



# Democratic Theory & the role of the Academic Librarian: *Melding Theory and Practice*

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Presentation for the Annual CAPAL Conference,  
Calgary, AB, 2016

“Intellectual freedom is indispensable to librarians, because they are trustees of knowledge with the responsibility of ensuring the availability of information and ideas...[and] so that teachers may freely teach and students may freely learn.’

(Buschman, 2014, p.1)

“An institution cannot foster democracy without practicing it. Broad-based and critical debate over ends, means, choices, exceptions and non-exceptions are again suggestive for specific public educative institutions such as libraries. Can, for instance, a library support intellectual freedom for its community without practicing it as a workplace?”

(Buschman, 2007, p. 1493)

# Overview

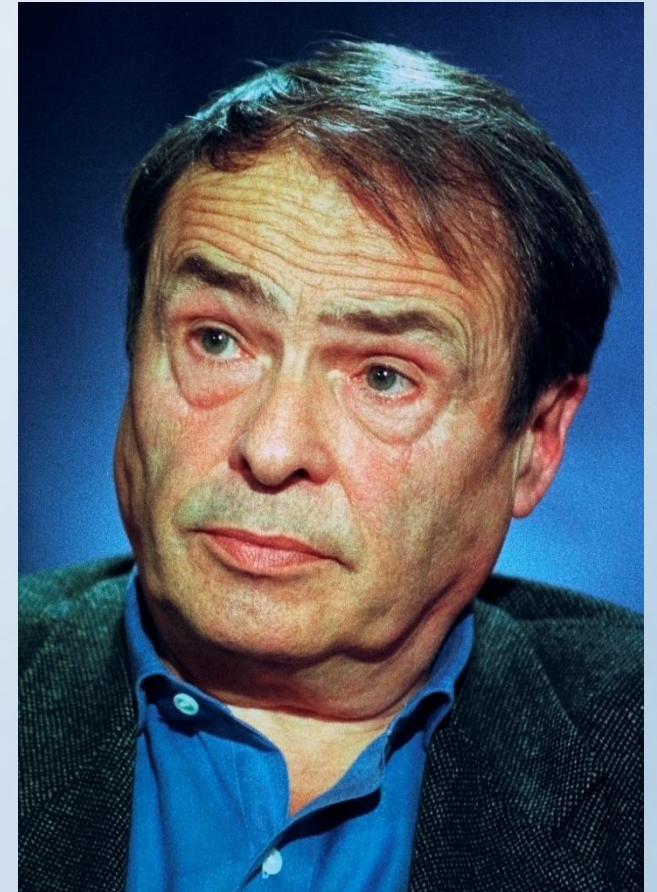
- What is Definition of Democratic Theory ? How does it apply to Academic Librarianship?
- Structuring Structures and Structured Structures of the Habitus
- Intellectual Freedom
- Academic Freedom
- Academic Library – Public Sphere – Deliberative Democracy
- Conclusion

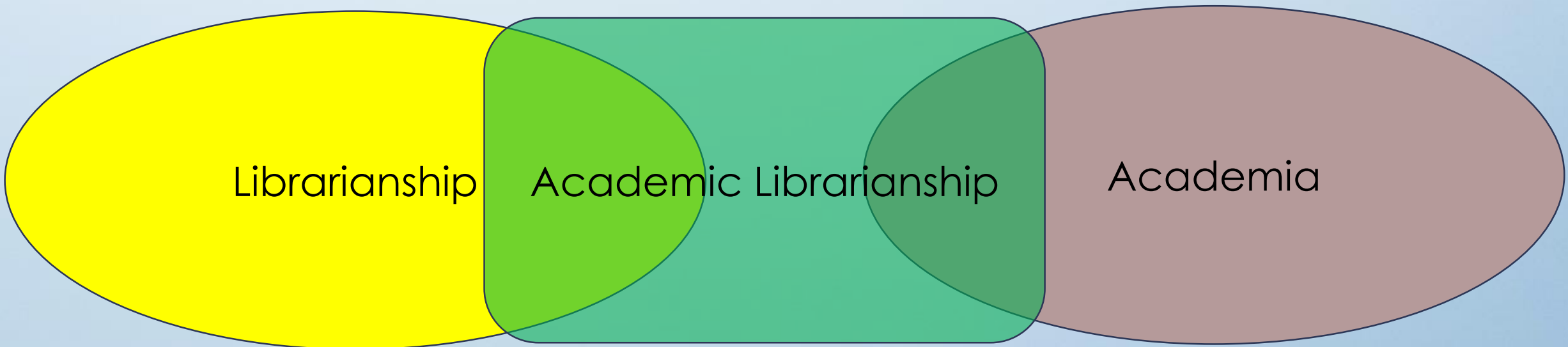
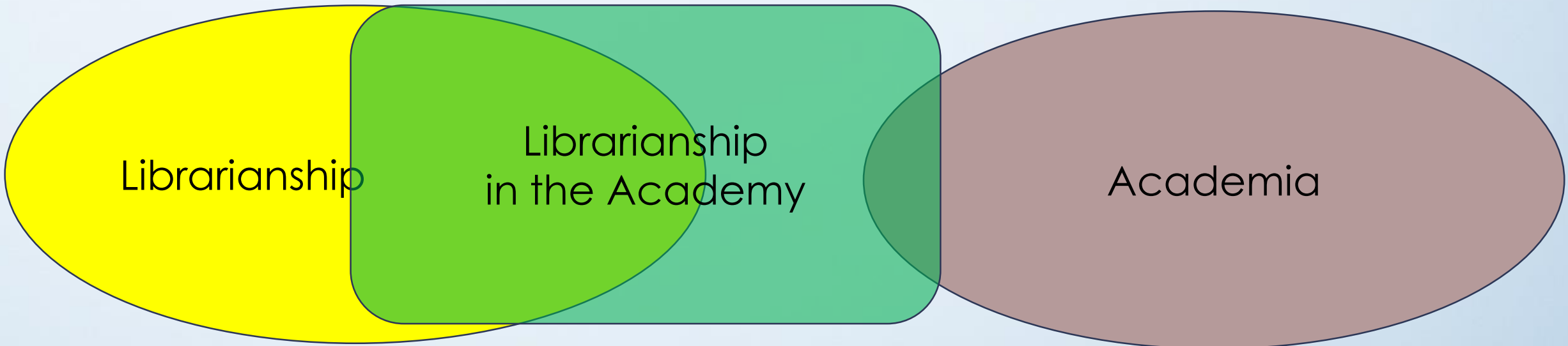
# Democratic Theory

- “Simplified, democratic theory seeks to identify the conditions for and obstacles to the exercise of democratic power by informed and engaged citizens in the interest of the commonweal. This focus tapes a rich vein of concepts...the democratic exercise of power and it’s meaning, obstacles to the democratic exercise of power, the mechanics of democracy versus its meaning, the common good, the determination of the common good, citizenship, political deliberation, democratic deliberation, and without stretching the point, forms of power beyond definitions of the public and commonweal and their relationship to the functioning of democracy” (Buschman, 2007, p. 1486).
- How does democratic theory apply to academic librarianship?

# Structuring Structures and Structured Structures of the Habitus

- Bourdieu – Habitus; Structuring Structures; Structured Structures
- Causation
  - History
  - Training/Education
  - Workplace
  - Internal Identity
  - External Perception
- Modern Entrenchment





# Intellectual Freedom

- What is it? How is it defined by professional organizations?
  - ALA
  - CARL
- Why do these definition damage Academic Librarianship?
- Communicative Content
- Pragmatic Discourse is a necessity – Librarians create discourse

# Academic Freedom

- Knowledge and Information creates discourse
- Higher education is the vehicle that drives critical analysis/critique
- Research and Scholarship promotes Intellectual Freedom
  - ❑ Creation of New Knowledge (*Active Doxa*) from Knowledge (*Doxa*)
  - ❑ No Limitations on Scholarship & Research
  - ❑ Mentor, Mentor, Mentor = If you can't change the Habitus, you have to Change the Habitus!!!
- Collective Bargaining – Faculty Status and Tenure

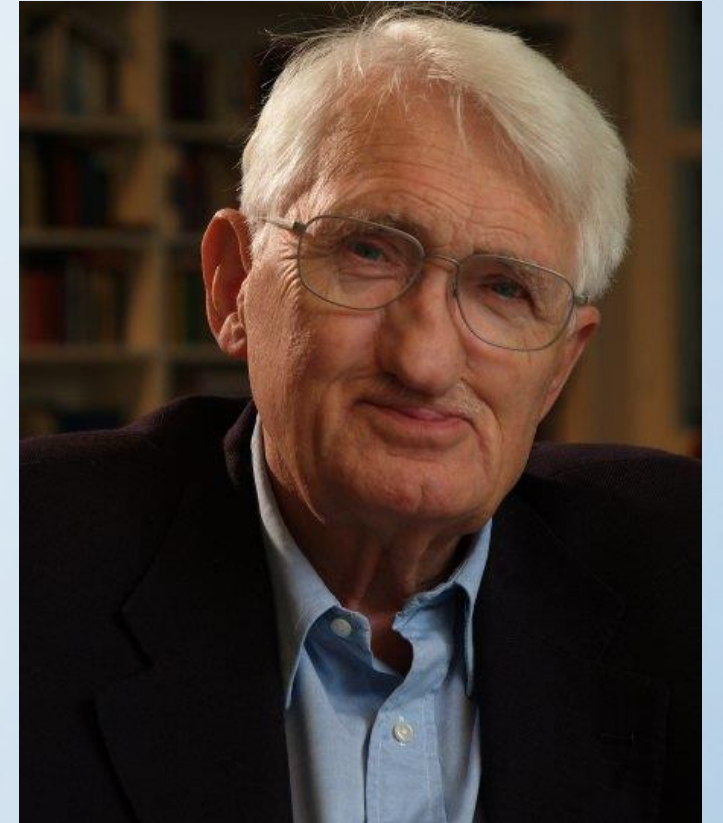


The Real Problem

Power  
BOMER

# Deliberative Democracy

- Definition
- Habermas – The Libraries Role
  - Communicative Action
  - Public Sphere
- Academic Librarians roles in the power structure
  - Hold both dominant and dominated traits
- Reach out and “Enlighten the Path”



# Conclusion

Academic Librarians **HAVE THE POTENTIAL TO BE** Public Intellectuals

“Knowledge serves society, and it is this particular role of the intellectual as a member of the privileged minority with the luxury of time, facilities, knowledge and training to guide people in making informed decisions...Intellectuals ought to be authoritative, meaning that they possess an abundance of knowledge that can be applied in the service of society...They are important public servants and leaders charged with defending the common and democratic faith.” (Woodford, 2005, p. 22).

*In the neoliberal environment democracy needs public intellectuals to challenge the system and keep inquiry and intrigue alive. This is the outcome of melding theory and practice for Academic Librarians*



Questions





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