

# **The end of tenure and the advent of renewable contracts for all in librarianship (LIS)**

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San Nicolas de los Garza, Nuevo Leon, Mexico

June 24, 2013

Paper presented at the:

Part-Time and Adjuncts SIG Session of ALISE 2014,  
Casualties and Collateral Damages: A Critical Look at Educational  
Entrepreneurship  
Philadelphia, PA  
Jan 21-24, 2014

## **Abstract**

This paper, “The end of tenure and the advent of renewable contracts for all in LIS,” as part of a topic suggested by the organizers of the Part-Time and Adjuncts SIG Session of ALISE 2014, whose title of proposed session is: Casualties and Collateral Damages: A Critical Look at Educational Entrepreneurship, written and proposed by a Mexican LIS scholar educated at national and international universities, LIS at undergraduate level at UANL, Mexico, one (Muela-Meza) in the USA at Master level (SUNY-Buffalo), and PhD (Muela-Meza, in Information Studies at the University of Sheffield, UK). Having a long tradition employing critical librarianship conceptualizations to his LIS practice and scholarship at UANL, and to his journal *Librarianship (LIS) Critique: Journal of the Sciences of Information Science*. And having researched and faced since 2008 many situations as part-time and adjunct professor at UANL, hampering his mobility towards full tenure. Thus, if accepted this proposal for participation by presence at ALISE in Philadelphia, would give the author the chance to bring forward some international insights on the issues of fading out of tenure and the advent of renewable contracts with critical epistemology and critical theories and concepts, mainly comparing the U.S., British, Spanish, and Mexican librarianship. Based on some international critics of capitalism and neo-liberal policies (Bouzas and de la Garza, 1998; Berry, 2002; 2005; Giroux, 2012), and underpinned with critical epistemology

and critical librarianship concepts, they will try to analyze these issues as how they affect LIS theory and practice (as in e.g. Horner, 2000).

### **Keywords**

Critical librarianship; critical pedagogy; tenure; collective contracting (bargaining); flexibility; neoliberalism.

### **Resumen**

Esta ponencia, "Un acercamiento crítico al fin de los contratos de base permanente y el advenimiento de los contratos renovables para todos en la bibliotecología y ciencias de la información," como parte del tópico seleccionado por los organizadores del grupo Bibliotecarios de Tiempo-parcial y Profesores Adjuntos de Contratos Renovables de la Conferencia Anual de ALISE (Asociación de Educación en Bibliotecología y Ciencias de la Información de la ALA, American Library Association) 2014 (ene 21-24, 2014), cuyo título propuesto para la sesión es: Víctimas y Daños Colaterales: Una Visión Crítica en la Educación Emprendedora, escrita y propuesta por un académico mexicano en bibliotecología y ciencias de la información, formado a nivel nacional e internacional, en la licenciatura en bibliotecología de la Facultad de Filosofía y Letras, de la Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo León (México), en los EE.UU. a nivel maestría (Universidad Estatal de Nuevo York en Buffalo, 2000-2002), y doctorado (en estudios de la información en la Universidad de Sheffield, Reino Unido, 2003-2007). Quien cuenta con una tradición de utilizar conceptualizaciones de la epistemología crítica y bibliotecología crítica en su práctica y academia e investigaciones dentro y fuera de la UANL y su revista que dirige y edita: Bibliotecología Crítica: Revista de las Ciencias de la Información Documental. Y quien ha investigado y enfrentado desde 2008 muchas vicisitudes como profesor de tiempo parcial y adjuntos sin contratos de base ni categoría laboral acorde a su preparación doctoral, que le ha impedido su movilidad hacia la base con estabilidad laboral. Por lo tanto, si esta propuesta para participar presencialmente en este grupo de ALISE es aceptada, le daría al autor la oportunidad de aportar perspectivas críticas e internacionales sobre los asuntos controversiales de la desaparición de los contratos de base con estabilidad laboral y el advenimiento de los contratos renovables, con epistemología crítica, bibliotecología crítica y teorías y conceptos críticos, principalmente comparando la bibliotecología estadounidense, británica, española y mexicana. Fundamentados en algunos críticos contra el capitalismo y sus políticas neo-liberales (Bouzas y de la Garza, 1998; Berry, 2002; 2005; Giroux, 2012), y fundamentados en conceptos de la epistemología y bibliotecología crítica, tratarán de analizar estos asuntos en cuánto como afectan la teoría y práctica de la bibliotecología y ciencias de la información (como e.g. Horner, 2000).

### **Palabras clave**

Bibliotecología crítica; pedagogía crítica; contratación permanente de base; contratos colectivos; flexibilidad laboral; neo-liberalismo.

## **Introduction**

### **1. Introduction**

## **1.1 Overview**

This paper, “The end of tenure and the advent of renewable contracts for all in LIS,” as part of a topic suggested by the organizers of the Part-Time and Adjuncts SIG Session of ALISE 2014, whose title of proposed session is: Casualties and Collateral Damages: A Critical Look at Educational Entrepreneurship, written and proposed by two Mexican LIS scholars educated both at national and international universities, both LIS at undergraduate level at UANL, Mexico, one (Muela-Meza) in the USA at Master level (SUNY-Buffalo), and PhD (Muela-Meza, in Information Studies at the University of Sheffield, UK), and the other (Torres-Reyes), both master and PhD at the University of Granada, Spain. Both having a long tradition employing critical librarianship conceptualizations to their LIS practice and scholarship at UANL, and to their journal *LIS Critique: Journal of the Sciences of Information Science*. And both having researched and faced since 2008 many situations as part-time and adjunct professors at UANL, hampering their mobility towards full tenure. Thus, if accepted this proposal for participation by presence at ALISE in Philadelphia, would give the authors the chance to bring forward some international insights on the issues of fading out of tenure and the advent of renewable contracts with critical epistemology and critical theories and concepts, mainly comparing the U.S., British, Spanish, and Mexican librarianship.

### **1.1.1 The research problem**

What are some of the most adverse effects of labor flexibility and precariousness the lack of tenure and promotion, and the constant renewal of contracts in librarianship faculty and practitioners, from a Mexican-US comparative study comprising the 2000-2010 period?

### **1.1.2 Aim**

To analyse to what extent some of the most adverse effects of labor flexibility and precariousness affect the lack of tenure and promotion, and the constant renewal of contracts in librarianship faculty and practitioners, from a Mexican-US comparative study comprising the 2000-2010 period.

### **1.1.3 Objectives**

- To analyze the advent of labor flexibility and precariousness in the neo-liberal economy, both in the USA and Mexico.
- To analyze the correlation of the adverse effects of labor flexibility and precariousness with the lack of tenure and promotion, and the constant renewal of contracts in librarianship faculty and practitioners, both in the USA and Mexico.
- To analyze other possible interrelated factors others than flexibility and precariousness that may also have adverse effects on librarianship academy and practice.

- To assess the possible implications this study may have on public policies for the benefit of librarianship faculty and librarians of both the USA and Mexico.

## **1.2 Background to the study**

This proposal has a direct background of the author's paper to be given in January 2014 at the American Library and Information Science Association (ALISE) of the American Library Association in Philadelphia, PA, USA as first author in co-authorship with Torres-Reyes (Muela-Meza & Torres-Reyes, 2014), entitle: "The end of tenure and the advent of renewable contracts for all in LIS," as part of a topic suggested by the organizers of the Part-Time and Adjuncts Special Interest Group Session of ALISE 2014, whose title of proposed session is: Casualties and Collateral Damages: A Critical Look at Educational Entrepreneurship.

However, there are many other critics who address the problems of flexibility and precariousness. For instance, to mention but a few, some international critics of capitalism and neo-liberal policies (Bouzas and de la Garza, 1998; Berry, 2002; 2005; Giroux, 2012), and underpinned with critical epistemology and critical librarianship concepts, they will try to analyze these issues as how they affect librarianship faculty and librarians (as in e.g. Horner, 2000). If accepted to obtain this Fulbright scholarship, the author will review deeply the literature as some it is already proposed in the section of bibliography.

### **To analyze the advent of labor flexibility and precariousness in the neo-liberal economy, both in the USA and Mexico.**

According with a labor expert and critic of neo-liberalism (Berry, 2005; 2002), who conducted a PhD dissertation analyzing the issues of academic tenure and the advent of renewable contracts, these issues are deeply rooted and interrelated with capitalism as a political and economical system, and particularly with the new neo-liberal ideology called *flexibility of labor*.

Hence, likewise, according to some Mexican sociologist of labor, the flexibility of labor has emerged along with the neo-liberal phase of capitalism since the 1970s. This is how they try to configure an explanation of this phenomenon that does not have a universal and epistemologically accepted definition: "flexibility of labor as a form would be the capability of management to adjust, the employment, the use of the labor in the productive process, and the salary, to the changing conditions of production, but this form might have various contents depending on the conceptions behind them, but above all of the interactions among the actors, the institutions, and standards, and cultures within and outside labor" (Bouzas and de la Garza, 1998, p. 35). These are issues also analyzed in similar manners by a critical pedagogy expert (Giroux, 2012).

Thus, these issues that also matter most for LIS practitioners and scholars (e.g. Horner, 2000), are issues that matters for the authors of this presentation, that if given the chance to the authors to analyze them, and to share them with a

larger audience of ALISE, both in presence and online, it would help them to understand these phenomena, through the feedback of readers and participants of this SIG, both for their research purposes, and for their current difficult labor conditions at UANL. Which, as they would explain in presence at ALISE in Philadelphia, these are international issues related to capitalism, and they are not exclusive of the US reality or of any other country in particular.

Thus, by bringing insights from critical studies in labor sociology, critical pedagogy, analyzing some of the most critical consequences of capitalism in academia and scholarly issues, might help the authors, and the audience to bring critical perspectives to capitalism and neo-liberalism, and chances are, to come out with better understanding, and strategies to resist these challenges faced by worldwide academia and in particular LIS practice and theory.

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