate the problem of alienation from work because the "root causes stem largely from contradictions located within the structure of American society" (Brager & Halloway, 1978, pp. 17-18).

The profession of social work and social service workers have historically functioned in a precarious position vis-à-vis the basic values of Western society, specifically the operant values of present-day post-industrial America. The high frequency of societal alienation among our respondents lends great credence to the perspective of social work as existing in direct conflict and contradiction with a capitalistic system.

Capitalism is based upon the premise that each individual is free to compete with skills and/or goods in a free market, and that each has available to him/her an equal opportunity to succeed.

> Since modern man experiences himself both as the seller and as the commodity to be sold on the market, his self-esteem depends on conditions beyond his control. If he is successful, he is valuable; if he is not, he is worthless. (Fromm, 1971; from Work in America, 1973, p. 5)

In a pure free market economy, the whole concept of social work must be a priori foreign. The Protestant work ethic has been tempered in double-bind fashion by the notion of the Christian work ethic. It is fine to help a neighbor in need, but it is not fine to support those for whom capitalism has failed. Capitalism does not provide for those who

could never compete in the first place, nor does it willingly provide when its mechanisms cease to function.

To review, there is a strong association between the societal and structural conditions and social service workers' experience of alienation. Our hypothesis that workers would express less alienation than their report of alienating structural conditions would indicate, proves to be true. Social reality factors, our attempt to operationalize Marx's concept of false consciousness, do account for this difference.

We are concerned that movement toward social change not overlook the seemingly mundane: the conditions under which Americans work, and the work itself, are truly at the heart of the matter. Nor should those focusing on changing work conditions ignore social work's goal of creating a more egalitarian society.

We do not believe that burnout and alienation will vanish in the near future. Given the current economic and political climate, it is likely that burnout will become an even larger problem. While the need for social services is increasing, hostility surrounding their provision is increasing as well.

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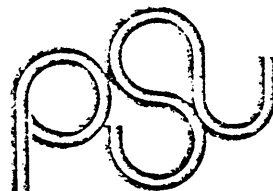   book, 1972.

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APPENDIX

November 1, 1980

To whom it may concern,

This student is representing a small group of Social Work
graduate students engaged in a thesis project concerning various
aspects of working in social services. At this point they are
interested in making contact with social workers who are not members
of NASW; social service workers without advanced degrees; and
workers with less than a bachelor's degree. They are particularly
concerned with investigating how positions are organized,
how workers view themselves and their positions, and how they
expect their careers to evolve.

They would greatly appreciate your cooperation in helping
them obtain names and addresses of workers who fit the categories
they are interested in so that they may interview or send
questionnaires to them. Please be assured that full confidentiality
about the agency and the staff will be maintained.

Thank you very much for your help.

Sincerely,

John F. Longres, Ph.D.
Advisor to the Research Project
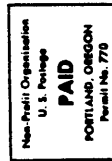
RESEARCH on WORK in the SOCIAL SERVICES

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Research on Work in the Social Services
School of Social Work
Portland State University
P.O. Box 751
Portland, Oregon 97207

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PORTLAND STATE UNIVERSITY
School of Social Work
Research on Work in the Social Services

Dear Colleague:

The questionnaire which follows is intended to help understand the way you are organized and your attitudes about work. Although we are attempting to explore some hypot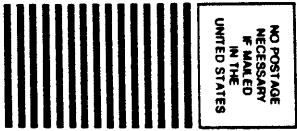heses, there are really no right or wrong answers. We are interested in uncovering the range of points of view which exist among people who work in social service.

The questionnaire is not very long. Almost all of the items are closed ended and require only that you circle the response that most reflects your point of view. While the items are closed ended please feel free to write comments in the margins or in the space provided.

The confidentiality of your responses will be completely respected. To assure this please do not write your name or name of your service agency or department anywhere on the questionnaire. In addition please be sure to tick out your name from the address form or remove the label.

The results of this study will be available in the Portland State University Library by the upcoming summer. If at that time you would like more information please feel free to contact me at the school.

Please return the questionnaire by folding it in such a way that the business reply section with my name appears on the outside of the mailer. Since it is important that the questionnaire be returned within the next two weeks, we suggest that you will give it your immediate attention.

We hope that you will enjoy responding.

Sincerely,

John F. Longres, Ph.D.
Professor of Social Work and Sociology

GENERAL INFORMATION

SEX: Male   Female

Please indicate your AGE at last birthday. _____

Please indicate the years of FORMAL EDUCATION completed and/or highest degree earned.
_____

Are you a member of any PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS?
  Yes   No
  If yes, please indicate which.
_____

Are you ACSW (Academy of Certified Social Workers)?
  Yes   No

Are you a member of a UNION?
  Yes   No

Do you work for a social service AGENCY or DEPARTMENT?
  If yes, please answer the following:

  the service is   private
                          public

  I work   part time
                          full time

  my job title is   _____

  my chief duties are in casework/counseling
                          supervision
                          administration
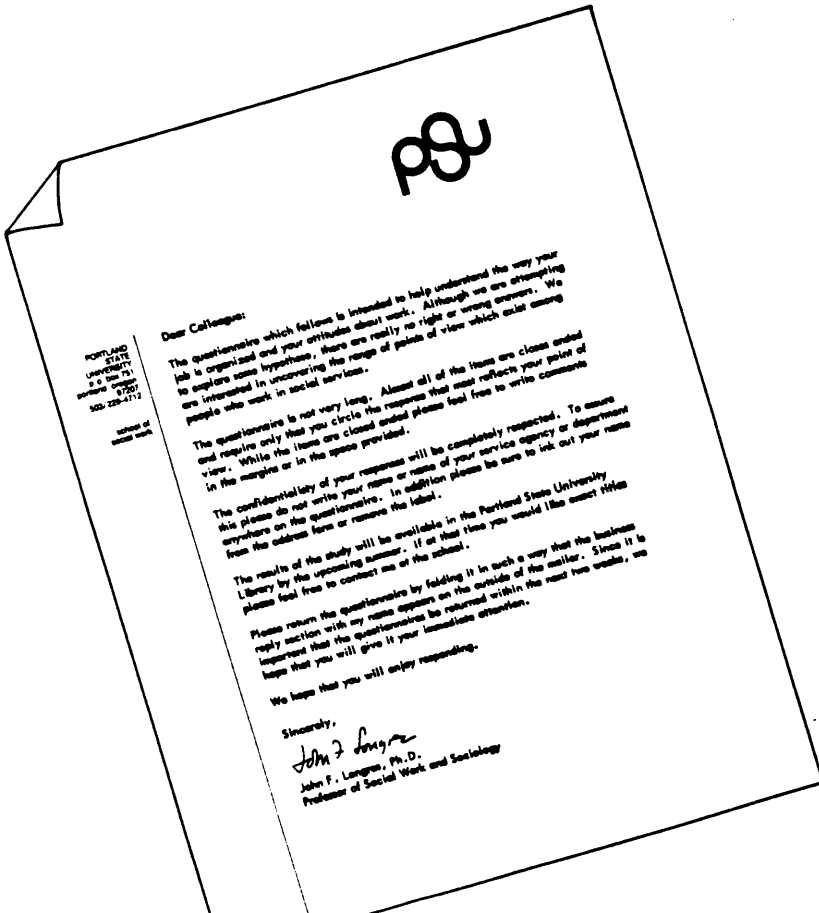   other _____

  my duties also include
  (check all that apply) casework/counseling
                          supervision
                          administration
                          other _____

Do you have a PRIVATE PRACTICE?
  Yes   No
  If yes,   full time
                          part time

How long have you worked in your current position?
_____

1

Below are general attitude statements with which some people agree and others disagree. PLEASE CIRCLE THE RESPONSE THAT MOST ADEQUATELY EXPRESSES YOUR ATTITUDE ON THE SUBJECT. Please indicate whether you completely agree (CA), agree (a), agree somewhat (AS), disagree somewhat (DS), disagree (d), or completely disagree (CD).

Statement	Response		Statement	Response
I am an idealist.	CA a AS DS d CD		I dislike people who always follow the usual social conventions.	CA a AS DS d CD
I don't like to think of myself as part of a professional class of people.	CA a AS DS d CD		The well being of the group is as important as my own.	CA a AS DS d CD
I think it is wise to do things in the expected way.	CA a AS DS d CD		It is impossible for me to believe that chance or luck plays an important role in my life.	CA a AS DS d CD
My own needs must come before those of others.	CA a AS DS d CD		I can't find time to do things that relax me.	CA a AS DS d CD
Many times I feel that I have little influence over the things that happen to me.	CA a AS DS d CD		It bothers me to think that I am not considered part of a real profession.	CA a AS DS d CD
I have a lot of interests besides my work and career.	CA a AS DS d CD		In the end we can only look out for ourselves.	CA a AS DS d CD
I find I'm pretty realistic about things.	CA a AS DS d CD		By taking an active part, people can control the society in which they live.	CA a AS DS d CD
Most of us are the victims of forces we can neither understand or control.	CA a AS DS d CD		It doesn't bother me when things are uncertain and unpredictable.	CA a AS DS d CD
I wish people showed greater respect for me as a professional person.	CA a AS DS d CD			

2

The following are phrases that describe the conditions under which people work. CIRCLE THE RESPONSE THAT MOST OBJECTIVELY DESCRIBES THE CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH YOU PRESENTLY ARE WORKING. Please indicate whether the phrase is very descriptive (VD), descriptive (d), somewhat descriptive (SD), somewhat not descriptive (SND), not descriptive (nd), or very non-descriptive (VND). For respondents who do not work in a social service agency or department, or for those who do not work directly with social service clients, some of the items may not apply. If this is the case please circle not-applicable (NA).

Response	Phrase	NA
VD d SD SND nd VND	requires great mental effort	NA
VD d SD SND nd VND	access to administrators	NA
VD d SD SND nd VND	large case/work load	NA
VD d SD SND nd VND	paper work	NA
VD d SD SND nd VND	requires a high level of skill	NA
VD d SD SND nd VND	unclear expectations from others	NA
VD d SD SND nd VND	participation in policy/program development	NA
VD d SD SND nd VND	close supervision	NA
VD d SD SND nd VND	flexible rules and procedures	NA
VD d SD SND nd VND	must work very fast	NA
VD d SD SND nd VND	frequent policy/program changes	NA
VD d SD SND nd VND	comfortable areas in which to work	NA
VD d SD SND nd VND	teams	NA
VD d SD SND nd VND	learn new things every day	NA
VD d SD SND nd VND	choice of clients/people to work with	NA
VD d SD SND nd VND	assistance from co-workers or associates	NA
VD d SD SND nd VND	routine work	NA
VD d SD SND nd VND	time enough to do expected work	NA
VD d SD SND nd VND	small number of personnel	NA
VD d SD SND nd VND	community support	NA
VD d SD SND nd VND	formal and impersonal	NA
VD d SD SND nd VND	low community status	NA
VD d SD SND nd VND	a rules manual or book	NA
VD d SD SND nd VND	fair salary or pay	NA
VD d SD SND nd VND	no written job description	NA
VD d SD SND nd VND	job stability	NA
VD d SD SND nd VND	channels of communication specified	NA
VD d SD SND nd VND	clients who come willingly	NA
VD d SD SND nd VND	union or workers association	NA
VD d SD SND nd VND	few opportunities for advancement	NA
VD d SD SND nd VND	competition for clients	NA
VD d SD SND nd VND	limited community resources	NA
VD d SD SND nd VND	clients with severe economic problems	NA
VD d SD SND nd VND	stable funding	NA

3

Below are some statements about work which some people agree and others disagree. PLEASE CIRCLE THE RESPONSE THAT BEST DESCRIBES YOUR ATTITUDE ABOUT YOUR WORK. Please indicate whether you completely agree (CA), agree (a), agree somewhat (AS), disagree somewhat (DS), disagree (d), or completely disagree (CD). For those who do not work in a social service agency or department some of the statements may not apply, if this is the case please circle not applicable (NA).

Statement	Response
My job is probably as good as any available to me.	CA a AS DS d CD NA
I feel I am positively influencing other people's lives in my work.	CA a AS DS d CD NA
I have great respect for my colleagues.	CA a AS DS d CD NA
There are so many problems that I find it best to ignore them and just do my work.	CA a AS DS d CD NA
I enjoy helping people work out their difficulties.	CA a AS DS d CD NA
I find myself in agreement with the administration in most matters.	CA a AS DS d CD NA
I am just a paper pusher.	CA a AS DS d CD NA
I take responsibility to be involved in important decisions.	CA a AS DS d CD NA
I am highly committed to my work.	CA a AS DS d CD NA
I invariably do what the administration wants even when I disagree.	CA a AS DS d CD NA
I get tired of listening to other people's problems.	CA a AS DS d CD NA
I can always find a way to bend the rules to make work as easy as possible.	CA a AS DS d CD NA
I feel like a creative human being when I am at work.	CA a AS DS d CD NA
I am always in some kind of quarrel with the administration.	CA a AS DS d CD NA
I go to a lot of workshops in the hope that I will learn something to make my work easier.	CA a AS DS d CD NA
I don't feel very involved in my work.	CA a AS DS d CD NA
I am embarrassed to admit what I do for a living.	CA a AS DS d CD NA
Others should worry about the need of clients as much as I do.	CA a AS DS d CD NA
I do what's necessary and little more.	CA a AS DS d CD NA
When things are not right I always pitch in to help work things out.	CA a AS DS d CD NA
If I had to do it over, I would choose this job/career over again.	CA a AS DS d CD NA
I like to work with others in the hope of improving the social services.	CA a AS DS d CD NA
Too many people dictate how my work is to be carried out.	CA a AS DS d CD NA
I feel I am part of a real team.	CA a AS DS d CD NA
I have my area of expertise and am not concerned by what others are doing.	CA a AS DS d CD NA
My job is strictly a means to an economic end.	CA a AS DS d CD NA

4

If you have any general comments about the questionnaire please feel free to write them in. We hope you enjoyed the questionnaire and will return it promptly.
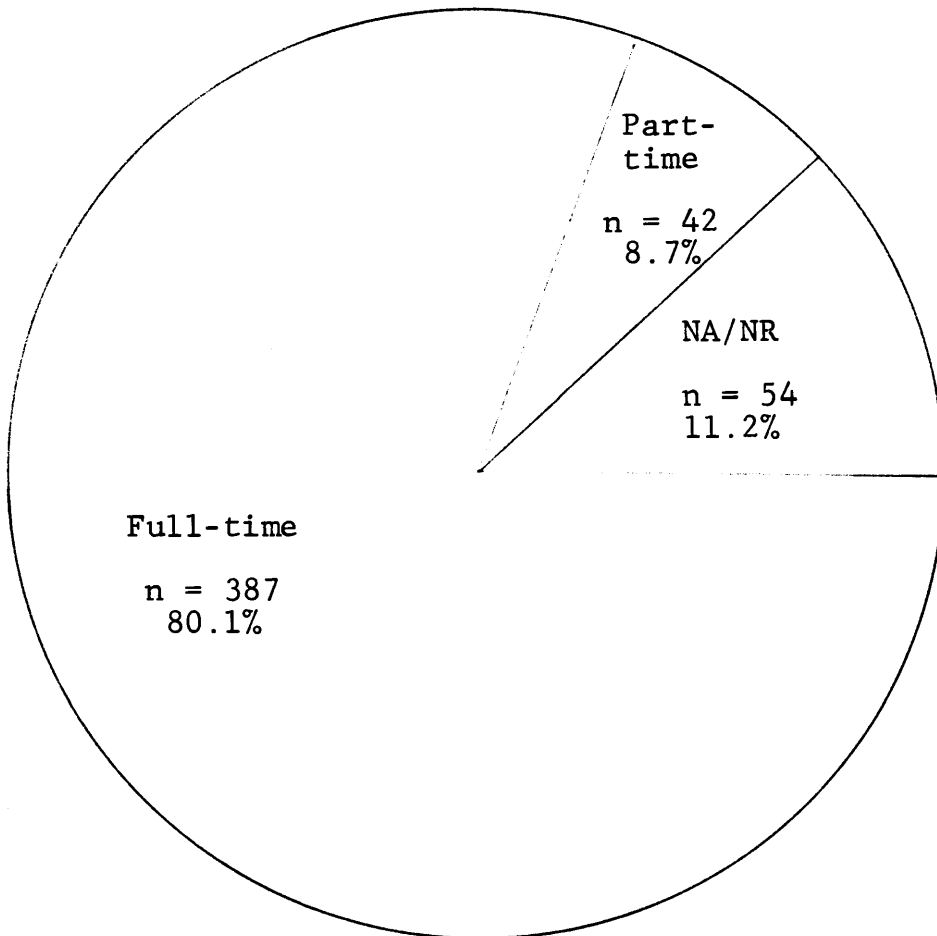
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Part-time

n = 42
8.7%

NA/NR

n = 54
11.2%

Full-time

n = 387
80.1%

Figure 4. Full- or part-time employment in social services.

TABLE XXIII

AGE OF RESPONDENTS

Age	Number of Respondents	Percent
0-25	15	3.1
26-30	67	13.9
31-35	100	20.7
36-40	92	19.9
41-45	42	10.1
46-50	36	7.5
51-55	59	12.2
56-above	45	9.3
NR	20	4.1
Totals	483	100.0

TABLE XXIV

LENGTH OF TIME EMPLOYED IN SOCIAL SERVICES

Number of Years	Number of Respondents	Percent
1 to 4	72	14.9
5 to 8	119	24.6
9 to 12	99	20.5
13 to 16	77	15.9
17 to 20	28	5.8
21 to 24	20	4.1
25 to 28	18	3.6
29 to 32	21	4.3
33 to 36	4	1.2
37 and above	10	2.0
NR	15	3.1
Totals	483	100.0

TABLE XXV

LENGTH OF TIME EMPLOYED AT PRESENT POSITION

Number of Years	Number of Respondents	Percent
1 to 3	220	45.5
4 to 6	115	23.8
7 to 9	57	11.8
10 to 12	44	9.1
13 to 15	9	1.9
16 to 18	9	1.9
19 to 21	6	1.2
22 to 24	1	.2
25 and above	7	1.4
NR	15	3.2
Total	483	100.0