

The Core Competencies for 21st Century CARL (Canadian Association of Research Libraries) Librarians: Through a Neoliberal Lens

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ABSTRACT: Librarians are noted for their defense of others but not themselves or even their profession, thus there is a lack of consideration with respect to our roles within our own institutions and within our profession. The Core Competencies for 21st Century CARL Librarians statement developed by the Canadian Association of Research Libraries (CARL) is investigated as an expression of what our role should be, using a neoliberal lens and with reference to the work of Foucault, poststructuralists, and as an expression of critical inquiry, to discover the statement's potential role as a tool for delivering ideology. Language and concepts associated with neoliberalism are identified throughout the statement and potential impacts on professional identity are addressed.

Keywords: competencies, competency statements, neoliberalism, academic libraries, higher education



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A. Methodology

According to Alvesson and Willmott (p. 619) “[c]onceptualizations of organizational control tended to emphasize its impersonal and behavioural features with scant regard for how meaning, culture or ideology are articulated by and implicated in structural configurations of control.” Further, “authority is ... determined in context and in conversation, and in relationship with structures of power that privileges some voices over others” (Drabinski p.383) and any “document [referring to the Framework, but applies equally to the CARL Competencies] may carry the imprimatur of the professional association, but its authority is not determined once and for all simply by its adoption... [it is] always determined in the context of the audience – that’s us – who receives it” (Drabinski p.383).

For Foucault the subjective life seems to be one that includes the presence of and centrality of an author’s experiences, character, and values (‘author’ is a social construction whereby one is assigned responsibility for a text [Gutting p.12]). Death is the loss or marginalization of this subjectivity, the subordination to structural systems. These systems are more concerned with space (ahistorical) as opposed to time (history), and with language as an autonomous system (Gutting pp.7-8). For Foucault, while it is acceptable for an author or person to suppress their subjective life, a systematic suppression of subjective life is inappropriate and represents violence.

Systemic suppression occurs in micro-centres of power (Gutting p.87) dispersed throughout society. Power constrains, eliminates, and produces knowledge on behalf of “cognitive authorities that present themselves as grounded in nothing more [than] the force of disinterested evidence and argument” (Gutting p.52). Gutting states the focus of these micro-centres and the system is not just on results but on procedures that produce results (p.82) in order to normalize judgement (p.84) and the system. Library associations may be considered micro-centres, as are workplaces.

Investigating competencies statements and policy within librarianship is important for understanding the profession and monitoring its changing roles, values and assumptions in the context of what is happening in our respective societies. University libraries (and universities) in Canada are part of the larger public sector but not under their direct control. The federal government disburses money to provincial and territorial governments who then decide the amounts transferred to each sector, including the educational sector. There is also direct government funding of research. These two examples offer systemic methods for implementing and promulgating neoliberal values within the university and ultimately, within the library workplace.

Competencies statements are promulgated and/or supported by both library associations and workplaces. Unfortunately, little research in library and information science (LIS) exists on the Core Competencies for 21st Century CARL Librarians (henceforth CARL Competencies) statement developed by the CARL, nor research that investigates the ideological sources of competencies (meaning, culture, and ideology), how they are used and whether they are or reflect “structural configurations of control” (Alvesson and Willmott p.619). The CARL Competencies will be investigated through a neoliberal lens to discover any presence of that ideology and whether organizational and ideological control is inherent in the statement.

The literature on neoliberalism itself is deep in terms of time, has expanded greatly as it has moved beyond the economic and political realm and taken different forms in different nation states, and has increased in volume through the voices of neoliberalism’s critics. Neoliberal ideology has not been as extensively researched in the field of LIS and as such the author’s reading was expanded beyond LIS into business, politics and higher education in order to gain an understanding of how to identify neoliberal ideology and how its criticism is structured.

The ACRL Framework’s perspective of scholarship as a conversation within published research, informed the identification of approaches used in investigating LIS literature and neoliberalism, in order to better describe and understand that literature. The intent was to apply the neoliberal lens (an understanding of neoliberalism) and to critique the context and structure of power and authority, with reference to Foucault, to hopefully start a dialogue on our profession and our expectations of our profession.

The survey portion of this research was approved by the University of Windsor Research Ethics Board, was implemented using locally loaded Fluid Surveys software (by the University of Windsor) and made available for responses for a month. Mailing lists were targeted to solicit respondents and respondents were self selected. The hypothesis tested was that the CARL Competencies were not being used by academic librarians. If they were being used, the intent was to discover any differences in their use and whether these differences were related to their positions within their respective libraries, and thus their potential use for ideological control at the administrative level. Another intention was to determine the value of moving forward to investigate a dependent hypothesis: that the CARL Competencies represent both the responsibilities and the authority of administrative level staff (commonly known in Canada as Associate University Librarians (AUL) and University Librarians, but in the latter case CARL calls them library directors) more than they do regular librarians in university libraries.

Unfortunately, less than 6% of the population responded. This research was not able to help build a more accurate picture of the current landscape of the use of competencies in Canadian academic libraries or to gain a picture of whether and how the CARL competencies are being used by members of the profession. It did confirm that the CARL Competencies statement was being used, both willingly and at the urging of library administrators.

B. On CARL, the Statement and Survey Results

CARL stands for the Canadian Association of Research Libraries. Current members include Canada's twenty-nine largest (research-based) university libraries and two federal institutions: Library and Archives Canada; and the National Research Council of Canada. CARL "provides leadership on behalf of Canada's research libraries and enhances capacity to advance research and higher education. It promotes effective and sustainable knowledge creation, dissemination, preservation and public policy that enable broad access to scholarly information" (CARL "Strategic Directions").

A member library is normally represented in CARL by the library director, thus the association explicitly represents the interests and needs of their member research libraries, not their librarians. The directors also serve on committees. The website further notes "CARL committees, subcommittees and working groups are open to non-directors—most frequently Associate University Librarians or subject experts—as contributing members, subject to the approval of the committee chair and the person's own library director." (CARL "Committees"). Service on these committees is therefore tightly controlled through approval of the respective library directors.

Under Human Resource Management on their website, CARL states regarding the CARL Competencies initiative: "Competency profiles have been used within many professional groups to help chart professional progress and define goals and objectives. National level statements set standards across multiple institutions. Competency profiles can also be used as a compass or checklist of desirable competencies when hiring new librarians or when identifying training and development opportunities for existing librarians." These sentences make it clear CARL members are using the statement for administrative ends or goals.

According to the CARL Competencies Statement, this competencies profile is meant to act as a guide to help librarians working in research libraries manage their careers, set meaningful professional development goals and align those goals with the missions of their respective organizations, and as a means to identify strengths and gaps in personal competencies.

The survey was implemented to discover whether the CARL statement was being used, and how. Unfortunately, the CARL-only responses represent almost 6% of the total projected population, too small a data set to be used to expand results to the population as a whole. This also made the data unreliable for determining if relationships existed between individuals' positions within the library and how each used the competencies. Thus the results of this survey leave us with many unanswered questions with respect to use of the statement.

The majority of respondents chose not to use the CARL statement irrespective of whether their library was a member of CARL. The findings also showed very few library respondents were being encouraged by library administration to use the CARL Competencies. Additionally, a few non-CARL librarians proactively chose to use them. A few respondents also indicated the statement is being recommended by some library administrations in a formative and/or prescriptive manner. The fact they have been recommended for use in a prescriptive manner is disturbing based on the discussion that follows on neoliberal ideology embedded within the CARL Competencies statement.

For the question of whether respondents choose to use the CARL Competencies regardless of their library administration's stance, 35.21% of the respondents choose and 64.79% choose to not use the CARL competencies statement. The largest group here indicated that they were unaware of the statement. Those who said no, they did not choose to use the statement were asked why. Of these, 62.34% left comments including a few people who had actually responded yes. Of those commenting, 23.38% indicated they were unaware of the CARL Competencies statement. Other interesting comments included the statement was dated, contrary to academic freedom, they forgot, the statement was nebulous, unrealistic, they preferred to focus on ethics or other competency statements, were interested in more critical sources, and the presence or existence of collective bargaining agreements.

Interestingly, only 38.57% of respondents chose to use any competencies statements at all. The top two statements mentioned were the ALA Core Competences of Librarianship, then the Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education. Respondents indicated they use these to set professional development goals and to identify gaps in professional development goals. For those who were asked why they didn't use any competency statements some responded, (paraphrased): too generalized, are 'unrealistic wishlists', are bureaucratic and time could be spent better elsewhere, are written by senior managers with no consulting of other librarians, what about the role of collective bargaining agreements?, they don't respond to my needs, too busy doing my job, only useful when managing, recruiting, or teaching, and there are none relevant to the area of work one would be engaged in.

C. Neoliberalism and Higher Education

Neoliberalism, an ideology and new form of capitalism, was created as a challenge to the Keynesian orthodoxy that dominated the intellectual and political landscape of the 1930s. Capitalism was required to compromise with labour and government (Gutstein pp.19-20) through the redistribution of wealth cutting into capitalist profits. Neoliberal resistance to Keynesian economic orthodoxy may be considered a “creative act ... born in the struggle against an apparently invincible resistance” (Scott p.12 quoting Milosz p.217), and was likely similar in manner to the emergence of Keynesianism and to democracy itself in their own time. Klein (p.17) identified the main tenets of neoliberalism’s “political trinity” as “the elimination of the public sphere, total liberation for corporations and skeletal social spending.”

The intent of the movement was to capture and use political power to further the interests of capital (Gutstein p.19) contrary to their ideological claim of hands off, free market principles and their emphasis on personal freedom. Ferguson (p.170) described it as a “regime of policies and practices associated with or claiming fealty to that doctrine” though the doctrine would never successfully exist because of internal contradictions, including implementation decisions in conflict with ideology. As Clarke (p.58) put it, “the neoliberal model does not purport so much as to describe the world as it is, but the world as it should be. The point for neoliberalism is not to make a model that is more adequate to the real world, but to make the real world more adequate to its model.”

A key point of neoliberalism is that it has moved beyond its economic roots into everyday life. Li (p.66) remarked that “modern capitalism is unique in that it is the only socio-economic system that has ever existed in human history where market relations have become dominant in every aspect of social life.” Carr and Batile (p.2) echo this when they state “under the reign of neoliberalism there has been increasing emphasis on values such as the single-minded pursuit of policy and ideology prioritizing the commercialization of everyday life, the corporatization of human services, the dismantling of the welfare state, the militarization of public space, ruthless individualism, and the increasing privatization of the public sphere,” the latter referencing, among other things, the privatization of what was once considered a public good in a democracy, the higher education system.

Harvey (p.165) stated “[t]o presume that markets and market signals can best determine all allocative decisions is to presume that everything can in principle be treated as a commodity. Commodification presumes the existence of property rights over processes, things, and social relations, that a price can be put on them, and that they can be traded subject to legal contract. The market is presumed to work as an appropriate guide – an ethic – for all human

action. In practice, of course, every society sets some bounds on where commodification begins and ends. Where the boundaries lie is a matter of contention.” Moltó Egea (p.268) comments that through neoliberalism’s “social engineering, [it] positions human beings and knowledge as management resources exploited to obtain exchangeable and marketable value.”

There are many parallels to what is happening within government being reported in higher education. Political and economic power is being redistributed upwards into the hands of university presidents, their boards and their administrative staff (Turk p.302; Stonechild pp.138-142) with these administrators and managers “follow[ing] their own agendas for change rather than faculty [agendas]” (Newson p.49), resulting in the transformation of academics’ work and social relations (Polster), and movement from a collegial system to a bureaucratic one aligned with corporatism (Duggan pp.65-80; Deem p.265).

Correspondingly, there has been an expansion of administrative support staff (Cox p.93) accompanied by pay packets that outstrip those for faculty (CAUT “Majority”). In the US, Marcus (n.p.) notes “The number of employees in central system offices has increased six-fold since 1987, and the number of administrators in them by a factor of more than 34.” Canadian universities are publicly funded institutions. Unfortunately, Smith (n.p.) notes that “[s]hockingly, 20 cents is now spent on central administration [in Canada] for every dollar spent on instruction and non-sponsored research; back in 1987-88, 12 cents went to administration. At the average top 25 university, central administration (including external relations) now consumes \$18 million that previously would have flowed to instruction. (For a G13 school, it’s \$20 million; for the top 5, \$39 million),” while data for the province of Ontario (in Canada) shows “non-academic full-time salaries at Ontario universities, adjusted for inflation, rose 78 per cent from 2000/01 to 2013/14, from \$934 million to nearly \$1.7 billion. Most of that is for administration at all levels, although ‘we can’t determine from the existing data how much senior administration salaries increased on their own,’ says OCUFA communications manager Graeme Stewart” (Davison n.p.).

Public education is being forcibly privatized through a starvation of funds (Dumenil and Levy; Fanelli and Meades pp.220-221; Brophy and Tucker-Abramson pp.23, 25, 28). According to Brownlee (p.18) this was the result of a “sharp and prolonged reduction in government funding that began in the 1970s.” “[B]etween 1983-84 and 1994-95, the federal contribution to postsecondary education was reduced by over \$13 billion” (Brownlee p.17). As government funding decreases, the burden of education is shifted via tuition fees (along with monies from parents’ taxes) onto the shoulders of families and students, moving us further away from university as a ‘public good.’ This has also resulted in a focus on international students as revenue generators. Newson argues the point of this privatization is

to create new wealth accumulation opportunities (higher fees and debt, creation of corporate monies) and Thompson (p.337) notes this starvation helped “accelerate the trend to university-industry partnerships.”

This corporatization (Hanke and Hearn) continues through presidents and boards soliciting and accepting private donations and industry partnerships. This may include funding for new buildings and programs, along with private sector demands for control over courses, programs or departments and people (Levidow p.160; Brownlee, 2016, p.19; Harvey “Tempers”) and inevitably, control over research and research results (Schafer; Krinsky; Healy; Fanelli and Meades p.220; Jeppesen and Nazar; Brophy and Tucker-Abramson p.28; Polster). The economic dimension is now prioritized and dominant (Pawley p.20; Gregory) and universities are described as “engines of prosperity” (Schafer p.53) with finance ratings for universities normalized.

Policies, legislation and regulation are being introduced that extend the reach and control of presidents and their boards beyond areas traditionally addressed, or at least to a greater degree than they were formerly addressed (Turk). Examples of “powerful, unaccountable and uncommunicative senior management teams” (Deem pp.260, 271) are being reported (Fanelli and Meades p.220; Polster). Activity-based budgeting is being used as a lever to extinguish programs considered unpopular or with little relevance to the free market (Podur n.p.). This budgeting, when implemented, does not mean everyone is equally resourced at the start: programs less attractive to the fickle market (Byers and Johnson p.17; Houck p.89), may lag and lose resources until such a time as it may regain popularity with the public, or be merged or closed by administration, sometimes bypassing university senates to do so.

Large university centralized funds are also being developed that reputedly exclude departments and programs from funding based on their “application” requirements, and reflect competitions for resources (a divide-and-conquer tactic combined with deadening people with detailed work (Giroux commenting in Moyers)). These research projects may ultimately be rewarded or denied on the authority of a single individual, reflecting a lack of rigour and transparency in the process. A number of authors comment on competitions at the faculty, departmental and program levels, and at the individual level (Deem p.258; Hanke and Hearn p.18; Polster).

Successful and unsuccessful attempts at wage freezes and outright wage cuts continue in a government-engendered austerity crisis (the result of underfunding of the public good: education, healthcare, and welfare). There continues to be an increase in precariousness at universities (Giroux *Neoliberalism’s War* p.66, pp.104-106; Turk “Introduction” p.20; Turk pp.293, 298-299) as seen in the contracting-out of services (such as cleaning staff), in the

increased number of sessional teaching staff, and in the attacks and curbing of trade unions (Lazonick; Fanelli p.51; Harvey p.168; Fanelli and Meades). The decrease in full-time work (Giroux *Neoliberalism's War* p.66; Turk "Introduction" p.20) also comes at the same time as benefits are being reduced or disappearing entirely (Dumenil and Levy, p.12; Turk pp.293-294).

Further, there is the proposed capital valorization of Ontario's university pension schemes. Fanelli and Meades (p.219) mention valorization of the education sector and a significant part of that sector are these pension schemes, an underutilized source for creating new monies. These monies are needed because financial markets require new infusions of cash in order to keep capitalism running. Large investments in any economy do not occur unless investors expect high rates of return (Li). Investing in finance markets rather than estates and buildings is thus the preferred strategy according to Kirby. Lazonick indicates this is most likely driven by corporate executive compensation based on stock increases. Also, finance markets are not subject to wages and benefits, or to costs associated with investing in property, so investments in the market are mostly profit. Thus most of the monies of the wealthiest 1% in Canada and the US are a result of income from investments (Broadbent Institute; Lazonick).

Multiple pension funds currently exist where risk to members is minimized, and these monies are 'dead' as they are inaccessible to financial market machinations. Under the Ontario government proposal, they would combine the multiple funds into one large fund, shifting the risk onto the members of the fund and away from the universities (and the government as funders), and deliver all dead monies into the market, under the control of the financial market through investing, with one board in control. This allows finance to create money in the market. Our complicity in this process in our roles as pension scheme members and investors is noted by Soederberg.

Under neoliberalism, as much as is possible is being commodified and made subject to the market. In the market, legal rights are court-based and expensive to exercise, thus shifting control over 'rights' to those with the money to prosecute their position and lobby politicians for appropriate legislation (Fanelli; Harvey p.175). A suggested area for additional research is to confirm popular opinion that universities are increasingly going to court over union grievances, forcing both sides to spend more money, even as the universities lose. There is also a shift to a "nexus of contracts" where consumers and even contractors have to accept standard form contracts, making it impossible to bargain contracts. These forms are created by corporations and are intended to bypass the courts (Birch).

Neoliberalism, and university administrations, focus on the performance of individual employees (Deem p.258; Polster) and “the individual’s ability to contribute to the production of surplus value and the accumulation of capital” (Clarke p.55). Teaching is devalued in a new value system that stresses and supports research (Levidow p.159; Burgan p.239), patents, grant funding (Schafer p.53), and the quantity of students’ faculty reputations may entice to study at the university, thus a culture of celebrity faculty with preferential treatment. Newson (pp.50-51, 53) specifically mentions the creation of academic tiers in this process, resulting in “haves and have-nots” with a corresponding identification and silencing of any individual promoting research or opinions contrary to the politics of the university and its funders (Harvey “Tempers” pp.208-224; Burgan; Deem p.271).

Archer, through use of faculty interviews, also identified a number of neoliberal strands: an audit culture or regime and culture of managerialism (pp.266-267); a requirement to create products; a mantra of accountability and need to count everything; demand for competition between colleagues, between departments and between faculty; a focus on funding; the rise of individualism; “masculinised performances” with concomitant rejection of women (women are either ‘too soft’ or a ‘ball-breaker’ with no other identity, much less a neutral one, allowed) (pp.272-274); and “flexibility” (p.274) where “the neoliberal subject is governed through an active turning of power back upon the self (to produce the self-governing subject)” (p.275). For example, staff must be flexible and work longer hours, and be willing to be shifted around the organization to meet short term needs. One can attempt to resist through setting boundaries or attempting to create balance (p.275), but flexibility becomes a weapon against self as peer pressure comes into play in conjunction with rewards for those who conform, alongside pressure from management, entangled with personal desire to be professionally responsible.

Muela-Meza (p.62, quoting Dilevko, 2009) identified messages used to convert faculty, scientists and scholars, including librarians, to neoliberalism. They include:

- a) “The ambiguities of perfectionism and the quest for social status.
- b) Professional schools and the market model.
- c) The ideology of performance measure and audit culture.
- d) Disciplinary aspects of the audit culture.
- e) Metrics in universities and accountability in universities.
- f) The game of grants.
- g) The corporatization of higher education.
- h) Scientific research and the culture of competitive performance.
- i) The ideology of achievement.
- j) Multitasking and triviality.”

Ultimately, all of these changes in the academy lead to a diminishment or elimination of the public sphere (Giroux *Neoliberalism's War* pp.17, 22, 59) and any concept of public good (Thompson p.338; Cox p.4; Giroux *Neoliberalism's War* p.16; Fanelli and Meades; Newson p.45; Polster).

D. LIS Literature and Neoliberalism

A search of the LIS literature produced a multitude of articles on issues of social justice, equity, intellectual or academic freedom, freedom of access to information, democracy, capitalism, librarian and library neutrality, and the relationship between power and politics, among others. Librarians have explored these issues for many years but their research does not necessarily recognize or explicitly identify any changed context from democracy to neoliberalism. Certainly strands of neoliberal ideology may be identified in reading the LIS literature but authors' attribute those strands to globalization, capitalism, or technology with few recognizing the encroaching or occupying neoliberal ideology.

Authors have addressed the concept of power within LIS but do not always explicitly identify neoliberalism or neoliberal ideology. For example, Cope states that we should "... critically examin[e] the systems in which that 'authority' [re authoritative sources] is established and articulated" (p.16). Hooper (p.30) identified the current model of education as "a hegemonic, socio-politically structured cognitive model, which students are expected not only to navigate but also read as a social map defining societal roles" a description that could be of neoliberalism, and discusses how this hegemony necessitated a "pedagogically critical archival education" (p.39) in response.

There is minimal LIS research that mentioned neoliberalism and even less on its presence and impact on academic libraries and academic librarianship. Nicholson (p.332, quoting Enright "Information Literacy") noted that it is "precisely *because* neoliberalism is part of our everyday lives that it remains largely invisible to us" and that as the dominant hegemony it excluded other perspectives (Bales and Engle; Nicholson "Information Literacy", "McDonaldization"; Waugh, "Creeping Influence") potentially explaining the lack of critical research.

Areas of concern and resistance in LIS with respect to neoliberalism included: a need for more informed critique and action regarding our institutions and libraries as tools of the ruling class (Bales and Engle); deprofessionalization at the National Library of Canada (Oliphant and McNally); the 'McDonaldization' of the university and of academic library workers (Nicholson "Information Literacy", "McDonaldization"); its presence in strategic planning in an academic library setting (Waugh, "Creeping Influence"); through replication of dominant ideology especially as reflected in the Library of Congress subject headings

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(Adler); disintermediation as phenomenon of commodification, of neoliberalism (Mirtz pp.303, 296); deprofessionalization in public libraries (Greene and McMenemy; Irwin and D'Alton); neoliberalism in public libraries (McMenemy) and in public library governance (Irwin); the public library as contested space in the face of neoliberal intrusion and occupation (Frederikson); and in Ignatow's investigation of globalization and public libraries neoliberalism is also mentioned. Buschman's work (this paper does not reference all his relevant works) interrogates changes in the contexts that libraries inhabit, changes that are disrupting the practice, values and theory of our profession. Budd presents his argument (p.172) for why democracy and thus libraries are under threat from neoliberalism.

Authors writing on information literacy (IL) and neoliberalism, identify IL as a "situated practice" of neoliberalism and the neoliberal university (Nicholson "Information Literacy", "McDonaldization") and its impact on definitions of success (Beilin); on IL as pedagogical praxis, progressive librarianship and acts of democratic citizenship within neoliberal libraries and institutions (Ryan and Sloniowski); with critical thinking (in their critique of IL) representing a "preeminent mode of neoliberal rationality" (Eisenhower and Smith p.312); as the "predominant way to frame the educational role of libraries and librarians" (Seale, *Neoliberal Library* p.39); as a "defining political paradigm of our time" (Enright, p.17 quoting McChesney, 1999, p.7), and the emergence of IL in this context (p.28) and the information literate as a neoliberal subject (p.32), an idea also explored by Seale (*Neoliberal Library*, p.40); IL and the politics of knowledge production (Seale, "Information Literacy"); and the ACRL Framework through the lens of understandings of Enlightenment (Seale, "Enlightenment"). There is also recognition by librarians that IL standards are neoliberal (Beatty), plus Gregory and Higgins (p.7) recognize the complicity of librarians in the workings of neoliberalism.

In *Critical Journeys* only four people Schroeder interviews mention neoliberalism, each to different degrees but none with respect to librarian competencies specifically, except indirectly through IL competencies; that "we should understand literacy as more than a set of competencies; more than simply the ability to read and write. . . literacy as a culturally-situated phenomenon, embedded within specific social, political, and economic systems, subject to (and potentially constitutive of) the power relations and ideologies that define particular moments in history" (Accardi, Drabinski and Kumbier p.xi).

E. CARL Competencies

There is little published research on the Core Competencies for 21st Century CARL Librarians statement, published in October 2010. The statement was an outgrowth of the 8Rs Canadian Library Human Resource Study (De Long, pers. comm.). Over a two- year

period their study investigated eight core issues integral to human resource management in libraries: recruitment, retention, remuneration, reaccreditation, repatriation, rejuvenation, retirement and restructuring (8Rs Research Team) and surveyed library administrators, human resource managers, librarians and paraprofessionals. It resulted in a number of reports that identified competencies that would be needed in libraries in the future. Under the auspices of CARL, DeLong and Sorensen solicited CARL member librarians for a 2014 human resources survey with the intent of furthering the work on the 8Rs study (DeLong and Sorensen pers. comm.).

Carson (pers. comm.) identified then interviewed librarians who exemplified one of “the core professional competencies identified by CARL: foundational knowledge, interpersonal skills, leadership and management, collections development, information literacy, research and contributions to the profession, and information technology skills” (Carson and Gamache). They asked the research question: “Does their success come from specific education, approaches, attitudes or work ethic?” No article has been published at this time.

Previous work on LIS definitions of librarian competency (Soutter 2013) showed the research of a majority of authors used in that study simply accepted or assumed formulations of competency were neutral, or were uncritical in their use and formulation of competencies. The questions that need to be asked at this juncture are why are we “looking to standardise and structure work processes and jobs” and “codifying and prescribing desirable behaviours and qualities” (Brook p.12)? Should we not “utilise a wide variety of different learning paradigms” (Talbot p.592) to assist librarians in “deep and reflective engagement” (Talbot p.588) in their field as opposed to competencies and competency statements that “assume jobs are relatively static” (Brook p.13), statements that tell librarians what the librarians should feel is important in those jobs?

Critics say competency frameworks have failed to “take into account future organisational requirements” (Brook p.12) as they are based on an assumption that “successful past performance [will] predict future successful performance” (Martin and Pope p.82). They have also pointed out that “addressing weaknesses does not necessarily equate to outstanding performance” (Brook p.12) and this approach “reflect[s] a mechanistic approach to management” (Martin and Pope p.86). Librarians’ work activities today seem to require constant mental reappraisal of what skills, attributes and behaviours in what degree and mix may be applied to each new problem at hand, and competency frameworks are not written to anticipate what may be required in the unknown future, they only reflect what was required in the past. They are unable to anticipate completely new problems or situations or even what mix may be applicable to resolve the situation, thus “detailed competencies may start to become out of date as soon as they are formulated” (Martin and Pope p.85). A few

respondents to the survey agree the statement is dated, and others added it was nebulous and unrealistic.

Competency statements assume individuals may become equally good at everything desired by the job and organization (Brook, p.13). But claiming a multitude of competencies for positions or librarians does not necessarily reflect the success that may be made of that position by the implementation of fewer or even one competency (Martin and Pope p.82) or even through non competency-based approaches or alternate philosophies and ideologies. Ticking the boxes on a checklist of competencies does not equal the complexity of the whole person or the success of that person in any position. Additionally, how does one observe and assess attitudes and values found in competency statements (Martin and Pope, 82)? How do one apply a binary 'yes or no' for competency acquisition to work that reflects a matter of degree of expertise?

If we accept that knowledge is socially constructed then how are competencies being constructed, why, and by whom? “[F]rameworks of competence impose conceptual limitations” (Ruth, p.206) and if so, what may be derived from our study of the form and structure of the CARL Competencies statement to elucidate the expected function of these competencies, along with the intended roles for those engaged with such a statement? It should be noted that competency statements are tools that we may choose to use, or in some cases not use. If used, they may be engaged with in a formative way, to inform the work we do as librarians, or as an evaluation tool, or even a mix of approaches. It also may or may not be up to the individuals as to how they choose to engage with the CARL Competencies or with what portions they engage.

The CARL Library Education Working Group, which later became the Building Capacity Sub-committee in 2009, was “established to create relationships with those interested in library education and research, to identify next steps for taking priorities forward, and to identify actions arising from the recommendations of the 8Rs study” (Belzile *et al.* p.3). It may be argued that the CARL Competencies statement does not constitute a relationship of authority “determined in the context of the audience” at the time of its framing, as mentioned above (Drabinski p.383), but is an outcome of a previous and differently structured relationship (one that solicited information) transformed to address management-related issues such as recruitment and restructuring issues identified in the 8Rs study. The creation and delivery of this statement as a guideline is not the librarians but the voice of the administrators involved.

The individuals on these committees likely represented associate university librarians or higher within their respective academic institutions, since many currently hold or are retired

from those positions. The information for their respective positions at the time of discussion and development of the CARL Competencies statement was not available. The CARL website stated “CARL committees, subcommittees and working groups are open to non-directors – most frequently associate university librarians or other topic experts – as contributing members (CARL, “Committees”).” Thus it was not clear that any department head or lower-level librarians were involved in the creation of this statement; they only had a role as respondents to the original 8Rs Research Team survey 5-6 years previously. It is also unknown whether they had an opportunity to offer feedback and suggested modifications to this statement pre-publication, or whether their role was only to accept and implement such a statement post-publication. Thus we can see how a micro-centre of authority may impose a vision of librarianship without the input of the population of academic librarians.

The format of the CARL Competencies statement includes an introduction, an environmental scan, a section titled ‘Key components of the new model’, a list of seven areas of competencies (Foundational Skills, Interpersonal Skill, Leadership and Management, Collection Development, Information Literacy, Research and Contributing to the Profession, Information Technology Skills) with each area having bulleted points of what it encompasses along with instructional commentary, and a bibliography. The bibliography lists other competency statements that were consulted and a subsection called ‘other works cited.’ These cited works do not reflect, for example, any discourse on contested areas of librarianship, such as librarian neutrality, issues of social justice and race, nor different philosophies of academic librarianship.

The CARL Competencies statement included in its introduction directions on who should use the competencies and how. Recommended uses according to the statement are: create checklists of desirable competencies when hiring and when identifying training and development, to recruit new talent, to reassess the role of librarian within the academy, to market the profession, all implying use by search committees and by administrative level librarians. The CARL librarians themselves were to use this statement as a “guide” to “manage their careers, set meaningful professional development goals and align those goals with the missions of their respective organizations, to use this profile to identify strengths and gaps in their personal competencies in order to round out [and inform] their portfolios” (Belzile *et al.* p.3).

Poststructuralism says the “subject of any sentence is the person (or thing) who enacts the verb” (Belsey p.52) and so for the CARL Competencies it is the reader, and in this case the CARL librarian for whom identity is being prescribed. Further, identity, according to OED Online, may be defined as the “quality or condition of being the same in substance, composition, nature, properties, or in particular qualities under consideration; absolute or

essential sameness; oneness.” Alvesson and Willmott (p.630) state “[t]he construction of knowledge and skills are key resources for regulating identity in a corporate context as knowledge defines the knower,” and the CARL Competencies statement was intended to direct the management of academic librarian careers as per the content of the statement. It is a prime example of assuming the existence of a self-managed, entrepreneurial individual, and exhorts these librarians to implement this statement in order to remain competitive. But not only is approved identity being prescribed but that identity is predicated on a level of sameness across librarians within CARL libraries, promoting competition and a neoliberal audit culture even as it provides a retrospective vision of who we can potentially be in the future.

Even if librarians singly or in a groups wanted to negotiate the CARL Competency statement in their respective libraries, Alvesson and Willmott (p.632) indicate the difficulties inherent in that approach:

“[m]anagement through discourse may occur through regulations in which the employee is directly defined or implied by reference to [o]ther[.]. . . regulations in which the field of activity is constructed with reference to appropriate work orientations. . . regulation of belonging and differentiation. . . regulations indicating the kind of identity that fits the larger social, organizational and economic terrain in which the subject operates.”

Poststructuralism explains that humans have a tendency to “reduce diversity to order” (Belsey p.47) through the explication of meanings and differences that come from outside ourselves (66). They are not generated by ourselves but by language as other, independent of us. This language “transmits the knowledge and values that constitute a culture” (Belsey p.4) so learning or creating new knowledge “inculcate[s] obedience to the discipline inscribed in them” (Belsey p.4). This language is embedded within the CARL Competencies statement and restricts options when negotiating use of such a statement.

Further, it is the differences between things that forms our understanding of things, because “meaning is differential not referential” (Belsey p.10). Thus we cannot have, for example, good without bad and vice versa. Power is a “relation of struggle” (p.55) between these differences, between belonging and not belonging or power and resistance. It is clear that, according to CARL, to be a CARL librarian is to follow the CARL Competencies statement in order to belong, and to be in a position of authority simply because of the statement’s existence, which may help explain some of the use by non-CARL librarians as discovered in the survey.

We know further identity construction is being implemented through these competencies because “Library Directors and human resource professionals, moreover, can employ the CARL Competencies as a compass or checklist of desirable competencies when hiring new librarians or when identifying training and development opportunities for existing librarians” thus reinforcing top-down (micro-centre) approved identity. The statement also includes the information that “CARL libraries as a collective can use the competencies profile to market the library profession and to recruit new talent” (Belzile *et al.* p.3), inculcating new librarians, and creating an image of the profession in the eyes of the larger public that may be at odds with the librarians working in the field.

Further, it considers these competencies as “integral to building and maintaining a nimble staff which ably serves its community and continually adapts to a dynamic, constantly evolving research/information landscape” (Belzile *et al.* p.3). Even as it identifies the approved behaviour of the librarians it charges library directors and human resources to create this nimble adaptability through changed behaviour. The Committee does state “individual CARL libraries may place greater or lesser emphasis on specific portions of the competencies” (Belzile *et al.* p.3) but this also implies a top-down implementation reinforced by the Committee’s emphasis on the creation of nimble, adaptable staff. A nimble, adaptable staff under neoliberalism is a precarious state of existence, as discussed previously in this article. The authors of the statement conflate what is good for libraries being good for librarians, though library associations such as CARL are very different in scope and mandate from their constituent libraries, and each of those also different in emphasis from the librarians working within the field, and different from any librarian or library associations also.

Any allowed negotiation by the individual is expressed as the “successful practitioner develops expertise in specific areas, but builds and maintains a strong, well-rounded understanding of the library, the campus, and the larger scholarly communications environment” (Belzile *et al.* p.4). There is no indication that an individual has a right to choose how to approach the CARL Competencies content e.g. in a non-positivist, less instrumental way, or even to ignore it, nor to expand the universe of their expertise, much less in unexpected areas and ways. There is no recognition of and room for “[p]eople as ... unpredictable and self-willed agents” (Burgoyne p.10). There is also no explicit mandate or process indicated in the statement for a potential need for consultation and dialogue between library directors, human resources, and librarians. “Positivism is the belief and practice that valid knowledge is objective, empirical, and static” (Pankl and Coleman p.5) and “... positivism, in the form of a radical utilitarianism, pursues, almost relentlessly, predetermined, measurable outcomes” (*ibid.*), that is to say, an audit culture.

Confusion over how the CARL Competencies were to be used was expressed in the survey respondents' answers in response to the question of whether they chose to use those Competencies: "unrealistic to expect every librarian to meet the expectations that are included in the document," "a laundry list," and to paraphrase, they are used in theory but go to other statements for practical applications, doesn't apply to work outside library needs (indicating librarians are working beyond the limits of the library as defined by the CARL Competencies statement, a situation not addressed in the statement), that respondents meet the competencies appropriate to their job and other comments about selective use, comments on the competencies or statement being dated and not directly relevant.

The language of the CARL Competencies statement does not entertain responsibilities of team-based approaches nor does it ascribe any responsibilities to the library or libraries, the university context or even communities. The only legitimized approach to competencies, and thus our responsibilities, is at the individual, librarian level, pushing risk of non-conforming onto the individual. Failure is also at the individual level, removing explicit responsibility for success or failure away from administration, at the same time obviating any need for assessment or an audit culture at the administrative level. And as noted previously, the statement does not entertain or acknowledge the potential for the existence of librarian work that is not encompassed by the statement that may take a significant amount of time, nor thus does it allow what percentage of non-librarian duties should be fulfilled to still be considered a CARL librarian.

While we are to use the statement as a guide, the instructional commentary for each competency contradicts this by stating "All CARL librarians should" as opposed to 'may' or some softer language, when referencing the bulleted lists beneath. Thus we are instructed that it would be to our benefit to engage with all of what is included in those lists, even if it doesn't state "will". The CARL Competencies authors focus on the instrumental, on the practical and positivist, on the acquiring of vocational skills, and do "not question the world views from which they are born" (Cope p.17).

Knowledge is a neoliberal commodity in this statement and has an implied exchange value as acquisition of these competencies will make you eligible for a position in the market, that is, the 21st century academic research environment in Canada according to the CARL Competencies (Belzile *et al.* p.3). The burden of career management is thus handed to the individual where, "the employee is seen as the main or even the only stake-holder" (Baruch pp.231-32), and any failure in getting or keeping a position is a failure of the individual, not the library or the culture within which they are situated. Competency statements reduce librarians and their knowledge to "the status of commodities while suppressing questions

about class, culture, power, knowledge and social responsibilities” (Schroeder “Mark Hudson” p.132).

Previous research on librarian competencies (Soutter) shows the most commonly-used formulation of competency in the LIS peer-reviewed literature is one that includes knowledge (cognitive), skills (functional), and behaviour, but when a definition is provided separate from the discussion in the article, “it may not list any of the competency definition elements, except perhaps skills” (n.p.). That approach shows the difficulties librarians themselves have when they create lists independent of context. The CARL Competencies statement has the same problem. Points are phrased as ‘knowledge of’, ‘understanding’ or involve a commitment to develop what is essentially a knowledge base in defined areas. There are some behavioural terms, most located under the section on interpersonal skills, and indicate appropriate behaviours such as adaptability, flexibility, eagerness, open-mindedness, initiative, innovation, excellence, creativity, collaboration, all used in the neoliberal sense (Waugh “Innovations”) with no recognition that there is no effective way of measuring or auditing these in a transparent manner. Skills are listed and will be discussed later.

Neoliberal ideology with its emphasis on corporate speak has a commonly used strategy of engineered crises. This may be found in the CARL Competencies’ claims of a constant and rapidly changing environment and in their claim of a need for ‘standards.’ This approach causes “problems of generalizability and abstraction and [reflects] the ‘scientific’ assumptions of management” (Ruth p.206). “[M]odern management constantly confronts unpredictability and turbulence” (Ruth p.219) and we need to consider how competencies regulate and control by providing a “common currency of ... qualifications” used to supposedly avoid “inefficiencies both in the market itself, in terms of fitting supply and demand (people to jobs) and in the creation of supply (training to the creation of supply to fit the jobs)” (Burgoyne p.11). Neoliberalism is a monoculture and “[m]onocultures spread, not because they produce more, but because they control more” (Ruth p.208 quoting Shiva 1993, p.7).

The need to “continually adapt to a dynamic, constantly evolving research/information landscape,” an intense environment, or dramatically changed environment, is a neoliberal-induced crisis as it confuses those who do not perceive such a need and may increase uncertainty in these workers, increasing neoliberal control over labour and the market. The need for “nimble staff” that is to say flexibility, enables workers to be re-assigned as needed to fulfil administrative needs as opposed to a librarian’s career goals, an approach that actually reduces expertise and professionalism, and again, introduces greater precariousness and employer control over the work environment. Harkening to new technologies offers employers the greatest opportunity to manufacture crises and disrupt old ways of work,

shifting to a more instrumental approach reflecting the points made above. This approach only increases the individual's economic value to the employer.

Individuals must also align their goals with their institutional mission implying submission of self to the needs of the job; with marketing and recruiting representing neoliberal commodification of individuals and their capital aligned to the needs of academic market. Raven, Holyoke and Jensen (p.135) commented of a number of CARL research and scholarly statements, including the CARL Competencies that "it becomes clear that research is intended to be limited in scope and chiefly related to what helps to make either the library or the librarian more productive." They further note that in the "absence of self-directed research, others [associations, for example] will operationalize that activity in a very limited, closely job-related function" (p.136) and that there is "an emphasis on applied research or research to establish value, much like in a product, market-driven, highly corporatized environment" (p.136).

Management and leadership in the CARL Competencies is claimed to be necessary at all levels in the library (p.4), implying a level of control at lower levels that does not exist as power is increasingly centralized in upper administration, but plays to the myth of freedom of the individual in the workplace, even though we now work in more constrained, neoliberal ways that explicitly support the marketability of the employer and less, any career to which a librarian may aspire.

"[I]nnovative, value-added services" or innovative new programs are needed because we were never innovative in the past, apparently, and it was difficult to count our value at a socially-relevant level. Now we need to reduce services to some "value-added" we may count. We must also create and nurture partnerships because partnerships allow for outsourcing and the creation of new markets. We will market the library, advance library goals and earn a seat at the table because we are now in competition with other modes of delivery in the knowledge market and we need to create an economic value for the library, not individuals. This is very much related to activity-based budgeting where university libraries are a cost centre, in that the library costs money but adds nothing to the university's revenue base. As a result, the library, in the form of librarians, must now "strong[ly] advocate [for a] ...central place in the University's teaching, learning and research mission," marketing ourselves in ways that will access grant and other funding.

Foundational Knowledge, the first area of competencies, does not explicitly identify the existence of alternate approaches to librarianship, nor controversies in LIS and librarianship. It also does not recognize our relationships with unionization and collective agreements which, in many cases, claim precedence over our working conditions. Perhaps it is meant to

be included under the first point about knowledge of “the social, cultural, economic, political and information environment within which they work” (Belzile *et al.* p.6), or the second point on “Librarianship and professional practice” (*ibid.*). The latter does not encompass or highlight different research-based approaches or even practices of librarianship, such as critical analysis, critical literacy, class-based critiques, or sociological theories, for example.

The only type of research explicitly mentioned is evidence-based librarianship in the Key Components of the New Model section, stressing an instrumental, positivist approach as an acceptable methodology as it “emphasizes continuous and rigorous assessment as the foundation for decision making” (Belzile *et al.* p.5). The Research & Contributions to the Profession competency section consists of a list of acceptable outlets and thus outcomes for research, with one point at least asking librarians to be aware of methods of research, even if it doesn’t ask for an understanding of theories of research and the impact of the social and cultural context of information on libraries and librarianship.

The Interpersonal Skills section offers us a list of supposed skills. In reality a number of these are behaviours, as previously mentioned, and while some behaviour may be learned, there are those unable or unwilling to conquer them. Many can feign eagerness but not every librarian may be behaviourally suited to mentorship or change management. But as a positivist statement this document assumes everyone can equally obtain any or all items on this list, if required to by their libraries. There are actual skills listed: communication, advocacy, and problem solving. By reducing the complexity or diversity of who we are and the work we do to a list, and then forcing acceptable behaviours into a skills list, it implies all librarians should be able to pick up these ‘skills’ as needed or on demand.

All CARL librarians are to commit to leadership and management at all levels of the library, in order to implement the self-managed, entrepreneurial (and neoliberal) individual who assists administration in bringing all colleagues in line with the CARL-defined librarian. Most of this section is about understanding with a small number of actions. It is now acceptable to influence and motivate others to strive for excellence, raising the questions as to whose notion of excellence and how far this exhortation may stray beyond the arena of excellence. We may also perform project management. But the remaining points represent the need to understand (commit to and develop) the different professions listed, human resources management, risk management and project management, among others. One must ask “what interests are served by the naturalization [normalization] of particular convictions and values” (Belsey p.31) and further, ones that constrict us (the statement) and then stretches us as individuals as thinly as this sub-section implies?

It is interesting how the two longest sections of the statement are Foundational Knowledge

and Interpersonal Skills. Foundational Knowledge is about recognizing and knowing the official structures and regulations that surround and constrain us while Interpersonal Skills is about how we should behave within and among these structures and limitations. Note there is no hint of resistance to any of these structures, just managing our work within them because they are a given. These two sections come across as more important than the remaining five sections because they contain more information, include more behaviors and are more action oriented than the remaining five sections.

All CARL librarians need to have an understanding of Collection Development, an understanding, commitment and knowledge of Information Literacy, and knowledge, capability and understanding of Information Technology (IT), all reflecting a more passive engagement with these areas. The Research & Contributions to the Profession section employs a wider variety of words such as knowledgeable, commit to, contributions, active, ability, and so on, reflecting a more proactive role for CARL librarians in this area. Thus one is left with a story of CARL librarians needing to be aware of structures and regulations, how to behave within this context, exhorting colleagues to excellence (as defined by the statement), and being active in your profession and performing research. Most of Leadership and Management, Collection Development, IL, and IT seem to be secondary, passive concerns, which is interesting as their implementation and theory around them can be contentious in the LIS literature (Adler as one example).

These neoliberal statements are more concerned with ahistorical space as opposed to historical time, and with language as an autonomous system (Gutting pp.7-8) or neutral. Thus one could state the CARL Core Competencies statement is more about a mental space presented in a timeless, ahistorical fashion than with human subjectivity acting with agency within the space and in negotiation with their history as it happens. CARL as an example of a micro-centre, and its members, whether consciously or not, are responding to and attempting to bring us in line with the prevalent culture, a neoliberal culture and practice. It is ironic that the statement asks CARL librarians to be knowledgeable of the “social, cultural, economic, political and information environment within which they work” (Belzile *et al.* p.6) at the same time the statement attempts to inculcate neoliberal values and processes:

“The categories we all recognize not only make this account [an account of ourselves] possible, but also *call us* [sic] to account, and by doing so bring us into line with the norms and proprieties that culture itself constructs. Societies recruit us as subjects, subject us to their values, and incite us to be accountable, responsible citizens, eager, indeed, to give an account of ourselves in terms we have learned from the signifying practices of those societies themselves” (Belsey p. 53).

F. Conclusion

So what does all this mean? The questions that continually arise when reading about or when one considers neoliberalism are, what kind of society are we living in, or, "...what kind of society [do] we want to become?" (Giroux *Neoliberalism's War* p.194). This may be extended to ask the questions 'What kind of libraries do we want to work in and within what societal context?', and 'As librarians, what form of citizenship do we wish to promulgate?', 'What impact does neoliberalism have on the form and function of our libraries, academic or otherwise and on our professional identity?' and 'If we accept that the CARL Competencies statement is a tool for the dissemination of neoliberal ideology, what are we to do with this information?'

The neoliberal ideology is a monoculture and a top-down ideology, one which is filtering from broader society and culture into our university administrations, deans and library administrations, impacting faculty, librarians and other staff. Critics argue neoliberalism is supplanting democracy in our institutions, professional associations, and society, along with destroying the concept of a public or collective good. This includes libraries that act as a public good in a democracy. Librarians need to recognize that neoliberal small government means less money for public goods such as our roads, libraries, healthcare, social welfare and educational institutions. That trickle-down economics with tax breaks for companies results in corporate welfare and few jobs created, as indicated by the \$750 billion in uninvested cash-flow in the hands of Canada's most profitable corporations (Fanelli p.242), and in government austerity agendas. That a free market is a market without regulation, resulting in the imposition of standard form contracts such as those we are exposed to everyday in libraries (and our personal lives) such as Apple, Microsoft, ebook, and telecommunications licences. That neoliberalism, in attempting to commodify everything, will discard whatever it cannot derive profits from. The public good is a cost centre to neoliberalism and as such its draw upon revenue must be minimized or privatized.

Librarians argue neoliberalism challenges and displaces both the ethics and values of librarianship and thus changes our profession. There are myriad competency statements promulgated by various associations with their own claims to authority, working as micro-centres of authority implementing neoliberal values and processes. We desperately need to recognize and respond to the neoliberal context within which we operate. It is important for those working in our institutions to gain perspective and regain our history, and to have an informed voice regarding changes to our work. But do academic librarians have the right to determine their identity and professionalism and to what extent? One would think librarians have a right to participate in any dialogue about librarianship with respective stakeholders, seeing as librarians are intimate stakeholders on changes to the profession. Archer identified

spaces of identity resistance and thus negotiation (pp.281-282) as did Finch-Lees, Mabey and Liefoghe, and Alvesson and Willmott re: competency frameworks and Ryan and Sloniowski (p.285) with respect to IL.

Kandiuk (p.199) argued that unionization and collective bargaining have allowed for librarian control over work and thereby, it is suggested, negotiation of professional identity within higher education. This arena for negotiation is indirectly supported by Braunstein and Russo (p.254, quoting Wood) who state “librarianship and its core values are especially well-suited to a unionized environment” as exemplified in the values of collegial decision making, intellectual freedom and right of due process. These authors further state (p.256) unionization should be investigated “as a remedy for at least some of the problems facing twenty-first century academic librarians” including intangible benefits such as academic freedom and shared governance, issues that can impact any negotiation of professional identity. Learning how to negotiate identity may require becoming more active politically on their campuses through trade unions and on university senates. Librarians, among others, need to ignore identity politics and create unexpected communications and associations across trade unions and groups. It is only through mutual support and the creation of community around common issues (or just supporting each others’ humanity) that neoliberal values and agendas may be delegitimized. We do not have to accept others’ authority without interrogating its presence and legitimacy.

MacGregor (p.147) states that “[a]lternative scenarios have been delegitimised. Dominant discourses play down state-centred [and thus collective] solutions. Urgently a new battle of ideas is needed to argue for progressive reform” with respect to neoliberalism. Alternate scenarios to the singular use of the monoculture CARL Competencies statement should be encouraged. Competencies frameworks are backwards-looking documents, they can only tell you where you have been and what potentially worked under a specific set of conditions. But they are also capable of formulating a future set of conditions based on what ideology they encompass and inculcate. The framers of these statements are capable of rewriting history, by re-visioning our past work using new terminology, values and concepts, sometimes leaving behind activities, philosophies, ideologies (thus culture) at the same time as they stress and thus reorient to a newly approved, modified culture. Librarians must examine the frameworks within which they operate to identify the pressures on library associations, libraries and ultimately, librarian work.

So, challenge competency statements and restrictive uses of competency statements that define or constrict our profession and values. Read authors who challenge the status quo and assumptions. Present theoretical frameworks as lenses through which we may question librarian work. Perform research on issues relating to librarianship and challenge

assumptions about the profession and educate colleagues on results. For example, interrogate professional identity, the presence of neoliberalism, the current status of democracy, political economy, librarian neutrality (which allows us no voice in our world), the lack of librarian-specific statements (our rights and responsibilities for ourselves) as opposed to association statements on librarian ethics and their perceptions of our responsibilities towards users. Develop and write statements that propose and associate rights to librarians, not just their users, and join associations that consider librarians first and challenge assumptions and professional bodies that conflate librarians with libraries. Attend conferences and network. Become public intellectuals.

In a passive or unconscious response, librarians faced with neoliberal ideology and an increasing audit culture are finding themselves shifting into areas where administrative, neoliberal control is not as developed. Some librarians have moved away from collection development, where budgets are under firm control and librarian input is limited or even nonexistent, into subject liaison work and IL. Unfortunately, research on any shift seems to be nonexistent on this topic with respect to neoliberalism. Ironically, the presence of a larger number of IL articles on neoliberalism may be more reflective of librarians' willingness to stand up on behalf of users than to stand up for ourselves.

When we consider neoliberal ideology's focus on the individual with no room in its ideological framework for collective rights, it is, ironically, up to each individual librarian to decide how they wish to respond. There are no definitive answers to these questions posed above but the first step may be that we ourselves must decide where we stand and these in turn will inform how we move forward individually, and perhaps even collectively as librarians and as citizens.

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