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'Feminisation and Outsourced Work'

**A Case Study of the Meaning of 'Transformation' through the Lived Experience
of Non-core Work at the University of Cape Town**

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ABSTRACT

'Feminisation and Outsourced Work': A Case Study of the Meaning of 'Transformation' through Non-core Work at the University of Cape Town

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This dissertation examines the meaning of university 'transformation' from the perspective of workers in 'non-core' zones of work. Mergers, outsourcing, retrenching and rightsizing, have become features of the post-apartheid higher education landscape; and they seem set to remain. Through higher education restructuring work has been divided into 'core' and 'non-core' zones of work and 'non-core' work has largely been outsourced. The men and women working in the outsourced zones of 'non-core' work engage in the 'reproductive work' of the university and yet they largely remain hidden from institutional debates of transformation. The outsourcing of 'reproductive work' in institutes of higher education in post-apartheid South Africa as a cost cutting strategy is interrogated in relation to the costs it has in the everyday lived experiences of this sample of 'non-core' workers. The thesis makes a critical analysis of the strategy to outsource through the lens of aspects of the workplace experiences of 26 Fidelity Supercare contract cleaning workers in a South African institution of higher education. Given that 'women's work' in higher education has historically been under-represented and ignored as a separate and unrelated zone of work to intellectual enquiry, it is important to understand the experiences of those who engage in the lowest paid and most un-represented 'women's work' in the higher education sector. Given both the national and institutional-level commitments to gendered and racialised transformation in higher education sector, the research question posed is what does 'transformation' in higher education mean from the perspective of those working in 'non-core' jobs? The 'feminisation' of labour as a trend in broader labour patterns in post-apartheid South Africa, a gendered critique of South African macroeconomic policy, and the theory of 'housewification' are drawn on to develop a theoretical framework through which to understand the gendering process of 'core/non-core' work divisions in higher education. The study explores the ways in which the dual goals of 'marketisation' associated with South African neo-liberal policies and 'transformation' of the higher education system come into conflict and contradict one another.


An overview of the extent of outsourcing in the post-apartheid higher education sector is given, followed by a reflection on the literature pertaining to the effects of outsourcing on workers through the lens of lived experience. The case university is then introduced and the particular facts around outsourcing of services at this site are provided in relation to existing literature. It presents a description of the forces directing outsourcing at UCT campus and answers questions such as 'which services were outsourced?', 'how many jobs did it affect?' and 'who were the people affected?' It describes the current context of outsourced work on UCT campus on the basis of these answers.

The central findings illuminate that rather than the divisions of 'core/non-core' work being a 'neutral' strategy to cut costs to improve 'efficiency' and 'competitiveness', the division is a means of drawing new 'boundaries' between valuable and non-valuable work and determining which workers have access to wages and benefits. From the perspective of the lived experiences of contract cleaning workers, despite the Post-apartheid era of national and higher education 'transformation' at the University of Cape Town that was intended to increase access to those previously disadvantaged, the promises of 'transformation' do not translate into experiences of gender and racial redress at all. Rather, the meaning of working in 'non-core' zones is one of constantly encountering their marginality. The outsourcing of services on the basis of a 'core/non-core' division of labour therefore threatens to reinforce both gendered and racial divisions in higher education rather than transform them. Through outsourced work, 'non-core' workers on the University campus are 'excluded' from access to citizenship that comes with being a core worker at the university. The findings suggest that gender dynamics which reinforce the undervaluing and invisibilising of women's work ('feminisation') are central to this process of 'exclusion'.

April 2008

COMPULSORY DECLARATION

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

Signature:  Date: 26/11/2008.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The South African higher education landscape has been an area of great interest in post-apartheid political, social and academic debate. The apartheid system left no institution untouched. In terms of education, it systematically segregated the higher education system along racial lines affording white learners a far better education than black learners. By 1994, the result was a deeply racially stratified higher education system, divided into what are now referred to as historically advantaged institutions (HAIs) and historically disadvantaged institutions (HDIs). Discourses of transformation in higher education in terms of 'redress as reparations', 'redress as equity' and 'redress as empowerment' (Barnes, 2006a) have therefore directed national and institutional efforts to transform higher education institutions (HEIs) with emphasis on access to previously disadvantaged people; notably black people, women and people with disabilities. This redress has been facilitated through national policies such as the White Paper on Higher Education 1997 and legislation such as the Employment Equity Act 1998.

At the same time, over the past 10 years increasing pressure has been placed on South Africa's HEIs to become and remain competitive in the global knowledge economy. Globalisation, the changing nature of capitalist production and the advancement in technology have transformed the role of knowledge and information in the world economy (Orr, 1997; Castells, 2000; Grossman, 2006). For South Africa, the emergence into democracy has been accompanied with a shift towards neo-liberalism in the form of Growth Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) which has prioritized economic development through cut backs in government spending, privatisation, and trade liberalisation, for example. Higher education institutions have a central role to play in this national agenda of economic development, particularly in the production of skilled professionals and research outputs that will contribute to the development of the South African economy. The international emphasis on knowledge as a commodity has therefore also 'transformed' universities towards what has become known as the 'market university'.

A particular feature of the restructured higher education landscape in South Africa has been the adoption of business discourse and practice towards work restructuring along 'core-business' and

'non-core' lines. 'Core-business' in universities has become defined as teaching and research and the actors within it are primarily academics, researchers, administrators and students. South African research and debate has emerged which interrogates the ways in which the dual goals of marketisation and transformation of the higher education system come into conflict and contradict one another. In this context of change, the meaning of 'transformation' for different constituencies of higher education institutions has become a focus of such work. Of particular interest to this thesis are the recent applications of gendered analysis to debates of higher education transformation and marketisation (Zezeza, 2002; Shackleton, 2007; Barnes; 2006b and 2007). That marketisation is threatening the transformation agendas of racial and gendered equity for both staff and student populations is an area that is therefore developing, although more research is needed here.

'Non-core' work on the other hand has been defined as those support services which are 'manual and menial', such as catering, cleaning, security, maintenance and gardening. Preliminary research illustrates that these areas of work have undergone large scale restructuring in all of the 21 South African universities since the early 1990s (van der Walt, Bolsmann, Johnson & Martin, 2003). This restructuring has involved retrenchments and outsourcing, and thousands of university support service jobs have been removed and replaced by contract companies that promise to provide these services on university campuses nationwide. The meaning of marketisation and transformation from the perspective of non-core zones of work, as opposed to the core zones, is an area that still deserves much attention and it is *this* that forms the basis of this research dissertation.

This research dissertation aims to investigate the circumstances under which certain zones of work at the University of Cape Town (UCT) came to be outsourced. It aims to document the effects of outsourcing on aspects of the lived work experiences of the men and women working in outsourced jobs. As a HAI that has been identified in existing research as embracing the market model (see Bertlesen, 1998; Orr, 1997; Kenny and Clarke, 2000) and having outsourced support services, UCT was chosen as the case site for this research. The research poses the question, 'what has university transformation meant for workers in those jobs that have been outsourced?' Drawing on existing literature on gender, institutional culture and South African higher education

transformation, a gendered framework of analysis is developed for understanding the gendered implications of outsourcing and the gendered divisions of labour at UCT and higher education institutions more broadly.

Chapter 2 is a *Literature Review* which examines literature in two broad theoretical areas. The first of these, 'Globalisation and Labour in South Africa' is concerned with the relationship between macroeconomic policy in South Africa in the form of Growth Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) and aspects of changing labour practices. A review of literature that links flexibilisation and informalisation of labour conditions in post-apartheid South Africa, the 'Crisis in Social Reproduction', and policies associated with GEAR such as privatization and trade liberalisation is presented making use of both findings from existing qualitative studies and recent labour statistics. Of central importance is the concept of the 'Feminisation' of labour in South Africa. This is drawn upon to build a theoretical framework for understanding gendered changes in labour in South Africa. Feminisation of labour, theories of the social origins of the 'gendered divisions of labour', and a gendered analysis of GEAR inform the theorization of gender, globalisation and labour in South Africa which is then used as the basis for a gendered analysis of outsourced work in the case university.

The second area of literature, 'Higher Education Transformation in Post-apartheid South Africa' presents a discussion of the approaches to 'transformation' in Post-apartheid South Africa universities. Here I draw on the notion that transformation efforts in higher education are occurring parallel to the emergence of the 'market university model' in South Africa. The concept of the 'Marketisation' of higher education provides the avenue through which to view the effects of globalisation on the restructuring of higher education institutions. It forms the lens through which an understanding of how and why work at universities, as part of overall restructuring efforts, has come to be divided into 'core' and 'non-core' zones of work, and why certain zones have been outsourced while others remain 'in-house'. A review of the work of existing authors, such as Orr (1997) and Zeleza (2002), that write about university marketisation in order to a) frame and understand work restructuring in South African universities and b) describe some of the effects of marketisation strategies on the restructuring of work into different 'zones' is presented. In this section I introduce readers to a brief background of the extent of support service outsourcing as it has occurred in HEIs as well as a discussion of the effects of outsourcing on workers and trade

unions in the higher education sector. This section draws from survey material conducted van der Walt et al, and the few existing qualitative studies that have been conducted at different South African higher education institutions (for example, Johnson, 2001; Sørensen, 2004; Bezuidenhout and Fakier, 2006). A gendered analysis of these effects is offered that presents the university as a 'gendered institution' by drawing on the work that theorises gender, higher education transformation and institutional culture in a South African context, which includes but is not limited to work by Bennett (2002), Sørensen (2004), Shackleton, (2007), and Barnes (2006), for example. Gendered analysis in existing studies of support service outsourcing is discussed and the implications of this for my research are presented.

In Chapter 3, *Background and Methodology*, I introduce readers to the case university with a background to its transformation commitments. A background to outsourcing at the university is then presented. This background introduces the reader to some of the events and processes that lead up to the current context of 'non-core' work arrangements at the university. Analysis of key documents¹ and well as interview material with university management and ex-trade unionists is then used to make the case that outsourcing at the university occurred as part of a broader shift towards the market university model that is based on a certain set of values adopted by the university since the 1990s. The case of outsourcing at UCT can then be compared to exiting debates over the 'market model' of universities in South Africa. This is necessary for a number of reasons. Firstly, it builds a narrative and theoretical base for the foreground study. It also locates the sample through tracing the history that brought these workers onto the UCT campus in the first place. Secondly, it also presents a description of the forces directing outsourcing at UCT campus and answers questions such as 'which services were outsourced?', 'how many jobs did it affect?' and 'who were the workers affected?' Finally, it describes the current context of outsourced work on UCT campus on the basis of these answers.

Having located the study in this way, Chapter 3 moves into a discussion of the methodology and methods used to conduct the field work and collect the data needed to address the research problem. Since several support services have been outsourced at the University, the research focuses on an in-depth analysis of the experiences of contract cleaning employees of the company

¹ A complete list of documents used can be found in Appendix E

Fidelity Supercare that work at UCT through outsourcing. I used qualitative and quantitative data collection based on the assumption that lived experience is a valuable source of knowledge. A feminist approach to research that assumes that knowledge is 'partial' and 'situated' rather than value free and neutral is assumed. Feminist research also acknowledges that the production of knowledge is political, therefore, I conducted the research with an awareness of the power relations and 'micro-politics' in the research process and these are documented. The methods of sample selection, data collection and analysis are described and an explanation of these choices is offered in light of previous work reviewed in Chapter 2. The primary source of data collection in a semi-structured interview designed to explore aspects of the everyday lived experience at work of the sample. Finally, the limitations and ethical considerations in the research process are also discussed.

In Chapter 4, *Analysis of Data*, the findings are presented in themes that the researcher has identified during analysis of the qualitative interview data. The themes capture and describe aspects of work experience as lenses into the meaning of work for those contracted through outsourced work. The themes focus on both qualitative ('soft') and quantitative ('hard') aspects of 'meaning' derived from interviews. Wages, hours of work, and access to benefits represent the 'hard' indicators of 'meaning' while access to space in which to eat and change clothing, treatment by managers and UCT staff, access to channels of communication within the workplace and enjoyment or dislike of aspects of work indicate the 'softer' experiences that illuminate meaning. Both types of data offer a lens into the mechanisms used by both the University and the contract companies to construct and re-construct the value of 'non-core' zones of work as less than 'core' work.

In the *Conclusion*, Chapter 5, the findings in each theme are compared with existing key literature that I will discuss in the literature review to draw parallels between how aspects of non-core work are experienced at UCT by the sample of cleaners I interviewed and findings from similar research projects on other university sites. Following this is a summary of the main argument presented by the thesis; how the themes identified communicate information about the 'meaning' of 'non-core' cleaning work. The central findings are that the themes illuminate how rather than the core/non-core work divide being a 'neutral' strategy to cut costs to improve 'efficiency' and 'competitiveness',

the division serves as a new means of drawing 'boundaries' between valuable and non-valuable work and determining which workers have access to wages, benefits and dignity. The lived experiences of contract cleaning workers illuminates that the post-apartheid higher education institutional 'transformation' at the University of Cape Town that was intended to increase access to those previously disadvantaged is not about gender and racial redress at all. The meaning of working in 'non-core' zones is one of constantly encountering their marginality. The outsourcing of services on the basis of a 'core/non-core' division of labour threatens to reinforce both gendered and racial divisions in higher education rather than transform them. Through outsourced work, 'non-core' workers on the University campus are 'excluded' from access to citizenship that comes with being a core worker at the university. The findings suggest that gender dynamics which reinforce the undervaluing and invisibilising of women's work ('feminisation') are central to this process of 'exclusion'. Contradictions with, gaps and deviations from existing literature are also discussed, and the researcher provides possible reasons for these. Finally, the researcher identifies how these findings have broader relevance for the existing 'transformation' debates in higher education and suggests particular areas of the findings that are suitable for further research.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. INTRODUCTION

I have identified two main theoretical areas as relevant for both framing the research question and addressing it. The first of these emerges from literature on globalization and labour in South Africa. This is based on the work of authors such as Orr, Hart, Gelb, xxx that make theoretical connections between changes in South Africa's macro-economic policy over the years 1994 to 2006 and changes in the labour market. The debates presented suggest that the ANC government's adoption of GEAR (Growth, Employment and Redistribution) in 1996 signified a move towards a new form of neo-liberalism in South Africa. While macro-economic policy was designed to enhance job creation and reduce inequality, evidence suggests that the principles upon which such policy is based, such as the increase in labour market flexibility and privatisation, have resulted in job losses and an increased 'informalisation' of work, and the increased use of sub-contracting, all of which threaten government initiatives to reduce poverty, eliminate unemployment and increase equality. A gendered analysis of recent trends in the South African economy and how they have affected labour is also presented, offering insight into how and even why changes associated with neo-liberalism in South Africa affect men and women differently, with a focus on the particular affects on women. Of importance is women's' gendered role in social reproduction. Here, theorizing on 'women's work' by authors such as Cock (1980), Hartman (1981), Bennoldt-Thomas (1988), Berger (1992), Sampson (2003), and Budlender (2004) is reviewed to create a conceptual framework for understanding how women, particularly poorer women, 'bear the brunt' of neo-liberal reform in South Africa.

The second area of literature includes debates about the 'transformation' of higher education in post apartheid South Africa. The concept 'university marketisation' is presented and discussed as a means of describing and explaining global and local shifts in tertiary education towards a more corporatised university. Some of the implications of this shift for different zones of work in South African higher education are then examined. It is through bringing the two sets of theories and debate together, South African Labour and Higher Education Transformation which creates a lens

through which to conceptualise how changes in global patterns of economy have translated into a South African form of neo-liberalism that is affecting both labour and higher education reform, as well as labour restructuring within higher education.

There is general consensus that globalisation has affected university 'transformation' in South Africa in a number of ways. Analysis of the effects of global changes in the local higher education context has tended to focus on the meaning of transformation in universities from the perspective of the academics and students inhabiting these institutions. Existing debates, as the literature review illustrates, therefore include discussions of access to South African universities for black and women staff and students, effects of managerialism on academic freedom, and curriculum changes.

One of the aspects of transformation that has received far less attention however has been wide spread outsourcing of jobs that have been defined as 'non-core'. A section on the politics of knowledge production is vital for understanding the meaning of 'transformation' as it is and has been experienced from the perspective of workers who have been positioned in these outsourced 'non-core' jobs. Theoretical frameworks developed by feminist academics such as Hartsock (1987) and Bhavnani (1994) on the politics of knowledge production make it possible to access experiences of the less dominant populations that are otherwise kept invisible by dominant systems of knowledge. In this case, neo-liberalism in the form of university marketisation is the dominant system of knowledge and feminist epistemology is a valuable way of subverting dominant conceptions of outsourcing as natural and inevitable.

2. GLOBALISATION AND LABOUR IN SOUTH AFRICA

Discussions on the transition from apartheid to democracy in South Africa often point out that this shift has been accompanied by a shift to an increasingly neo-liberal market ideology (van der Walt et al, 2003). In 1994 the ANC government was elected into power and had the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) as one of its main policy framework commitments. The RDP promised a "people-driven" and populist discourse of the fulfillment of basic needs and a better life

for all informed by social democratic and redistributive principles. This promise was based on a development approach that emphasized addressing inequality and job creation, building new infrastructure, investing in the development of communities and improving service delivery (Orr, 2003; 1). The five-sub programmes that informed the RDP Base Document were: Meeting Basic Needs, Developing Human Resources, Building the Economy, Democratising the State and Implementing the RDP (Marais, 1997: 177; The RDP policy framework; 1994).

The RDP was criticized in some quarters, amongst the business community in particular, as an over-optimistic 'wish list'. Despite this, there is no doubt that the RDP did lay down some important benchmarks and targets for the achievement of greater social and economic justice in the post-apartheid period (Gelb, 2004; Padayachhe and Valodia, 2001). Progress towards these proved slower than anticipated, however, in large part due to persistent structural problems in the economy, manifested for example in the run on the Rand, the continuing volatility of capital flows, and the disappointing rates of economic growth and job creation. In response to these economic challenges the Government unveiled its Growth, Employment and Redistribution Strategy (GEAR) in June 1996 (Adams, 2006: 9). The presence of a strong neoliberal stance was made most explicit in the 1996 GEAR statement, but according to Gelb (2004:1) it had in fact been in place from 1994, even while the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) was seen as the government's policy framework. Through a combination of measures, including fiscal austerity, tighter monetary policy, budgetary reform, financial and trade liberalisation, restructuring of state assets and labour market reforms, the Government claimed that GEAR would be capable of achieving growth with both job creation and redistribution, thereby reconciling it to the RDP. Unlike the RDP, GEAR was not based on broad consultation but produced by a small technical team of experts (largely domestic and World Bank economists) insulated from popular pressure. Together with the document's neo-liberal drift, this led to mounting criticism, especially within the ranks of COSATU (the Congress of South African Trade Unions), the ANC's electoral-alliance partner. Despite this the Government, and in particular the Finance Minister Trevor Manuel, insisted on many occasions that GEAR was non-negotiable (Marais, 1997; Orr 1998; Hart, 2002; Seekings, 2007).

Despite the Government's 'assurances' that GEAR was compatible with the RDP, there is little doubt that its adoption signaled a discernible shift from the social democratic and redistributive principles enshrined in the RDP towards a neo-liberal macro-economic approach in line with the Washington consensus.² The RDP is mentioned only four times within the entire GEAR document, and the word "redistribution" receives even less attention. The RDP office was closed down in 1996, with its functions transferred to the offices of the deputy president and the finance minister (Marais, 1998).

As noted above, GEAR was designed to increase labour market flexibility, promote fiscal austerity, and curb government spending through 'accountability', effectiveness and efficiency in order to attract local and foreign private investment (Cloete and Kulati, 2003). These measures, it was predicted, would in turn lead to export led growth, tightened labour markets and eventually rising wages. The neo-liberal philosophy underlying these policies was that the 'free market' is a superior force in allocating resources. It was anticipated that GEAR-related policies would lead to an influx of foreign direct investment which would in turn assist in a GDP growth rate of 6% per annum and 400 000 new jobs per annum by the year 2000. With respect to the public sector, GEAR committed itself to a fiscal deficit reduction programme, from 4.5% of GDP in 1996/97 to 3.0% by 1999/2000. It was envisaged that increased foreign investment and economic growth, coupled with the control of inflation, would assist the state in its goals and the 'trickle down effect' (Hart, 2002) would ensure the increased wealth and distribution of wealth of everyone in the country.

According to Gelb (2004), macroeconomic policy, which comprises fiscal, monetary and exchange rate policy, has been the major focus of policy interventions from 1994. Fiscal deficit has been one of the areas where GEAR has been successful and targets have been achieved (Gelb, 2004). The National Treasury has completely reconstructed the budgetary and expenditure processes, but

² The Washington Consensus is a phrase initially coined in 1989 by John Williamson to describe the economic policy prescriptions that he considered to constitute the 'standard' reform package that was promoted by the Washington-based institutions, the IMF and the World Bank, through their structural adjustment programmes in the developing world. These prescriptions included fiscal discipline, tax reform, trade and exchange rate liberalization, liberalization of inward private investment, privatization of state enterprises, deregulation, labour market flexibility, and the protection of property rights. Williamson, John (1989). What Washington Means by Policy Reform, in: Williamson, John (ed.): *Latin American Readjustment: How Much has Happened*, Washington: Institute for International Economics 1989.

also introducing new systems of financial planning and expenditure management (the three-year rolling Medium Term Expenditure Framework), reporting and accountability (the Public Finance Management Act of 1999) (Gelb, 2004: 2). This, it is argued, has allowed for public investment in social infrastructure to grow faster than in economic infrastructure since 1994.

Valodia and Padayachee (2001) write that while the post-1994 policy package focused on supply-side approaches to growth, post-2001 witnessed an introduction of new policy interventions that indicate a more active role for the state in the economy generally, and more specifically in the areas of employment creation, industrial policy, economic growth and poverty alleviation. Despite this, as well as the conviction by Trevor Manuel and other ANC supporters that GEAR was inevitable and 'non-negotiable', other than its success in terms of fiscal policy, it failed to deliver on most of its targets, in particular in relation to economic growth, job creation and inward foreign investment. While Gelb (2004) acknowledges the success of the fiscal deficit, he also states that "it is hard not to conclude that domestic price and fiscal stability have been achieved only at the expense of external instability, giving the lie to the repeated claims by the monetary and fiscal authorities that 'macroeconomic stability has been achieved'" (Gelb, 2004:7). At the same time, the failure of the 'trickle down' approach implicit in GEAR to deal with the growing problems of poverty and inequality became increasingly apparent. As the country's Deputy President pointed out in 2006:

"A third of South African households are still not able to benefit directly from our relative economic success. Moreover, as long as a significant part of the population is excluded from the mainstream economy, our growth potential is considerably constrained"³

In the face of these realities, as well as increasing criticism and pressure from the Union movement, the Government was forced to revise and re-adjust a number of its GEAR targets, and in 2006 announced a new initiative, the Accelerated Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa (ASGISA), designed to promote more equitable forms of growth through a variety of direct

³ See 'Media Briefing by Deputy President Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka: Background Document to AsgiSA' (February 6 2006) pg. 2

interventions in the so-called '2nd Economy.' It remains open to question, however, whether ASGISA will be more successful than GEAR in resolving the obvious tension in balancing the needs of domestic social justice on the one hand and international competitiveness and macro-economic stability on the other.

The implications of the ideological and policy shift (from the RDP to GEAR) on labour have been widespread and a significant amount of attention has been paid to debating and documenting the changes in the labour market and the South African workplace since the formation of GEAR. Since the implementation of GEAR much has changed in South Africa and some of these changes were anticipated by the Minister of Finance Trevor Manuel. In an issue of the *Sunday Times* in 1996 he stated,

“As South Africa proceeds with trade liberalization and adapts to international competition, downwards pressure will be placed on unskilled wages. If this is not accommodated by the labour market, then unemployment will rise”⁴

Regulated flexibility in the labour market was a key tenant of GEAR as part of its job creation strategy, despite research by the ILO that stated that the South African economy “already has an extremely flexible labour market” (ILO, 1996: 12). In particular, one of the outcomes of greater flexibility is that formal sector employment is contracting. In response to liberalization, the South African economy has seen an increasing trend of informalisation and casualisation of labour as labour contends with cheaper labour practices elsewhere internationally. According to Hart (2001: 18), “In addition to growing unemployment, a number of recent studies document a rise in subcontracting and other ‘flexible’ labour practices, particularly in the clothing industry”.

There are different examples of flexible work through casualisation in the South African economy, ranging from the use of part-time workers, temporary workers, sub-contracting, homework, short-term contracts and self-employment (Orr, 2003). In South Africa, the impact of casualisation has been extensive. There have been massive job losses and a growth in the informal economy and

⁴ *Sunday Times*, 23 June 1996, in Marais (1997: 167).

the growing levels of unemployment make workers vulnerable to casualised work, downgraded working conditions, and exploitative employers and labour brokers (Seekings, 2006).

In explaining how casualisation reduces working conditions, Bernstein (1986), argues that the temporary nature of casual work influences the relationship between the employer and the worker in such a way as to disadvantage the worker. The employer has an interest in maximizing work output while reducing costs, especially long term labour reproductive costs in the form of a social wage, pensions, sick leave, health benefits, training, maternity and paid leave. The ability of the employer to avoid having to invest in these long term reproductive costs of the workforce is central to the success of the business, since the lower the cost of the labour the more competitive the business will be (Orr, 2001; Sampson, 2003).

World wide, the 'informalisation' of employment is growing. Informal work has many definitions and determining what constitutes informal work is an area that has been debated (Devey, Skinner & Valodia, 2003). Increasing numbers of people work in situations where the employment relationship is handed over to a third party and a sub-contractors or brokers intermediate between the person doing the work and the firm for which the work is being done. A more recent conceptualization of Bernstein's argument is 'externalising'. "Externalising" is another term that can be used for this form of outsourcing of work and refers specifically to the process through which the employment relationship is devolved to a third party or nominal employer (Von Holdt, 2005: 17). In general terms, neo-liberal or business arguments for externalization are that it allows the organization to focus all resources on its 'core' businesses. According to this line of thinking, outsourcing or externalisation of services allows to the business to focus its resources on the core business, which increases efficiency, reduces costs, and in so doing, increases productivity. Externalising also promises to provide a specialised service that has the potential to increase the skills base and expertise of the staff as well (Bezuidenhout and Fakier, 2006).

However, Bernstein, (1986), Von Holdt & Webster (2005), and Bezuidenhout and Fakier, (2006) argue that once work is externalized, the complexity of the employment relationship is transformed into the simplicity of a commercial one and this transition 'hides' the real relations beneath the externalised relationship. For example, while externalising can reduce costs, it also makes it

easier to hire and fire workers (Bernstein, 1986; Von Holdt, 2005). In this sense, externalising leads to what is known as “disguised employment” where there is clearly an employment relationship but it is ‘disguised’ as a commercial relationship in which the employee receives no social benefits (UNRISD, 2005; Von Holdt & Webster, 2005). According to this explanation, the ‘disguising’ of employment is a deliberate strategy undertaken by employers to avoid labour laws and the provision of other social benefits to their employees. The insecurity and ambiguity of the externalised employment relationship has benefits for the employer because under a standard employment relationship where the employment relationship is regulated by industrial relations, the employee has certain legal claims and protection from the core employer. Externalisation also serves to weaken unions by dividing workers along core/non-core lines, and this division enables employers to exploit the weaker and more insecure non-core workforce (Johnson, 2001; Bezuidenhout and Fakier, 2006). The findings from these studies illustrate that non-core workers in outsourced jobs struggle to get access to trade union rights, they have very little access to protections from labour laws and they tend to be excluded from skills development programmes as well.

According to Von Holdt & Webster (2005: 23), the liberalisation of labour markets has polarized the labour market into three broad zones of work; the core, the non-core (or atypical) and the periphery. The collection of works in *Beyond the Apartheid Workplace: Studies in Transition* provides examples of how the growth of the non-core zone excludes and pushes people away from the protective conditions of formal sector work and towards the margins of poverty. The zone of work that is of importance the focus of this thesis is the growing number of jobs in the economy that are being defined as ‘non-core’ and the relationship of this to outsourcing and/or subcontracting in higher education institutions.

Firstly, the research findings from recent South African studies suggest that under externalised work, control of the workforce is increased, job security is reduced, and work is intensified (Eppel, 2004; Mhlongo and Fakier, 2004; Bezuidenhout and Fakier, 2006; Von Holdt, 2006). Employers make use of fewer workers to achieve the same amount of work or in some cases even more work than the previous ‘employees’ of the core company for less wages and, in most cases, fewer benefits (Eppel, 2004). Therefore, the authors conclude that although externalised work is seen as

having clear advantages for employers, it is through this numerical flexibility that the advantages to the employer are achieved. The major criticism against the use of externalized work both elsewhere and in South Africa is that it not only fails to lead to any real efficiency (since efficiency is at the cost of squeezing more work out of the workers) but also fails to benefit ordinary men and women (Bezuidenhout and Fakier, 2006; Grossman, 2006).

Trade liberalisation in South Africa has also contributed to job losses in unionised sectors (Seekings, 2007: 19). Under privatization and outsourcing, conditions of work, wages, and benefits as well as other factors that determine the quality of employment change, often leading to deterioration in the quality of employment available. One of the 'costs' of the implementation of GEAR strategies, such as privatisation, labour flexibility and trade liberalisation on labour and workers more generally is referred to as the "crisis in social reproduction" (Furgeson, 1999; Hart, 2002; Sampson, 2003; Webster & Von Hodt, 2005; Bezuidenhout & Fakier, 2006). The reduced wages and conditions of employment, when combined with the effects of cut backs in state expenditure on social services, have consequences for the social reproduction of society at large. In South Africa, the new and progressive legislation, particularly the Labour Relations Act 1995 and the Basic Conditions of Employment Act 1998, that was designed to increase social justice, to promote equality and to protect formal sector jobs in South Africa is being undermined by moves towards flexible labour (Hart, 2002; Orr, 2003). According to Orr (2003: 31), "The labour legislation that has been adopted in this county is left toothless in the face of massive retrenchments, outsourcing and casualisation, which obviously undermine workers' rights and security". This is aggravated by employers in South Africa remain in power and many of them are not willing to and nor do they face pressure to comply with labour laws (Orr, 2003: 32).

Given the evidence that flexible work in the form of externalisation, and through trade liberalisation and privatisation has consequences for social reproduction, one of the conclusions being drawn is that the combined effect of these informalisation and casualisation trends has been an "intensification and entrenchment of apartheid inequalities and cleavages" (Orr, 2003; Hart, 2004; Theron, 2005; Bezuidenhout and Fakier, 2006). This in turn signals shifts in labour practices away from the goals of the Constitution and reform agendas of the post-apartheid government. This has been one of the major arguments from South African writers that challenge the ability of GEAR in

South Africa to achieve development. Indeed, it is stated that “there exists no example internationally where neo-liberal adjustments of the sort championed by GEAR have produced socially progressive outcomes...GEAR set no redistributive targets and demurred on the linkages between growth and income redistribution” (Marais, 1997: 171)

Since 1996, GEAR has replaced the RDP and the Accelerated and Shared Growth South Africa (AsgiSA) was formally launched in February 2006 in an attempt to curb rising levels of unemployment and eliminate poverty. AsgiSA has been criticized already on the ground that it is based on the same concept as GEAR; that growth equals job creation equals wealth redistribution. Despite this, AsgiSA report states that,

“We believe that we have built the basis for a national effort to achieve faster and shared economic growth. With this programme we can achieve our social objectives and we can more than meet the Millennium Development Goals. Our second decade of freedom will be the decade in which we radically reduce inequality and virtually eliminate poverty. We know now that we can do it, working together around an initiative which has the support of the nation” (AsgiSA, 2006)⁵.

Gender and Change: A Gendered Analysis of Neo liberal Macroeconomic Policies

Discussions that bring together gender and macroeconomic policy involve debate about the presence and participation of women and feminist agendas in the national and international institutions that create and implement macroeconomic policy. They also focus on the gendered nature of macroeconomics as well as the implications of this for creating successful alternative approaches to economic growth and socio-economic development. A gendered analysis of the macroeconomics that has been the basis of neo-liberal development interventions in Africa and other Third World regions has created new approaches to and knowledge of development in Africa. The initial approach to gender and development adopted by international institutions was to add women through an integrationist approach (UNRISD, 2005). The principle of this approach was

⁵ See <http://www.info.gov.za/asgisa/asgisa.htm#macro>

that gender reform would come about through getting more women to participate in the paid economy. Central to this critique of international and national development programmes and policies is that they are based on macro-economic theory that fails to take gender seriously. New alternatives to development have been recommended by feminist activists and academics that take experiential position of women as the centre of knowledge production and policy development (Sen & Grown, 1987).

One of the trends in most parts of the world is that the rate of women's economic activity has increased since the 1970s and 1980s with a few exceptions⁶. This increase in the presence of women in paid work is referred to as the 'feminisation of labour'. However, internationally, the feminist perspective of getting women into the productive economy has not been effective in reducing gender inequality for a number of complicated reasons (Sen & Grown, 1987; UNRISD report, 2005). Standing (1989; 1999) argues that there have been three noticeable trends in the international labour market which could all be described as 'feminisation' of labour. Firstly, the type of employment traditionally associated with women – insecure, low paid, and irregular – is spreading relative to the type of work traditionally associated with men. Secondly, women are entering the labour market and remaining there more and more. Thirdly, more men are being forced to participate in poorer working conditions or are being forced into unemployment. The result is an overall trend towards more flexible and informal forms of labour accompanied by greater insecurity and inequality. Budlender (2004) also makes the distinction between different meanings of 'feminisation' of labour. The first is the increased participation rates of women in the paid labour force referred to above. This is clearly the case in South Africa and is of interest to this study. The second is more linked to the casualisation and informalisation of labour that has accompanied this increase; characterized by reduced wages, intense working hours, lowered protections from labour laws and social welfare, non-unionised work, and generally exploitative working conditions. In essence, "labour market segmentation does not disappear with modernization and growth. The recent intensification of women's paid work has been paralleled by processes of deregulation in the work conditions as well as outsourcing..." (UNRISD, 2005: 67). Therefore, while the increased participation of women in the economy is desirable and critical to

⁶ According to the 2005 UNRISD report, the rate of women's economic activity in Eastern Europe, the Middle East and North America remain low by international standards (See pg, xxv).

reducing gender imbalances, evidence clearly indicates that just adding women doesn't fix the problem of gender inequality. This latter definition of feminization is of central importance to the building of a theoretical framework for understanding links between gender, informalisation of working conditions, and outsourced work for the purposes of this research.

The increased presence of women in paid work therefore does not necessarily indicate a more equitable gendered balance in labour practices because of the influence of various factors. Further gendered analysis of macro-economic suggests that the reasons for this are varied. Firstly, economic policies often contain a strong gender bias (Orr et al, 1998; Elson, 1999). Macroeconomic policies are generally assumed to be unrelated to context, a-historical and a-political. They are assumed to have universal applicability and have failed to take into account diversity and variety in the different context in which they are applied. However, gendered analysis of macroeconomic policy reveals that policy is highly political and gendered, from its inception to the outcomes of its implementation. Women and gender relations need to be integrated into the making of policies at a deeper level than just adding women.

Under trade liberalisation, privatisation, and the increasing flexibilisation of labour, women are the ones who are affected by the feminization of labour conditions because they are located in industries that are being hardest hit by informalisation and casualisation (Valodia, 2000). Industries that are labour intensive, such as the services and manufacturing sectors, are most susceptible to flexibilisation of employment. In African countries such as Zimbabwe, Nigeria, Ghana, Tanzania and South Africa, for example, female employment in manufacturing has declined as a result of imports from Asian countries (UNRISD, 2005: 37). Women from these industries are forced into more precarious forms of labour such as housework and temporary work. A gendered analysis of access to resources and opportunities indicates that women do not have equal access to education and therefore to secure work because of gender discrimination, and this is worse in situations of economic crisis. Reproductive roles assigned to girls and women prevent them from having the time to participate in school and often drop out to assist their mothers at home and at work.

In addressing what has come to be known as the 'woman question', early Marxism was criticized for its failure to include a gender analysis of class relations; the freedom of women was perceived to be a result of their freedom as a class. Women were to first gain access to paid employment and then men and women alike had to fight for their freedom against capitalism. They located capitalism and private property as the cause of women's oppression (Hartmann, 1981). Early feminists, involved in active struggle in the Western world, campaigned against Marxist thinking for the "neglect and systematic suppression of the question of the asymmetric division of labour between men and women" (Mies, 1988: 67). Prior to the feminist movement and the search for a social origin of the gendered division of labour, the difference in work between men and women was assumed to be biological. Women worked in the home because it was a natural function of their biological reproductive function. All work associated with the raising of children and social reproduction of family was presumed to be the natural domain of women. The woman issue then, according to liberal, Marxist and radical feminists, was that the public/private divide that allocated women to the home and men to the public sphere denies women access to political, economic and social personhood or citizenship that comes with participation in the public world. If access to jobs is the way to overcome oppression, then women's role in the home is an obstacle to economic liberation.

This was until theorists began present the possibility that men in the same class as women might benefit from the position of women in being located in the private sphere and engaging in 'reproductive' work. Hartmann's (1981) discussion in *'The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism'* gives a clear critique of the shortfalls of Marxist analysis of the woman question and fails to address why women are subordinate to men within the framework of capitalist domination. Her analysis is that gender influences *who* fills particular spaces within class arrangements and how and why women are oppressed. That is, she begins to address how patriarchy benefits capitalism, and how within capitalism men benefit materially from the subordination of women. This relationship between capitalism and patriarchy has kept women out of positions of power, limiting the competition to men and affording them the best jobs in the economy by freeing them up from the 'burdens' of housework.

Feminist scholars have for a long time challenged the biological argument at the basis of the sexual division of labour. According to Oakley (1974) women work in the home because of the operation of social relations constructed over time that serve both patriarchy and capitalism. Central to this is the social and historical construction of the 'housewife' and the mechanisms through which women's work conducted in the home as housewives is systematically 'naturalised'. Oakley (1974) argues that in conventional knowledge, it is assumed that women are biologically more suited to engage in all forms of reproductive work. Since this ability of women to engage in reproductive work, from the birth of children to the cooking, cleaning, loving and caring needed to raise the child and run the household, is assumed to be a natural function rather than a productive and learned skill, women have performed this work in the house for free. The stereotyping of women's work to the domestic zone is dependent on the assumption is both natural and therefore unskilled; women's work is reproductive; a natural function of being a woman, a privilege, unskilled, a duty even (von Werlhof, 1988). Under this logic, only productive work is worthy of remuneration, and this is work reserved for men. The social constructionist or historical materialist perspective of women's work argues that it is this systematic non-valuing of women's work that has been at the root of women's subordination.

In the 1980s, authors such as Meis, M., Bennoldt-Thomas, V., and Von Werlhof, C (1988) criticized the gendered hierarchical relationship and no longer accepted that it was based on a biological difference between men and women. If the difference was biological, then it was given and beyond any possibility of social change, since "what is mystified by a biologically determined concept of nature is a relationship of dominance and exploitation, dominance of the (male) human over the (female) nature" (Mies, 1988: 68). Rather, the dominance of men over women forms an integral part of the dominant production relations that have existed over time in their various forms from 'man the hunter' to modern day forms of capitalism. Meis (1988), for example states that the 'natural' argument does not just apply to child birth, but also the rearing of children and the social reproduction of the family. The woman's biological reproductive 'ability' or 'nature' is then extended beyond the reproductive biology of her body to the social roles she plays in the home. In reality, it is the social 'naturalizing' of the women as care giver that isolates her 'work' to the home and prevents men from conducting reproductive work that is not a natural outcome of being a woman. Thus, Meis concludes that, "no theorisation of the subordination of women is possible without the

theorisation of woman as housewife.....women's paid employment in particular – precarious, sporadic, poorly paid, and unprotected – is neither possible nor explicable without the existence of woman as housewife” (Meis, 1988).

It was through first and second wave feminism therefore that the gendered work roles came under scrutiny. The emerging analysis contended that the 'naturalising' of women's engagement in reproductive work and the subsequent justification for it being performed for free, extends to the paid sphere of work. In 1988 it was argued that,

“Not only is women's domestic labour invisible (as now universally claimed in all publications on development policy) but also their paid work. The underlying separation of the world of work into a domestic sphere, identified as female, and a waged occupation and career sphere, identified as male, is wrong because it does not correspond with reality” (Bennholdt-Thomsen, in Meis, 1988: 164).

In 1980, women were reported to perform two thirds of all the hours worked – including housework – in the world. For this work however, they received less than one-tenth of world income and owned one-hundredth of all private property (von Werlhof, 1988: 98). Von Werlhof introduces the concept of 'people as nature' as determined by economics and explains that it serves to distinguish between different people. 'Nature' includes all of the so called 'factors of production' or inputs that presumably occur in nature for free – and this includes human labour power. From the perspective of the dominant parties, “there is a tendency to treat resources, products and people as if they were nature and available gratis, like air” (Von Werlhof, 1988: 97). Even at this stage of 'development', she identifies that an ideological process of naturalization, feminization, domestication or even the 'housewification' of labour, based on the notion of women as 'absolute nature', was taking place. The future of women's work in the world economy was clear; “by exploiting the obligations imposed on women as wives, housewives, and sole child carer's, increased effort will be made to create a disposable unit of labour, hireable, fireable at short notice, forced to work anywhere for low pay and under appalling conditions and without adequate legal and welfare protections” (Bennholdt-Thomsen, 1988: 128).

The awareness of the social and historical construction of women's work in polarity with men's work as non-valuable led authors Sen and Grown (1987: 26) to conclude that "women's work is considered demeaning to men and their manhood if they perform it". Through these mechanisms, the value of 'women's work' or 'housework', and the people who perform the work (women) is deeply undervalued and its contribution to the economy remains hidden. In 1994, authors such as Kemp were still writing the same thing; that "the devaluation of women's work comes *not* from the actual tasks but from the social relations within which the work occurs". In a South African context, Mama (1996) and Lewis (nd) identified the dichotomy of nature/culture, productive/reproductive as "misleading categories for considering gendered economic activity in Africa" (Lewis, nd)⁷. Their analysis concluded that the destructive separation of productive/reproductive needed to be overcome through a re-conceptualisation of the term 'productive'. This research highlights the contributions that women have made to both national and local economies. Mama (1996) captures the complex variety of women's formal and informal, paid and unpaid that is socially critical, and yet mostly invisible and unacknowledged. Initiatives like the women's budget and the work by Elson (2000) and Budlender (2000) also illustrate how women's (unpaid) work is highly productive but constructed as 'unvaluable' through its exclusion in macro-economic policy.

The male domination of modes of production and the modes of knowledge production have served to keep the productive work of women invisibilised, feeding the notion that women's work is unproductive. Or rather women are capable of only serving reproductive functions. That reproductive work is constructed as unskilled and the natural domain of women undermines the complexity and skill involved as well as the knowledge that is required to perform it successfully. This distinction between skilled/unskilled, and creative/natural, can be extended to the mind/body split in which work of the mind is considered the domain of men and therefore more valuable and more skilled, productive, valuable than work of the body.

Having considered the notion of the social origins of the gendered divisions of labour, the complexities involved in debates about gender and development are more accessible. The way that gender operates to disadvantage women goes further when one considers the implications or

⁷ There are no page numbers on the online essay.

women who do enter paid work. Theories that naturalise housework as women's god-given role don't consider that women who enter paid work have two sets of 'work', while men only have one (Meis, 1988). More recently, this is supported by findings that in some cases, the fact that women are also socially conditioned to be the 'natural caregivers' has the result that women in the labour force typically endure a longer working day than their male counterparts (UNRISD, 1995, in Elson, 1999: 613). In addition the fact that unpaid work is often the responsibility of women means that women women's access to education, training, land ownership and paid work is restricted (ILO, 1995). Given *these* gendered divisions in labour, the paid work that women gain access to is often poorly paid and insecure. Employers often employ women specifically because pre-existing gender relations in society (inscribed in the family, marriage, and the law) allow them to exploit women workers (Davies, 1990). Recruitment into more secure positions tends to be dependent on education qualifications and other formal advantages. These secure jobs are therefore usually suitable to male candidates (UNRISD, 2005: 80).

In addition, the gendered dynamics within the household between men and women don't always mean that women have control over the income that they earn. For example, household income is not pooled equally and women do not necessarily have power in determining how it is spent, yet they are responsible for providing crucial reproductive services, such as buying children's clothes and food. In some cases, poorer women are also known to hand a large portion of their wages over to other family members and even members of the community who are also struggling in trying economic times (Agarwal, 1986; Pereira, 2002; Orr, 2003; Sampson, 2003). Since women are generally the primary care-givers in a family, they are also often responsible for paying for everything that is needed for the reproductive work in the household. However, given gendered power relations in society and the home particularly, earning money doesn't guarantee owning and controlling the money, and getting to decide how the money is spent. Having access to a wage doesn't automatically mean personal empowerment of the woman since she has more people than herself to think about and she may not control how the money gets spent.

Labour participation can also involve other costs that make it no easier for women to support themselves and their children. These costs include transport costs, union subscription fees, clothing, accommodation, work equipment and the cost of not working at home full time (Elson,

1999; Sampson, 2003). In some cases, participation of women in paid work can also cost them the financial support of other members of their families, since women are ostracized for engaging in paid work outside their 'traditional' place in the home. This is a direct indication of how deeply embedded gendered divisions of labour operate to keep women in the home and out of productive work.

A common example given of how access to employment does not necessitate full empowerment or addressing of gendered imbalances is that of the employment of women in export-processing zones that has resulted under the implementation of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) in developing countries. While the creation of jobs through these policies has been argued to be beneficial to women because it provides access to paid employment, several examples of how neo-liberal economic policies have disadvantaged women can be found in gendered analyses of the effects of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs). For example, 'adjustment' has also been associated with a drop in employment (Evers, 1994; Jayaweera et al, 1989; Rosa, 1987). For example, in Malaysia in 1985-86 there was widespread retrenchments in the electronics sector with 76% of those retrenched being women (Salih and Young, 1991, in Elson, 1999). Similarly and more recently, in South Africa trade liberalisation in South Africa led to large scale retrenchments in the textile industry with 50 000 job losses between 2003 and 2005 (Grevendonck, 8: 2005). Given huge unemployment in South Africa, finding alternative employment for women (and certain men) is a struggle. The criticisms presented suggest that through the use of gender-neutral language, the design and implementation of SAPs rely on concepts imbued with male bias, such as gender division of labour, the unpaid domestic work done by women, and the workings of the household" (Imam, 1988; Elson, 1999).

Gender analysis has interrogated how women's engagement in paid labour has to be negotiated in relation to their domestic responsibilities and roles as care givers in society. The home has therefore been identified by authors such as Mhone (1997) and Elson (1999) as a central unit of analysis that is not yet seen as central to the development of macro-economic policies (Mhone, 1997). Elson argues that gendered analysis of macroeconomic policies is necessary to improve the potential of macroeconomic policies and development initiatives to promote gender equity, economic growth and development and social justice more generally.

According to Elson (2000) the view that flexible work is more suitable to women is supported by assumptions that women are not the main breadwinners. This 'male breadwinner bias', as she refers to it, is firmly held and embedded within a gender-blind neo-liberal macroeconomic paradigm. Elson (2000) contends that in a hetero-normative world of work, women and men are assumed heterosexual, marriage between men and women is a norm, and the assumption that men and women engage in different types of work for natural reasons is widespread. Yet the notion that women are always supplementary earners to a main (male) earner is not necessarily true in reality. Despite this, labour markets and institutions still treat men and women according to this assumption, disadvantaging women who are, in reality, the breadwinners.

The quality of the jobs that women are entering through development efforts to increase the participation of women in the paid economy is not always empowering or beneficial to the women either. Many of the jobs that have been created for women are dead-end and insecure and still depend on the gendered exploitation of women (UNRISD, 2005). If the jobs are in the informal sector, they do not offer the same benefits to workers that formal sector jobs offer. International studies suggest that a lot of the work that women have gained through liberalization and other measures doesn't offer the same financial support and legal security as full-time formal sector employment that is available to men (Sen & Grown, 1987; Mama, 1997; Orr et al, 1998; Elson, 2000b; Valodia, 2000; Orr, 2003). Given pre-existing gendered divisions in labour, women are more likely than men to be employed in occupations with lower pay, poorer working conditions, and worse prospects for advancement (UNRISD, 2005: 67).

“Although such employment can raise women's absolute status....such income generating opportunities as have been created through globalization do not meet that criterion, since the jobs many women can get are dead-end and insecure” (UNRISD, 2005: 39).

The point is that the direct benefits for women and gender equality resulting from trade liberalization have been debated and they are not as simple as women's access to more jobs will lead to greater gender equity in the labour market. While some argue that macroeconomic policies were never designed to improve gender equality in the first place, others pose the question “why

not?" (Mhone, 1997). Ignoring gender will not lead to social justice since 50% of people are women. It is clear that the outcomes of export oriented-growth, privatization and FDI have in some cases led to an increase in the participation rates of women in paid work and a diminishing gender gap in labour force participation in paid work. The increase in women's participation in paid work however is not a guarantee that working opportunities are adequate to really make any inroads into or even fix greater gender equality.

Once in employment, other gendered divisions in labour operating at the level of the household and gendered roles in society more broadly also serve to keep women out of the best employment opportunities. Because of the informalisation of jobs that runs parallel to this feminization process, the quality of the jobs generally lacks the kind of investment in human capacity that is needed for real sustainable change. The reasons for women's participation in these jobs are structural, social, and rooted in general lack of gendered analysis in macroeconomic policy making and implementation.

This theoretical approach to gender and macro-economic policy is valuable for this research since it assumes that labour markets and workers are gendered to begin with and therefore changes in the structure of work will have gendered effects. These differential effects are evident in wages and conditions of work and through available statistics as well as observations of the lived experiences of workers. Feminist economics offers a gendered analysis that gender does operate within the household and other social institutions at a very deep ideological level. The gendered role of women as the main actors in zones of reproductive labour is at the heart of this. In macro-economic, the way gender operates in these institutions is not integrated into macroeconomic theories and concepts. These aspects of social life that constitute the subordination of women are generally assumed in economics to be insignificant in the theories and models used to understand and determine economic policy. Ignoring the way that gender affects economics leads to insufficient models for change, and in some cases this can deepen the plight of women.

According to Budlender (2004: 15) "the occupations and sectors that are dominated by women are generally seen as being less important, requiring fewer skills and thus deserving lower earnings than occupations and sectors dominated by men". The operation of gender ideologies impacts on

the way that women get paid when they engage in the formal productive economy. When women do enter paid work, they tend to enter into industries that resemble 'housework' - textiles, clothing, cooking, catering, cleaning, teaching, childcare, nursing and so on. In these industries, their work is often still undervalued. The fact that women perform these reproductive functions for 'free' in their homes as 'housewives' reinforces the gendered stereotype that it is women's natural role to perform reproductive work, as well as the valuation of the actual work as unskilled and of low value. Taking from earlier discussion, this work is actually regarded as 'non-work'. Given these assumptions, the performance of the work outside the home also doesn't necessitate a decent wage, benefits, or other forms of social reward or recognition (qualification, status, promotion, education). The rules that govern men's work (productive/public) don't apply in the same way to women's work (reproductive/private). It is this that lead feminist writers to the observation that,

"The housewife is not characterized by *what* she does, but by the conditions and *relations* under which she does it. In contrast, ideologies which represent housework as naturally female, always give precedence to the 'what', that is to the nature of housewives' activities as the crucial link" (Bennholdt-Thomsen, in Meis, 1988: 160).

In conclusion, the literature presented on the global feminization of labour suggest that there has been a feminization of labour in two senses; that more women are entering the work force, and more men and women are being forced to work in feminised conditions of work that suit the needs of international capital. Feminised work is synonymous with informalised work, and affects women more than men, although men are also being affected. The term 'housewification' can also refer to this feminization process of the 'worker' away from the proletariat (the breadwinner male) with a social and family wage towards an isolated worker without benefits or legal protections that was already visible to feminist writers such as Meis in the late 1980s.

In some instances, globalisation has created jobs, but the quality of these jobs is inadequate for any sustained improvement in the position of women in the economy. According to Elson, "Despite many gains from this process for some regions, globalisation has intensified social exclusion and the marginalization of the poor and other groups" (Elson, 2000: 1347). By ignoring gender, macroeconomic policies can actually have negative effects as well, and can lead to reduced growth

rates as well as reduced standards of living, especially to the poorest members of society who are women (UNRISD, 2005).

A Gendered Analysis of Growth Employment and Redistribution (GEAR)

A discussion about the impact of neo-liberalism on the South African economy as well as the national agenda for redress, equality, poverty reduction and social development has been presented. The central discussion presented on the relationship between globalisation and labour in South Africa is that changes in policy towards flexible and informalised conditions of work are having a negative impact on systems of social reproduction. In particular, rather than redressing past inequalities, government policies that affect labour are reinforcing characteristics of the apartheid workplace, including racialised division of labour and inequality. Central to this is critique is the role of women in the economy. If a gendered critique of macroeconomics is applied to South Africa, it becomes visible that the South African economy has pre-existing social relations of race, class and gender that shape the organisation of labour in our society in very specific and often problematic ways.

The logic from the previous section dictates then that macro-economic strategies would have differing impacts on different sectors, groups, and individuals depending on these relations and structures. This approach has been used to present a systematically gendered critique of GEAR in South Africa (Orr, Heintz, & Tregenna, 1998). GEAR contains no mention of the word 'gender' and only refers to women specifically twice. In reflections on the progress that has been made since the implementation of GEAR, a number of points are made that illustrate that various aspects of GEAR have had gendered effects, most of which have not contributed to the socio-economic improvement of women and the poor or the equalizing of gender divisions in labour.

Research conducted in South Africa suggests that casualisation of labour through liberalisation, privatisation, and externalisation has a particularly negative effect on women because the employer's responsibility towards the social wage and reproduction of labour is removed (Sampson, 2003; Orr, 2003; Bezuidenhout and Fakier, 2006). Sampson (2003) discusses the overall as well as gendered implications of the privatization of waste management services for

citizens in two areas in South Africa. The findings indicate that the privatisation of the services did not bring about a better and less costly service for citizens as promised (Sampson, 2003: 21). In support of the argument that privatization and outsourcing tend to lead to an informalisation of labour conditions (Theron, 2005) the findings suggest a number of things. Firstly, more women than men were retrenched from permanent positions with the municipality and 'transferred' to jobs with the private companies. This was because it was the casual workers that were targeted for retrenchments and all women workers were casual workers (Sampson, 2003: 21). Once workers were in the private companies, they complained of longer working hours, intimidating and fearful experiences at work because of increased and stricter supervision by management, and an intensification of work load (Sampson, 2003: 31). In addition, on occasion the private companies failed to do their work efficiently and the municipal workers had to complete these jobs in addition to their own work, indicating that the company was not actually doing the work for which it was being paid (Sampson, 2003: 25). Secondly there was a significant difference in the wages and benefits between municipal employees and employees of the private companies. Workers for the privatized companies complained of late payment and low wages, women employees receiving the lowest wages because of gendered divisions of labour (Sampson, 2003: 32). Fourthly, the poor provision of facilities by the private companies also led to poor health and hazardous working conditions. Finally, the quality of the waste management service delivery was also reduced under provision through the private waste management company, and this translated to more unpaid work for the women employees at home and in their communities after work. Combined with the effects of reduced benefits and low wages, the strain on workers, particularly on women employees, was increased as far as their reproductive responsibilities in their homes and broader communities were concerned. The case studies provided by Sampson illustrate the ways in which 'disguised employment' in public services is used in South African contexts to extract labour from 'contract workers' while denying them the benefits and wages needed to maintain social reproduction.

Gredendonck (2005) illustrates how trade liberalisation in South Africa has led to retrenchments in the clothing and textile industry. These industries are labour intensive and dominated by women, with a 70% female workforce. Since the adoption of GEAR and the implementation of trade liberalisation policies the textile, clothing, footwear and leather industries in South Africa show the

characteristics of informalisation as workers have been retrenched and subcontracting has been introduced (UNRISD, 2005). This has resulted in massive job losses, with a reported 50,000 retrenchments between 2003 and 2005 (Grevendonck, 2005: 8). Given the high levels of unemployment in South Africa, large scale retrenchments in the industry are leaving significant numbers of women unemployed and/or with very little option but to engage in less secure types of employment such as homework and contract work. This analysis illustrates the point that labour markets are gendered and gendered divisions in the labour market influence *who* gets retrenched from changes in the economy. Despite this variability, according to this study “this is not recognized by policy makers yet ignoring the socio-economic impact of changing trade patterns on women and men” (Grevendonck, 2005: 9).

These reduced and more precarious working conditions have significant consequences for the survival of workers, both men and women. From the studies presented workers who have been transferred into more precarious work through outsourcing, privatization and through retrenchments that result from liberalization, describe a series of survival strategies that range from taking on two jobs to being forced to choose between buying food and paying for water and electricity (Eppel, 2004).

According to Orr (1998; 2003), Casale & Posel (2002), Budlender (2002; 2004), and Makgetla (2004) gender, women's economic issues and household dynamics are almost completely invisible within the current macroeconomic strategy. This invisibility allows for the continued economic marginalization of women and sustained risks of poverty. Wage discrimination in the formal and informal sectors reflects an under-valuation of women's work. The inequality in payment between work conducted by men and work conducted by women is attributed to the fact that the work that women do is socially undervalued. This is evident in the fact that women tend to be employed in the lower paying industries. Women dominate in elementary (unskilled) professions and domestic work (Orr, Heintz, & Tregenna, 1998). Managers and senior professional occupations are still heavily dominated by white people and by men, with only 5% of black women employed as managers and senior professionals. This finding illustrates how the gendered division of labour still operates in South Africa, with the more 'reproductive jobs' being the least paid and occupied

primarily by women. According to Orr (2003), with greater labour market flexibility, the position of women will worsen, increasing their risk of poverty.

A gendered analysis reveals that the South African economy is characterized by gendered and racialised differentiation in employment (Orr, 1998; Magkella, 2004; Casale and Posel, 2004; Oosthuizen, 2006). While there has been an increase in the participation rates of women in paid economic activity, women are still being employed in the lowest paid and most insecure jobs and women across all race groups consistently earn less than men (Casale, 2004). In terms of race and gender, white people remain the highest income earners while Africa women form the lowest paid group of employed people (Stats SA, 2007). The lowest paid group of workers in the formal economy is women that work in private households as domestic servants (Orr, 2003; Stats SA, 2007).

Formal sector employment was higher than informal sector employment in 2007 with 71% of employment in the formal sector, 20.5% jobs in the informal sector, and 7.4% jobs in the domestic sector. In the formal sector, women represented 37% while men took up 63% of jobs. Black Africans are the majority in the informal sector, with 89% of informal jobs occupied by black Africans. There are also more women than men in informalised and non-unionised jobs (Orr, 2003:38). In 2001 the informal sector was dominated by women with 1782 thousand women working in this sector. Of these, 91% were black women, 4% coloured, and 1.4% was Indian and 3.8% white. As was discussed above, informal sector conditions are far worse than formal sector working conditions.

Women tend to spend more time than men engaging in both paid and unpaid activities. According to a study conducted by Stats SA, in 2000 women spent 215 minutes per day on unpaid work whereas men spent 85 minutes per day on unpaid work. The time that women spend on unpaid care work, such as collecting firewood, other forms of fuel, and water and caring for the young, the sick and the elderly, is directly related to the availability of social services (Stats SA, 2001). As state provision of social services is curtailed by government, it is women who end up performing these tasks as unpaid reproductive labour in order to provide for themselves and their communities.

The time spent occupied by unpaid reproductive work also limits their opportunities to perform paid work in the productive economy. This distinction is also affected by the intersection of race and class in South Africa with more black women than white women engaging in unpaid work. The unpaid work that is often performed by women in the home and communities is 'productive' in the sense that it has direct value, but it is not recognized as such in calculations of GDP. According to Budlender (2004), such invisibilising of the contribution that 'reproductive' work makes to society and to the economy is part of the reason why when reproductive work is performed for a wage, these wages tend to be low.

According to the March 2007 Labour Force Survey (LFS), the official unemployment rate was 25.5%. Among women, the unemployment rate was 30.8% while among men it was 21.1%, indicated that unemployment across all population groups was higher among women than men. Unemployment was highest among black African people at a rate of 30.2% compared to 4.3% amongst white population, 13.8% among Indians/Asians, and 19.8% among coloured people. The highest unemployment was for black African women at 36.4%, while unemployment among white men stood at 4.1%. In 2007, irrespective of population group, the unemployment rate amongst women, particularly black African women – was substantially higher than their male counterparts (LFS, March 2007). In fact, from 2001 to 2007 black African women was the only population group that displayed an increase in unemployment with the other groups reflected a decrease. These trends in unemployment figures have hardly changed since 2003 (See Makgetla, 2003).

The shift of reproduction costs as a result of decreased wages and reduced benefits tends to fall squarely on the shoulders of women given pre-existing gendered divisions in the labour market, the household and society at large. This disadvantage to women however is often made invisible, and hidden beneath the ideologies promoted by the ruling classes that state that capitalism is both inevitable and beneficial to all. All of these findings signify the "crisis in social reproduction" that results from the current informalisation of working conditions that is taking place in South Africa. The linking of theories of informalisation with feminist theories of feminization and 'housewification' illustrates that women tend to be the ones who are affected most by informalisation trends given their double work load and care giving roles in the communities, as well as their vulnerability to

poorer working conditions. In the same way that reproductive work is 'invisibilised' through the productive/reproductive or private/public work divide, the conditions under which both women and men are increasingly forced to work are similar to that of 'housework'; isolated, non-unionised, over-worked, presumed unskilled and undeserving of a family wage. More secure jobs are reserved for workers who are educated and skilled. The statistics indicate that in South Africa, these tend to be men (and white men in particular) as well as white women.

3. HIGHER EDUCATION TRANSFORMATION IN POST APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA

This thesis is primarily interested in how the changing nature of universities as workplaces is related to broader local and international shifts in economy. This section of the literature review is concerned with the specific debates focused around how globalisation has translated into university strategies of workplace restructuring. The implications of these for 'transformation' efforts in post apartheid higher education are also discussed.

Fourteen years have passed since 1994 and in that time higher educational institutional 'transformation' discourse has undergone many phases (Jansen, 2002; Barnes, 2006a). According to Barnes (2006a), discourses in the meaning of 'redress' in South African higher education have changed from 'redress as reparation' in the early 1990s to 'redress as equality' in the late 1990s to 'redress as empowerment' in early 2000. Given South Africa's history and the emergence of the country from years of systematic racial oppression, the ANC government was faced with the challenge of restructuring a "deeply divided higher education system" (Jansen, 2002: 1). 'Transformation' discourses have emphasised that social justice in institutes of higher education through the implementation of national policy and institutional specific policies, programmes and mission statements is necessary in order to level the playing fields. This has been facilitated through policies such as the 1997 White Paper on Higher Education as well as the Employment Equity Act 1998. The National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE) was appointed by Nelson Mandela in 1996 to make recommendations on a framework for institutional governance with an emphasis to "preserve what is valuable and to address what is defective and requires transformation" (NCHE, 1996: 1). The Commission was tasked to do two separate things: to

eliminate the legacy of apartheid in higher education and to modernise it by integrating it with international best practice and experiences. Given this mandate, 'transformation' in higher education has meant a number of things.

In terms of transformation as 'redress as equality', equality has primarily referred to equality of access to universities. Emphasis has been on transforming staff and student profiles to better represent the demographics of broader South African society (Mabokela, 2003). In 1994 the South African higher education sector boasted its 36 public higher education institutes; 21 universities and 15 technikons. Eleven universities were classified as white and within these 7 were Afrikaans and 4 were English speaking. The remaining 11 universities were classified as black. The technikons were also divided along racial lines with 8 white technikons and 7 black technikons. In addition to this there were 150 technical colleges and 120 colleges of education. The first policy proposal by the NCHE was massification. The assumption was that massification (or the increased enrolments of school leavers into higher education) would resolve the equity-development tension in higher education by creating greater opportunity for access while also producing skilled professionals for the government mandate of economic growth (Cloete et al, 2002). However, this approach failed when the expected number of university entrants was significantly higher than the number that actually enrolled in higher education (Cloete et al, 2002; Jansen, 2002; Barnes, 2006a). In 2001 the Minister of Education appointed a National Working Group (NWG) to "advise on the appropriate arrangements for restructuring the provision of higher education...including institutional mergers" (DOE, December 2001: 4). The NWC recommended the reduction of the 36 higher education institutions to 21 through mergers and proposed structural changes and institutional mergers to promote equity, equality, development, effectiveness, and efficiency. Between 2003 and 2005 the higher education sector in South Africa underwent a large restructuring process as an attempt to address some of the imbalances caused by apartheid policies, particularly the effects of segregating institutions into 'black' and 'white' institutions (Jansen, 2002; Barnes, 2005; Nash, 2006; Bennett, 2007). Institutional mergers involved the restructuring of some of the institutions that did not formerly offer degrees into universities and the merging of universities that differed in terms of race and class but were in the same geographical regions. According to Cloete et al (2002: 103), "for the first time in a post-1994 South African national policy document, effectiveness and efficiency were listed before equity". This signified a

profound shift in the definition of 'redress'. Redress was defined in the political and financial terms of developing institutions to perform 'mandated missions', as opposed to redress in educational terms (Barnes, 2006: 228).

In 2007, there are now only 22 public sector universities. While government proposed that the mergers were adopted as a means of transforming the higher education system towards the values of democratic development, there has been considerable debate about the intended and unintended effects of the mergers (Subotsky, 1997; Bennett, 2002; Jansen, 2002; Nash, 2006; Barnes, 2006). Despite these efforts, racial disparities remain high, with white students having a gross participation rate of about 60%, as against 12.1% and 11.5% respectively for the coloured and African populations (Brier & le Roux, 2006: 12).

In post apartheid South Africa, the effects of globalisation and the pull of neo-liberal imperatives that were identified in the earlier section on 'Globalisation and Labour' have not been limited to changes in the labour market. Globalisation is also transforming the nature of the higher education sector. This was clearly stated by Orr (1997: 43) as,

"Globalisation is of interest in relation to higher education because of the emphasis on the role of knowledge in international competitiveness".

For South Africa's higher education system the era of 'transformation' has been parallel to the influence of broader and more long term global events and shifts, such as the international economic crises of the 1970s, the collapse of the Communist regime in the 1980s, the change in modes of production, technological advancements, and the increasing hegemony of neo-liberal market ideology. With these shifts, the meaning of knowledge has changed in a fundamental way both locally and internationally. According to Orr (1997), one proposed solution to economic crisis has been to produce skills and knowledge in abundance. The commodification of knowledge has become very important to the political and economic development of countries worldwide and is being bought and sold under regulated conditions in the international market place. This has had direct implications for higher education world-wide.

The role of the nation state is also redefined under globalization and its underlying neo-liberal philosophy. In general, the privatization of key public services transfers power away from the state and into the hands of financial institutions and business which reduces the effectiveness of delivery (Orr, 1997). As part of the public services sector, the declining role of the nation state in public affairs has implications for Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). The implications of these trends of globalization for HEIs, and universities in particular, have come to be known collectively as the development of the 'market university' (Orr, 1997; Bertlesen, 1998). The first defining characteristic of the 'market university' in the new 'information age' (Castells, 2000) is that knowledge is valued as a commodity and universities are seen as central sites in the production of 'Intellectual Capital' (Bertlesen, 1998). Central to this is the emergence of managerialism in universities. According to Peters, Marshal and Fitzsimons (2000: 118) "managerialism is one of the main elements in the paradigm shift that favours a neo-liberal education policy discourse". Managerialism is focused on providing quality higher education at the lowest cost by improving the 'efficiency' of institutions (Adams, 2006: 9). In this sense, the 'market' model of higher education assumes the character of business. Under this model, HEIs are treated as businesses that sell commodities and services in the form of courses and knowledge.

According to Orr (1997) the features of international trends of marketisation were already visible in South Africa the late 1990s. The shifts in emphasis in policy documents are but one indication of the shift towards efficiency after the formulation of the state's macro-economic GEAR policy (Cloete et al, 2002: 428). At this time, Orr called for the restructuring of higher education to be analysed by viewing South African Institutes of Higher Education in relation to the changes that have occurred in the global and local social, political and economic context. In post apartheid South Africa, globalisation is of importance in relation to higher education because neo-liberalism has the reduction of state expenditure as a central principle, which has implications for public sector education. The increasing international emphasis on information and technology has meant that knowledge, and the institutions that produce it, has become crucial to national development agendas.

In South Africa, the rationale for the adoption of the market model, also known as 'mode 2' knowledge production (Van der Walt et al, 2002; Kenny and Clarke, 2000), is that higher education

institutions ought to be more competitive, and the way to achieve a competitive advantage in the market place is to adopt business-like approaches to management. The model proposes that market forces will have the positive effect of increasing management capability, maximizing flexibility, improving efficiency and increasing customer satisfaction. The task of positioning South Africa for technological and economic competitiveness has been a crucial goal of the new government, and HEIs have the potential to play a central role in building South Africa's position in a globally competitive environment (Jansen, 2002). Under this model, knowledge and education are viewed in a very instrumental light and the emphasis is on producing skilled labourers and technicians to enter the professional workforce aimed at the development of the economy. Within this model, not only are private sources of funding increasingly sought under the market university model, but corporations have increasing control and influence over the policy and governance of 'market' universities given that much of the work that goes on in universities is directed towards the interests of these beneficiaries.

The state approach to university restructuring has been modeled by neo-liberal policies and thinking with the result that universities are operating in a contracting economy (Van der Walt et al, 2003: 272). Government spending in higher education has been cut back and Universities have been encouraged to seek financial support from private business (Bertlesen, 1998; Jansen; 2002; Zeleza, 2002; Cloete et al, 2002). The emergence of new relationships between the state, society and higher education has complicated the higher education landscape. Given the earlier discussion of transformation of higher education as necessary to redress past injustices, the restructuring of higher education has been driven by the dual goals of global competitiveness and national development (Jansen, 2002: 12).

Analysis of higher education 'transformation' in post apartheid South Africa has focused on the extent to which changes in the local political, economic and social environment are affecting and producing responses from higher education institutions. Further analysis examines how various institutions, distinct from one another because of their historical positions in South Africa as, have responded to changes in both the local and international environment (Cooper, 1997; Subotsky, 2001). Another key area of debate and discussion about the meaning of 'transformation' in higher education has been informed by and concerned with the impact of the shift towards the market

university model and away from a humanistic model of the university that has a broader social responsibility to cultivate citizenship and develop the skills and character of its students. This is expressed by authors such as Zeleza, (2002) and Orr (1997: 62) who states that “the key challenge for South African higher education in the context of extreme poverty, unemployment and homelessness is to contribute to meaningful and sustainable development”. Here, the contribution is through the production of knowledge that adds to social development rather than just to the economy. Such a debate highlights that there is a real and perceived disconnect between the two goals of economic development on the one hand and social redress, justice and development on the other.

Under this new model, institutional administrative and management structures have also changed and have become powerful change drivers in higher education, and this is what Zeleza (2002) more broadly defines as the ‘corporatisation of management’. Marketisation has had evident implications for the organisation of academic labour (Van der Walt, Bolsmann, Johnson, and Martin, 2002: 11). For academics, existing research focuses on the various dimensions of academic work that have been affected by trends towards corporatisation in universities. Bertlesen’s (1998) analysis of the emergence of market discourse in higher education sheds light on the impact of marketisation on the institutional culture and structure of work in high education institutions stating that, “market discourse is revolutionising what we are and what we do as centers of higher learning, and carries serious implications for autonomy, jobs, and academic freedom” (Bertlesen, 1998: 131).

Webster and Mosoetsa (2001) elaborate on the changing nature of academic work as a consequence of managerialism through a study of six South African universities and one Technikon. The findings suggest that academic work has become subject to increased control from above in the form of managerialism. Managerialism is described as a response from institutions that are under increased pressure by government but are not receiving increased resources (Johnson, 2006: 63). Academics experience a loss of community and feelings of powerlessness as managerialism has replaced collegial governance and is threatening professional autonomy and the academic quest for knowledge (Webster & Mosoetsa, 2001; Johnson, 2006). The crisis of ‘managerialism’ is reflected in the ongoing debates over academic

freedom and institutional autonomy within a system that is increasingly catering for the needs of the market (Johnson, 2006). In particular, academics are faced with government subsidy formulas for higher education that focus on output oriented funding. This puts pressure on academic productivity as it becomes directly tied up with access to funding for the institution (Stumpf, 2001; Van der Walt et al, 2002). In terms of curricula, university courses have become more career-oriented and instrumental, to compliment the changing nature of the career from a traditional and linear career to a more flexible one characterised by multiple jobs and continuous life-long learning. The implications of this for the meaning of academic work is that academic staff are required to create 'marketable' programmes that can take them away from their disciplinary commitments (Webster & Moseotsa, 2001; 10). Academics effectively have less control over the content of what they teach, since demand for knowledge that is perceived as having no commercial use value is decreasing (Jansen, 2004). Pressure to produce combined with more hierarchy and tiers in academic work has created greater competition amongst academics for jobs and recognition. This has also been referred to as the 'flexibilisation' or 'proletarianisation' of academic labour (van der Walt et al, 2002; Zeleza, 2002). In mainstream discussions of academic work restructuring, no mention of gender is made. All academics are treated as equal and all non-core workers are also assumed to be un-gendered. Gendered analysis offers the insight that increases in flexible labour practices amongst academic staff creates a divide between a pool of elite professoriate with all the benefits of higher salaries and benefits and a growing mass of the lumpen-professoriate of part-time, poorly paid academics, among whom women tend to predominate (Zeleza, 2002: 69).

These changes have informed heated and contested debates amongst academics. In debates around academic identity, freedom and institutional autonomy, for example, authors such as Jansen (2004) identify the state as the main violator of academic freedom and autonomy in South Africa. Other authors, such as Andre du Toit (2004) and South Hall and Cobbing (2002; 2005) go beyond this and refer to the corporatisation of the university as infringing on academic freedoms. They suggest that managerialism and the institutional bureaucrats within the university are undermining collegial governance and the intellectual climate of the university. This line of argument is reiterated as a concern for the way that the market discourse is eroding the institutional culture of critical inquiry which threatens the other interest of African higher education; to produce informed, critical, responsible and creative citizens. As is stated by Grossman (2006:

103), "A university following such a market driven approach necessarily becomes increasingly impoverished as a center of critical social enquiry". Bertlesen (1998: 141) also sees the degradation of the intellectual climate as the heart of this issue stating that "the corporate idea that top management can make unilateral decisions which academics will implement flies in the face of a culture that values above all its traditions of democratic collaborations in open and intensely value-driven decision-making". Here, Councils, Vice Chancellors, Deans and Faculty members are also implicated. Finally, senior academics have also been identified as violators of academic freedom by selling their skills at high prices to those prepared to buy their skills outside of academic institutions, such as state and business (Desai & Bohmke, 1996). This is a direct conflict emerging from the control that private enterprise is having on the direction of research and teaching as knowledge becomes increasingly commodified. There is ongoing debate amongst academics about whether there is more or less academic freedom from state control in post apartheid South Africa than prior to 1994 (Barnes, 2006b).

Further research by Johnson (2006: 64) revealed that academic work restructuring has been experienced as increased pressure to cope with large student numbers, difficulty in accessing information about their changing conditions of work, greater hierarchy at work characterised by broadening divisions in staff levels, greater competition with colleagues to compete for limited resources and jobs, and a general limitation in the possibilities for collaboration with senior colleagues and peers. Academics also report doing more work for less pay, and engaging in extra private work to make up for the lack of corresponding increases in salaries with work increases (Johnson, 2006: 66). The research indicates tremendous stress on academic staff as a result of restructuring and managerialism as it has been applied to universities, or what Johnson describes as 'contrived collegial managerialism' (Johnson, 2006: 69).

Increasing the intake of fee-paying students has also been part of the reform agenda. Since the implementation of these changes towards the 'market university', there have also been fee hikes for students, which increasingly restrict access to university education to those who can pay fees (Kenny and Clarke, 2000; Pithouse, 2006). Another concern arising from the market driven university model is that although the absolute number of students in the higher education system has been steadily rising since 1994, the doors that were once half open to the working classes as

part of an earlier 'redress' strategy have now been closed, creating more elitism (Barnes, 2005; Kenny and Clarke, 2000). Upfront payments of money from students, and rising fees means that the poorest people are moving further away from opportunities to study. Focus has also been on the way that neo-liberalism threatens to exclude poorer students, who tend to be black, from access to universities, particularly those universities defined as HAs. According to Barnes (2006b; 135) while academic middle classes are yet to be hit by global poverty, ranks are diminishing because academic structures have not adjusted to the realities of the lives of the Africa majority. Graduate students seek employment anywhere where they can earn enough money to support themselves and their families. Given this migration of graduates into business and government, the question remains who will be the next generation of African intellectuals? While de-racialisation has been a central concern of transformation, neo-liberal exclusion of the poor, primarily through price hikes, the use of 'performance indicators, relating to outcomes based performance, research outputs and qualifications' threatens de-racialisation given the interlocking of race and class in South Africa (Nash, 2006). If universities want to attract, retain and grow previously disenfranchised populations, preferential financial devices must be in place (Barnes, 2006b).

Criticisms of the market approach to universities are that the ideological rationale, that the market has superior allocative power, leads to the 'commodification' of new areas of social and natural life by capital (Zezeza, 2002; Grossman, 2006). The material force given to this ideology is through providing businesses new outlets for capital investment. In a critical analysis of the transformation of higher education, Bertlesen (1998) used discourse analysis to argue that these goals of the South African university in the 1990s are informed by a market discourse that "transforms social thinking through a parasitism, absorbing and other discourses to realign them with its own imperatives" (Bertlesen, 1998: 137). Thus, the market discourse turns the student into a 'client' and 'consumer' of the higher education 'product' and 'core business'. It replaces collegial governance with managerialism and promotes the values of 'efficiency', 'competence', 'skill', 'productivity' and 'accountability' over the intellectual task of critical enquiry (Bertlesen, 1998). The value of Bertlesen's analysis is that it treats post apartheid university 'transformation' as the product of an ideological shift; the result of the emergence of a 'market discourse' that is dictating the direction of the university.

Gender and University Transformation in South Africa

The preceding literature highlights some of the debates that have developed in response to the restructuring of employment and work in higher education in a context of the knowledge economy and the increasing pressure of being party to the globalised world. Gendered analysis asks 'how will women fare in corporate universities?' (Zezeza, 2002). Gendered and higher education institutional culture has been another focus of both international and local studies as they relate to issues of 'transformation'. Before turning to a gendered analysis of transformation efforts and marketisation in South Africa, a review of literature on gender and higher education more broadly is needed to locate the discussion.

In international literature on gender and universities, it is stated that universities, although widely perceived as neutral, are in fact gendered organizations (Wieneke, 1995). Dines (1993) argues that women in academia are disadvantaged by the simple fact that they are not men. This has been directly linked to masculinist institutional cultures that are invested in keeping women out since "prestige is synonymous with more men and less women" (Shackelton, 2007). In post-colonial Africa more generally, 'transformation' towards greater gender equality proposed as part of a national agenda has largely been defined in terms of changes to mission statements, enrollment of women into traditionally male areas of study, and attracting more women into academic and leadership positions in universities (Bennett, 2002; Mama, 2003; Essof, 2006). In terms of students, the gender agenda has been dominated by affirmative action strategies that focus on increasing access and getting women into institutes of higher education. This is based on the liberal assumption that universities are egalitarian institutions and gender equality will automatically arise from "adding women and stirring". It is linked to the dominant discourses that the low participation rates of women in higher education can be attributed to gender inequality in society. However, this view has been criticized by feminist scholars who argue that far from being neutral, universities are highly gendered institutions (Bennett, 2002; Pereira, 2002; Mama, 2003; Tsikata, 2007; Barnes, 2007; Bennett 2007).

The actual rates of female participation in higher education in Africa vary from 9% in the Central African Republic to over 40% in Morocco, Egypt, and Senegal. Lybia, Swaziland and South Africa show 50% female participation rate (Essoff, 2006). Women staff are still under-represented in the senior academic and managerial positions while women students remain clustered in the arts, humanities and social sciences but struggle to make significant inroads into the natural sciences (Mama, 2003). Women in the sciences are located in the Health Sciences, and within that area of study women tend to be positioned as nurses as opposed to doctors, indicating further gendered discrimination within disciplines. This is despite efforts by government to increase the participation rates of women in the sciences as part of a broader goal of national development through science and technology (Mama, 2003; Jansen, 2002).

Although numbers are an important indication of the representation of men and women in higher education, Bennett (2002) illustrates that advocacy initiatives on African university campuses have been far less concerned with numbers than with a) the absence of gender analysis in intellectual work, b) reproductive labour, and c) sexual harassment and sexual violence (Bennett, 2002: 40). Recent context specific and in-depth research on what it means to be a woman in higher education illuminate that the "gender gap" in numbers is actually far more complicated. In determining other factors that affect gender equity in higher education, research has varied from the role of high schools in preparing school leavers for tertiary education (Bennett, 2002) to the impacts of gendered institutional cultures on marriage and family, governance structures, on mentoring relationships and on aspects of every day life within the university itself (Tsikata, 2007) to issues of access, curricula, and effects on neo-liberalism on management (Okeke, 2004; Zeleza, 2002).

In the mid-1980s, it was the absence of women's experience from discussions of the core business of universities, teaching and research, that formed the basis of activism. At this time equity was perceived as an epistemological issue, with women academics advocating for gender analysis in research and teaching. A number of women and gender studies programmes, centers and departments were established around Africa as critical to this agenda. For example, the Gender Research project at the University of Cape Town and the Centre for Gender Studies at the University of the Western Cape in South Africa, the Development and Women's Studies Unit at Ibadan University (IU) in Nigeria, the Women's Research and Documentation Project at the

University of Dar es Salaam, and the Gender Unit at Eduardo Mondlane University in Mozambique (Bennett, 2002; Essoff, 2006).

It was at the same time, in the 1980s, that the challenges of the 'dual burden' of reproductive work and academic work became an advocacy issue on campuses (Tamale & Oloka-Onyango, 2000). At the University of the Western Cape in South Africa, for example, women academics, administrative staff and students advocated for maternity leave, childcare facilities and benefits in the 1980s (Bennett, 2002: 41). Work in the area of the 'dual burden' of women in academia raised new debate about gender and the core business of higher education and the challenges that both women students and academics face as they pursue careers in academia. Institutional culture characterised by a drive against the recognition of reproductive labour, support for gender dynamics that promote the unpaid reproductive work of women, and the continued masculinisation of students, faculty, and managers. Further areas of research on gender and higher education has focused on the dual responsibility of women students and staff that arises from the reproductive roles that women are expected to play in society (Tsikata, 2007).

This is linked to violence, which is the focus of the third area in which theory and activism around gender in higher education has been most pronounced. Institutional cultures that value masculinity over femininity pose serious challenges for women staff and student in the form of sexual violence, sexual harassment and sexual corruption (Bennett, 2002). Research on the meaning of working in this institutional context for women trying to advance careers in academia reveals that gendered aspects of institutional culture that have sexuality as a central aspect of survival present very real and material challenges to the ability of women students and staff to survive and thrive in the academy.

The application of a gendered analysis to staff transformation suggests that for academics, conditions such as longer working hours and reduced academic freedom have different consequences for male and female staff. With regard to working hours, women work longer hours given their domestic responsibilities (Tamale, 2000; Zeleza, 2005). This has a negative effect on the ability of female academics to advance their careers. Further findings of women administrative staff being treated like 'wives' from their male colleagues indicate that gendered theories of

'gendered divisions of labour', 'feminization of labour' and the 'undervaluing' and 'invisibilising' of women's work outlined earlier in this review also apply to how work is valued and organized in universities. With respect of academic freedom, the constrained climate that monitors and polices femininity and women illuminates that academic freedom doesn't mean the same things to male and female academics either (Pereira, 2002; Barnes, 2006b; Barnes, 2007). Further challenges exist in the development and implementation of policies to protect against gendered discrimination and sexual harassment. These are very central aspects of cultures around gender and sexuality that powerfully affect issues of women's citizenship status in universities. According to Zeleza (2002: 69), the implications of the transformations in higher education for gender relations are "complex and contradictory" and they also "vary in different regions and countries". The factors that affect women's access, for example, vary across the continent. Once inside institutes of higher education, the impact of globalization on universities also strengthens certain individuals and disciplines over others. The effects of globalisation shift both interest and investment away from the 'softer' areas of study where the majority of women students tend to be located, compromising some of the gains that feminists and women administrators and academics have managed to achieve in terms of gender equity in higher education.

The use of methodologies that focus on the micro-politics of everyday life of women students and staff has allowed for the creation of a lens into gendered institutional culture. Gendered and sexuality dynamics in higher education operate at different levels of the institution and in different aspects of every day experience from enrollment and admissions, subject choice, drop out rates, and participation in student politics for students to management, curricula, and teaching and career opportunities for staff. Overall, continental research begs the question of how much attention has been paid to transforming the structures and processes that reproduce gender inequalities and actively discriminate against women in the academy. Transformative institutional policies and practices need this kind of introspection, research, advocacy and activism. On all African campuses, the climate is described as "a chilly climate for women studies" (Ndlovu, 2001) and the marginalisation of women administrators and scholars persists (Mabokela, 2003).

In a similar fashion to other African countries, the post-apartheid South African government has set in place wide ranging mechanisms for addressing gender inequalities in education. The

Constitution, the Women's Budget Initiative, the Office on the Status of Women, and the Employment Equity Act 1998 are means through which greater gender equality has been sought. According to Salo (nd) government has played a central role in creating formal structures to encourage the greater participation of women in academia. In terms of access, South African higher education 'transformation' policies and processes have focused mainly on transforming the racial demographics of students, staff and management, particularly in the HAs (Bennett, 2002: 43). This has most frequently taken the form of affirmative action strategies for women students as well as gender employment equity targets for transforming staff profiles. Unlike other African universities, South Africa has not had an issue with getting women into higher education. Since the 1990s there has been a rapid increase in the enrollment of women students with numbers doubling from 42,000 in 1993 to 86,000 in 1999 (Subotsky, 2001). In 2007, student profiles in higher education also reflect a higher representation of women than men (Riordan, in MacGregor, 2007).

In terms of staff, South African universities are required to follow the Employment Equity Act 1998 to monitor appointments in order to redress past imbalances of both race and gender. According to Bennett (2002), even here there has been insufficient attention paid to recruiting women candidates for positions and universities are still characterized by a gendered stratification in vertical employment. This situation has not changes much since in 2007, for example, only three of the 23 Vice-Chancellors and 5 of the 23 Registrars in the country were women, and women fill fewer than 30% of all senior positions (Shackleton, 2007: 2). Women represent 21% of all Deputy Vice-Chancellors, 28% of the deans and 21% of Executive directors. The highest proportion of women is in the lowest academic positions, and lowest pay-classes in support positions (MacGregor, 2007; Shackleton, 2007). Such findings are similar to those found elsewhere in Africa which reported that women are still under-represented in executive and senior academic jobs (Mama, 2003).

South Africa has the greatest number of gender and women's studies teaching sites in Africa, with 9 out of the 22 universities offering some degree of gender and women's studies teaching (Essof, 2006: 154). Recent work on gendered institutional cultures in South Africa however reflects that where women are studying is still a gendered issue, with more women in under graduate study than

post graduate study (Salo, nd). A gendered analysis of the dynamics of marketisation add that the career areas that become most sought after by students in the corporatist university are those that tend to be more instrumental and career driven, such as science and commerce. Approaches to access and increasing the enrolment of “women from disadvantages communities” particularly have actually targeted enrolment of women into these disciplines as part of the goal of human resources development (Jansen, 2001: 12).

Gendered analysis has offered the insight that one of the core businesses of higher education institutions in South Africa, as is the case in other African countries, is the reproduction of heterosexual and male dominated institutions (Bennett, 2002; Shackleton, 2007). Bennett (2002) locates cases of sexual harassment on university campuses as zones for deep analysis of the meaning of gender within higher education. In the early 1990s, detailed research on sexual violence from South Africa emerged from the Universities of Stellenbosch, Cape Town and Natal (Bennett, 2002).

In South Africa, national discourses on “gender equality” at a constitutional level have been translated into national level policy to improve the participation rates of women in academia. Overall, the actual efforts to transform South African universities in particular - the composition of staff, students and curricula content - have been centered on issues of racial equality. Much less attention has been paid to gender transformation in South African universities. One of the problems of gender transformation in higher education is that “Black people, women and the disabled have all been lumped together as designated groups” (McGregor, 2007; Shackleton, 2007). The subject of gender and institutional change in South African higher education remains unmapped and women still remain a marginalized minority in the academy (Barnes, 2007: 22). According to Essoff (2006:160) “The current climate of marketisation and cost recovery seems to intensify the contradictions between politically correct rhetoric, on the one hand, and financial and administrative stringency that under fund social justice concerns on the other”.

Has the national policy agenda impacted in any way on the lived experiences of non-core workers at the university? The core business of universities is to produce professionals (historically these have been white males). The core business of universities is also concerned with the reproduction

of gendered norms of sexuality and gendered identities that are linked to access and citizenship (Bennett, 2002). Given ample evidence of masculine institutional cultures, what can perspectives of the university from the standpoint of workers in non-core jobs contribute to existing debates about gender and higher education transformation in a context of the increasing pressures of globalisation?

Addressing discrepancies in male-female ratios in participation has not been enough to constitute real progress towards transforming universities into more gender equitable institutions. Questions being asked by feminist academics researching in the area of African higher education transformation are whether enough is being done to bring about gendered transformation with regards to these more qualitative and long standing aspects of the university culture. Although the theoretical links between gender, organizational change and management, institutional culture and higher education are yet to be firmly mapped and, work has begun which reveals similar findings across African universities. According to Mama and Barnes (2007: 3) “despite the declarations and resolutions of the African higher education establishments, there are persistent institutional inequalities which reflect a lack of commitment to gender issues and taking women seriously in intellectual spheres”. The need to integrate challenges of gender dynamics in continent wide higher education debates (looking at globalisation, academic freedom, access, citizenship and nationalization) is still highly visible (Bennett and Ready, 2007: 46).

Transformation in Post-Apartheid South African Higher Education: Bring ‘Non-Core’ Labour into the Debate

The preceding section of the literature review has highlighted that ‘transformation in higher education has meant a number of things in a South African context and has been a protracted process full of debate. A parallel process to transformation efforts has been the restructuring of higher education towards the ‘market university’ model. Existing literature illustrates that the arrangement of work has been significantly impacted by the adoption of neo-liberal ideology in the restructuring of the higher education sector. The effects of this on the lived experiences of academics and to some extent administrative staff have been researched, although research in the area of how the processes of restructuring affect academics (and administrative staff), or how they

can be supported is still thin however (Johnson, 2006: 58). In this review, some of the implications of the dual goals of marketisation and transformation from the perspective of staff and student in South African universities have been discussed, both generally and from a gendered perspective.

There has been significant reflection and writing on the meaning of marketisation for those jobs and people situated in what have come to be called the 'core' business of universities; teaching and research. Indeed it has been observed that discussions of staff restructuring in higher education have tended to focus solely on managerial and academic constituencies (Van der Walt, Bolsmann, Johnson, & Martin, 2002: 3). The discussion presented above has not been conclusive given that this is not the main aim of the research project. What is shown however is that there is a significant gap in the literature regarding the relationship between transformation, the 'impact' of globalisation on higher education and the experiences of people that work through what has been defined as 'non-core work' in higher education. What has 'transformation' meant, if anything, from the perspective of those in zones of work that have been identified as 'non-core'? And what can this view of transformation contribute to the greater debates that are developing in the context of the challenges facing higher education in post apartheid South Africa? It is the impact of globalization on 'non-core' zones of work in higher education that forms the central focus of this research dissertation.

South African Higher Education and Labour: The Outsourcing of Non-Core Jobs

"The transformation of public sector universities in post-apartheid South Africa remains at the center of government's political commitments, policy formation processes, and public debate. Yet one aspect of university restructuring has received surprisingly little attention: the trend towards outsourcing of support service functions in the 1990s" (van der Walt, Bolsmann, Johnson, and Martin, 2002: 3).

In line with the imperatives of the NCHES, apart from increasing income through other sources, reducing costs in higher education has also been on the agenda of university restructuring. One means of doing this has been through the restructuring of 'non-core' support services and this has often included large scale retrenchments and outsourcing. This process of outsourcing support

services and retrenching support staff is consistent with international developments (Adler et al, 2000).

Van der Walt et al (2002) conducted the first and most comprehensive study of South African university support services outsourcing in 2001. The research was based on a survey of the 21 public sector universities in South Africa at the time⁸. One human resource manager and one representative of the trade union amongst support service staff in each university were interviewed. The research of university support service outsourcing was designed to explore the impact of government policy on ordinary workers, the factors that promoted universities to restructure, and how class struggle on campuses has shaped the actual outcome of international and national restructuring processes on different university campuses (Van der Walt et al, 2002).

The findings indicate that across the sample of 21 universities, all institutions had restructured their support services since 1994. From 1994 to 1999, support staff workers in South African public sector universities fell from 14,346 to 10,817, which is a large retrenchment of 4000 workers (Subotsky, 2001:5). In this definition, support staff workers include cleaning, catering, maintenance, transport, and security jobs. Of the 15 out of 21 universities for which data were available, 12 (or 80%) chose to adopt outsourcing in order to reduce costs. At the same time, management staff numbers increased from 1125 to 1229, academic jobs increased from 13,717 to 14,412, and administrative staff numbers grew from 9769 to 11,750 (Subotsky, 2001). Slightly less than half of these institutions hoped that outsourcing would also improve the efficiency of support services (six out of 15, or 40%) and improve their competitiveness. All of these institutions were HAIs, except the University of the North (Van der Walt et al, 23). Twenty percent of responses to interviews with Human Resource managers at the universities stated that outsourcing was in line with government policy, meaning in response to cut backs in state expenditure and pressures of increased competition, while 53.3% stated that universities outsourced support services on the grounds that they were non-core. Eleven of the managers out of the 15 interviewed from each university also stated in interviews that further restructuring was likely and 8 of these identified further outsourcing as a definite component of staff restructuring.

⁸ Since then, mergers have reduced this number to 11 institutions (See Jansen.).

According to Van der Walt et al (2003: 279), the decision to outsource non-core services indicates that the market university paradigm played an important role in university outsourcing but that this influence has largely been limited to HAIs. In total, 8 institutions gave the need to outsource “non-core” activities as the rationale for outsourcing support services, and of these 7 were HAIs with the one exception of the University of the Western Cape (UWC). According to Kenny and Clarke (2001), the responses of different institutions have varied, with HDIs having different reasons for their responses and approaches to restructuring to HAIs. The responses of HAIs have largely been based on the greater embrace of model 2 universities. This finding is consistent with other available analyses that suggest that HDIs responses to the post apartheid environment in the form of outsourcing have been based more on a survivalist than an attempt to move towards a market university model. Johnson (2001: 5) offers a similar analysis stating that there seem to be two imperatives underlying the restructuring process within higher education institutions; the ‘rightsizing’ conception and the ‘core and non-core’ conception. “Rightsizing’ refers to reducing the size of the institution since it was argued that some institutions, particularly those in the homelands, contained a disproportionate number of support service staff to academic staff. ‘Rightsizing’, therefore, has been more common in the HDIs and occurred as part of the broader institutional mergers (Johnson, 2001: 5). For example, Fort Hare, Venda, the University of the North, and the University of the Western Cape had all initiated restructuring by 2000 due to financial constraints (Kenny and Clarke, 2000: 26). For HAIs, restructuring has been based upon the distinction between ‘core’ and ‘non core’ jobs. Cost cutting under an environment of tight fiscal restraint then is identified by the authors as only one factor that influenced outsourcing of support services across universities and technikons. More frequently the case amongst HAIs is that support functions have been outsourced in an attempt to increase the competitiveness of the universities as they lean further towards the market model of universities.

The Core vs. Non core Debate

Critics of the approach to outsourcing assumed by HAIs in particular argue that there are flaws with the logic of this approach. The most comprehensive analysis is provided by Adler et al (2000) in *The Wits University Support Services Review: a Critique*. The critique is based on research of the

process of restructuring at Wits in order to assess the case for outsourcing. In it the authors criticize the university and the consultants contracted by the university to implement outsourcing for the flawed logic and poor research techniques that were used throughout the entire outsourcing project. The first criticism is that there were serious problems with the approach of the consultants. The second is that it is problematic to assume that outsourcing can rectify a lack of managerial capacity. The third and most important is that identifying an activity as non-core is insufficient grounds to outsource it.

“Even more problematic is the notion that the separation of core and non-core functions can serve as an unambiguous basis for deciding which functions to outsource and which to retain in-house. Decisions to outsource are not generally defined by what is core, but by what is most suitable to restructuring a particular aspect of the organization. Suitability depends on a range of factors: cost, a desire to bring in high-value expertise, the availability of such services on the local market, and fashion” (Adler et al, 2000: 10).

In terms of this analysis, any function can be outsourced whether it is defined as ‘core’ or ‘non core’ depending on the logic of the decision to do so. The relevance of this distinction in South Africa is that it is generally still the unskilled “manual and menial” services that are being targeted for outsourcing in South Africa. A research study conducted in 1999 using a sample of 101 South African companies revealed that between 1994-1998 68.3% of companies surveyed had outsourced. The three most commonly outsourced functions were defined as ‘non-core’ areas: cleaning (21.9%), security (19.3%), catering/canteens (11%) and maintenance/gardening (10.8%)⁹. According to the same study, blue collar workers constitute more than 90% of all employees who were outsourced whereas only two percent of executive jobs were outsourced (Kelly, 1999). Those functions that have been identified as ‘non-core’ in higher education follow a similar pattern and tend to be the “manual and menial” campus occupations that do not contribute directly to knowledge production but are nevertheless critical to the functioning of the university. Existing literature shows that similar services and/or departments have been identified as non-core and

⁹ The survey was conducted by Andrew Levy and Associates and these figures are presented by Van der Walt et al (2002: 18).

outsourced across all HEIs; these are catering, cleaning, security, gardens, maintenance and printing (Johnson, 2001; Kenny and Clarke, 2000; Van der Walt et al, 2002; Grossman, 2006).

The first objection to outsourcing therefore is based on the suggestion that in South Africa, the distinction between 'core' and 'non-core' has more to do with class than with organizational requirements. Since the majority of the working class and poor in South Africa are still black, the concluding analysis offered is that the approach to restructuring at Wits is determined by the market model and will tend to reproduce the apartheid legacy for both the workforce and the student (Adler et al, 2000: 32).

A recent discussion of the core/non-core division of work in higher education presented from the perspective of 'workers' was written by Bezuidenhout and Fakier (2006). On the basis of their study of the lived experience of contract cleaning workers at the University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, South Africa, the authors argue that "there is a need to investigate how boundaries of inclusion and exclusion are being reworked under post apartheid neo-liberal work order" (Bezuidenhout and Fakier, 2006: 479). The study aims to illustrate that neo-liberalism introduces a new language of 'boundary drawing' that is not as crude as the racial language of apartheid that blatantly separated people on the basis of race. Instead, the new language, possibly even more dangerous than its predecessor, uses the seemingly 'neutral' criteria of 'core' and 'non-core' work to define who gets access to rights and citizenship. The logic of this cautioning argument is that under the market university model, support services that are defined as non-core are being outsourced by HAIs in particular on the basis of this distinction. These jobs generally include catering, cleaning, security, grounds maintenance, and transport, all of which are traditionally defined as relatively unskilled manual and menial activities and are predominantly occupied by black and coloured blue collar workers, many but not all of which are women.

A similar logic is offered by Grossman (2006) in his critical discussion of the effects of outsourcing at the University of Cape Town. According to his analysis, the values that are being promoted through this shift in orientation towards a market university at the University of Cape Town, such as 'excellence', 'efficiency' and 'productivity' are in direct conflict with the stated goals of 'equity' and 'social justice' in the University's mission statement. His evidence for this is grounded in the fact

that the outsourcing of 'non-core' jobs has severely weakened union presence on campus, it has reduced the wages and benefits available to the 'outsourced' workers, and it has increased the intimidation tactics used to control workers in these jobs. The implementation of this 'flawed logic' underpinning the distinction between 'core' and 'non-core' necessitates a direct attack on workers in non-core jobs. What of the stated goals of 'equity' and 'redress'? If 'redress' through outsourcing is the strategy it needs to be reconsidered because it is not improving the lives of ordinary men and women (Bezuidenhout and Fakier, 2006; Grossman, 2006).

Studies such as those offered by the above authors suggest that 'efficiency', defined in these terms, is dependent on the exploitation of the working classes through a set of specific management practices. In South Africa, because of the racial divisions along class, the majority of blue collar workers, vulnerable workers or the working poor are black and coloured workers. Of these, the majority are women. Literature on outsourced workers in higher education consistently emphasizes that black workers and women workers were historically disadvantaged through racially determined laws that denied them access to education, occupations, skills, incomes and power¹⁰. In present day South Africa, the majority of the people still working in blue collar jobs are therefore those who have been exploited in the past by apartheid, and are now being exploited along lines that appear to be defined by the neutral imperatives of economic growth and competition. The lines of inclusion and exclusion for citizenship are in effect being shifted from race to what is considered to be a neutral qualifier – occupation in core and non-core jobs. Despite claims by contract companies that jobs have the ability to improve the training levels and conditions of work for their employees,¹¹ evidence from studies suggests that such strategies have failed to improve the quality of the lives of ordinary men and women. The conditions of work and the daily lived experiences of workers have been negatively affected.

The conclusion then is that the notion of 'core' and 'non core' may be understood as an ideological justification for retrenching blue collar workers and avoiding unions rather than the result of precise management appraisal of the needs of the organization. Given that that large percentage of

¹⁰ The Industrial Conciliation Act 1924, the Job Colour Bar, Migrant labour Act, and the Bantu Education Act all served to disadvantage black people from access to these rights of citizenship.

¹¹ There is evidence of such claims being made by contract companies at Wits, UWC, and UCT. See Grossman (2006), Van der Walt (2002) and Johnson (2001)

workers are black writers such as Van der Walt, Grossman, Kenny and Clarke and Bezuidenhout and Fakier, are now writing about the possibility of the re-racialisation rather than the de-racialisation of universities. If this is the case, then it confirms studies that reveal that instead of a decisive break away from the apartheid workplace regime, there is a more complex pattern of continuity and change (Webster and Von Holdt, 2005).

The findings about conditions of work under contract labour in higher education are consistent with broad theories about the nature of contract work. These studies also draw from this broader theory in their analysis. In particular, the concept of externalization and the notion of a triangular employment relationship are useful in understanding how contract work benefits employers at the expense of workers. Non-core workers therefore experience variable exclusion; they are included in the sense that they are fully employed and earn wages within the core economy, but they are excluded from some of the protections of core legislation and rights conferred in the constitution. The degree of wage reduction and exclusion from benefits however depends on the nature of the enterprise and the contractual relations (Van der Walt et al, 2002).

The Quality of Work: Implications of Change for 'Non-core' workers and their Unions

Research has not been limited to the extent of outsourcing or the proposed reasons for it; it has also investigated some of the effects of outsourcing on the lives of working class men and women and on the workplace order. Measures of 'effects of outsourcing' have been both quantitative and qualitative. Quantitative measures such as wages, benefits and hours of work as well as qualitative methods that access quality of experience at work have been used. Trade unions, management and outsourced workers have been interviewed in this area of study.

In the research conducted by Van der Walt et al (2001), a survey was used to collect data from trade unionists about how outsourcing has affected workers in a given set of areas – wages, benefits and job security. They also invited trade unionists to talk about any other issues affecting workers. Other studies have drawn data from interviews with outsourced workers working on university campuses, using lived experience as a lens into the meaning of work restructuring in higher education. For example, in-depth studies have been conducted at the University of Witwatersrand (WITS) by Bezuidenhout and Fakier (2006), the University of Cape Town (UCT) by

Kenny and Clarke (2000) and Sørensen (2004), and the University of the Western Cape (UWC) by Johnson (2001). For the majority of workers across all the institutions that have outsourced, the impact has been more or less the same; for workers at the University of the Western Cape (UWC), wages were halved from approximately R3000 with benefits to in the late 1990s to R1000 without any benefits in 2001 (Johnson, 2001: 8). In all three instances of outsourcing, before outsourcing benefits included a provident fund, access to bursaries for dependents, medical aid, housing subsidies, and low-interest bearing loans (Kenny and Clarke, 2000; Johnson, 2001; Van der Walt, 2002; Subotsky, 2001). More specifically, at the University of Witwatersrand, the wages for cleaning workers, for example, fell from approximately R2277 plus benefits to around R1200 per month without benefits (Van der Walt et al, 2002: 29). In 1998, outsourced security guards working at the University of Cape Town earned R7 per hour in comparison to the rate of R15 per hour that was paid to UCT security employees prior to outsourcing (Kenny and Clarke, 2000: 27). According to Van der Walt et al (2002: 17) this reduction in wages happened as part of a trend towards greater divergence of staff salary scales between internal employees of the university, which can be attributed to managerialism.

More qualitative data on aspects of 'impact' of outsourcing have been gathered through the use of in-depth qualitative interviews with contract cleaners that work in outsourced jobs at three different universities; UCT, UWC and WITS. Johnson's study of contract cleaning works at the UWC in 2001 revealed that fewer workers were expected to do much more work. Workers interviewed were also constantly nervous about getting caught 'chatting' or exceeding their breaks. This was based on the fact that in 2000 there were 20 disciplinary hearings and 9 dismissals. Four dismissals were of workers who refused to clean windows when their danger pay was removed (Johnson, 2001: 8). Other findings include a loss in organizational memory through the retrenching of long term employees.

Sørensen (2004) conducted in-depth interviews with six women contract cleaners employed by the company Fidelity Supercare and working at the University of Cape Town in 2004. Her analysis focuses on the micro politics of the cleaners' negotiations and methods of resistance employed in order to provide for their families (Sørensen, 2004: 30). Her findings indicate that contract employees that transferred were paid far less, R1224 per month, than they were paid when

working for UCT, R2500 per month (Sørensen, 2004: 31). The findings indicate a high level of control, exploitation and intimidation on the part of Supercare management as well as a disregard for any social responsibility towards Supercare employees. This, she suggests, is directly facilitated by the refusal by UCT to take any responsibility for the working conditions of Supercare employees at UCT. Gendered discourses of cleaning work as 'just cleaning' were also identified as mechanisms through which work is invisibilised (Sørensen, 2004: 34). These practices are viewed as being central to the construction of cleaning workers into a highly vulnerable and exploitable position. Sørensen (2004) also documents experiences of both physical and mental health problems related to poverty and high workloads, which are exasperated by limited wages and benefits to afford doctors visits. The combined effect of these poor working conditions is strain on the employees to ensure their own survival and the survival of their families. The use of gendered analysis adds a specific attention to issues of agency, subjectivity and power by including a theme focused on the survival strategies of women workers given the constricted and hidden conditions under which they work. This essentially makes the research feminist in that its aim is to avoid re-inscribing women in a victimized position (Sørensen, 2004).

In writing about university transformation and the use of outsourced labour in higher education, Bezuidenhout and Fakier (2006) based their article *Maria's Burden* on an original research study entitled 'A case study of the living conditions of female outsourced workers at the University of the Witwatersrand' (Mhlongo & Fakier, 2004). The original research was a qualitative study that made use of in-depth interviews with 10 female workers employed by the contract cleaning company 'Fidelity Supercare' and working at the University of Witwatersrand in 2004. Interviews were also conducted with the Director of Human Resources at Wits and one of the site managers of Supercare. Other methods included participant observation and the use of a researcher journal to record both work activities and activities within the household conducted by one of the participants, called Maria. The lived experiences of the 10 contract cleaners collected through this study was then used as the basis for *Maria's Burden* to explore the continuities and discontinuities between the apartheid labour regime and the neo-liberal, post-apartheid order in South Africa. The *Maria's Burden* article documents that cleaning work through Supercare at Wits was an experience of low wages and no benefits. The long hours spent traveling to and from work reduced the amount of productive time available to workers, the majority of whom were women (Bezuidenhout and Fakier,

2006). The Supercare management made use of intimidation, increased surveillance and intensified workloads, combined with the effects of externalizing the employment relationship, such as increased ambiguity, workers are increasingly placed in vulnerable working and living conditions. These findings are similar to those that emerged at UWC in 2001.

Another important 'impact' has been on the unions in higher education. Impact on unions was a central focus of Johnson's article. According to Standing (1997: 29), "Representation security implies that participants in the labour market must have a secure capacity to bargain and influence the character of employment, to have an adequately strong voice to ensure that distributive justice is pursued". The outsourcing of support services has also affected the unions and the ability of the contracted workers to secure union representation. Trade union presence in South African universities has been undermined by outsourcing of support services. Blue collar workers forming the basis of the National Education, Health and Allied Workers Union (Nehawu) membership were retrenched through outsourcing, forcing Nehawu offices to close on at least three different university campuses.

In Maria's Burden the conclusions drawn were that the use of contract labour in higher education (and in this instance contract cleaning) is reproducing the inequalities and the mechanism on which the apartheid order was built. In particular, the researchers focus on drawing similarities between how the apartheid work order placed the burden of social reproduction on the shoulders of African men and women through enforced systems of migrant labour and the current use of contract work. These findings suggest that the claim by both universities and the contract cleaning company that outsourcing offers a more 'efficient' and 'productive' service was actually hiding another reality; that the efficiency and extra productivity promised to the 'client' is at the expense of the working poor both in and outside the workplace. Inside the workplace it is through increased intensification of work through numerical flexibility (fewer workers do the same or more amount of work), reduced wages and conditions of employment to cut back on costs, and negative treatment of employees in the form of tight control needed to maintain this workload. The exploitative working conditions are facilitated by the powerless position that is constructed through the triangular relationship between Wits, Supercare and the worker.

Outside the workplace the burden is largely in terms of time to engage in unpaid reproductive activities and financial constraints. With reduced wages and curtailed benefits there is increasing financial demands on contracted cleaners and often alternative forms of employment were reported in addition to a full time job to earn extra money (Bezuidenhout and Fakier, 2006: 475). These alternative forms of work are found both in the formal and informal economies, a finding that blurs the argument currently structuring macroeconomic policy that there are two economies, one formal and the other informal, that are separate and distinct. In this way, gendered analysis of work provides new theoretical frameworks through which to understand work arrangements that may be more beneficial for the production of policy targeted at gendered equality.

The existing studies that have been reviewed here on the higher education and outsourcing have focused on the effects of outsourcing for workers and their unions. Through the use of a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, they have emphasized that the majority of work that has been outsourced has been manual and menial and affecting jobs largely occupied by black working class people, many but not all of whom are women. Through the use of studies that focus on the micro-politics of everyday life of people caught in the tension between redress and the need for economic pragmatism, the findings suggest that like apartheid, the new neo-liberal order places the same burden on African people, homes and communities through the externalized employment relationship. Applying a gendered analysis, the authors state that the burden of social reproduction falls on to the shoulders of women workers in particular because they spend more time than men engaged in unpaid reproductive work and are deemed to be capable of “super care” (Mhlongo and Fakier, 2004; Bezuidenhout and Fakier, 2006). Sørensen implies that presence of ‘gendered discourses’ that demean cleaning work to ‘just cleaning’ are also central to the creation of poor working conditions. The term “Super care”, used by Mhlongo and Fakier indicates that women’s labour power is assumed to be always available both inside and outside the workplace. It was through in-depth qualitative research of the micro-politics that rich qualitative data was available on the meaning of working in non-core jobs in higher education. In all three cases, the everyday lived experience of fundamental levels of employment, such as transport to and from work, wages, hours, conditions of work, and treatment from other UCT staff and company management, allowed for the emergence of specific themes around ‘meaning’ of work.

Discussions of university transformation and gender have been limited to the relationship between gender and what is defined as the 'core business' and actors of the university; students and academics. The focus of existing research of gender in South African higher education has been predominantly on gendered identities and bodies; how male and female bodies are gendered and treated differently within the institutional setting. Much less has been written about the gendering of different zones of work. With university restructuring, another 'zone' of work has emerged in higher education. While there is literature that focuses on the gendered dynamics of working in administrative, academic and even managerial jobs, gendered analysis of higher education reform that focused on areas of work outside of teaching and research is very scarce. My focus here is not on issues of access to students and staff, or even issues of gender and institutional culture as they relate to participation of women in the 'core' work of higher education. If gender dynamics are operating in various ways at the level of core work, which evidence suggests, what is happening at the level of non-core work? How, if at all, is gender present in the restructuring of work along core and non-core lines from the perspective of those located in non-core jobs? The focus here is on the relationship between gender and meaning of work that has been defined as non-core from the perspective of those that work in non-core jobs. There is still a gap in existing literature linking South African higher education transformation, gender and zones of 'non-core' work in higher education. With this research the intention is to note and explore this gap in more detail.

In this thesis, the focus is on the way that areas of work are themselves feminised under the restructured work arrangement. I am making a theoretical link between feminised work, and the outsourcing of work defined as 'non-core'. This is an area that has received much less attention in the literature about work restructuring in higher education.

4. CONCLUDING REMARKS

While the neo-liberal and market discourse may justify the employment of these men as women as beneficial to the university for a number of reasons, I aim to present another view to subvert this knowledge claim. The studies that I have identified show that outsourcing, as it is informed by the dominant market discourse that is linked to neo-liberal ideology, has been widespread in South

African higher education institutions. Is this trend enough to conclude that it a natural and inevitable path to growth and development in the existing formation of South African higher education institutions? Bertlesen (1998) and Grossman (2006) for example argue that neo-liberalism has been widely accepted and embraced by the University of Cape Town and Adler et al (2001) illustrate its prevalence at Wits. The research conducted by Van der Walt indicates that the majority of HAIs are taking the neo-liberal route as a response to changes in the local and international environment.

A view that is generated from the lived experience of the cleaners themselves may be useful in subverting this claim. I aim to investigate the actual conditions of work for a group of workers that have been positioned in 'non-core' zones of work and from their experiences develop an understanding of the meaning of work from their perspective. In comparing my findings with existing literature I hope to complicate dominant perceptions of the value of outsourcing to the university. A feminist approach is central here since "Feminist accounts of globalization that seek to challenge its dominant scripts can do this by "denaturalizing global capitalism and seeing it as socially constructed...." (Bergeron, in Zeleza, 2002: 82).

In order to achieve these broader visions for a South African higher education system that is committed to redress and the broader needs of citizenry, the perspective of the working classes is needed in the debate around university transformation. If the assumption that all knowledge is partial is adopted here, then a more comprehensive analysis of university transformation needs to include knowledge that is derived from multiple perspectives. This research projects aims to investigate the experiences of people who work in non-core zones of work to produce knowledge that reflects the meaning of higher education transformation form the perspective of those who engage in work other than teaching and research, management and administration; the workers who occupy the so called support services.

CHAPTER 3

BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

1. INTRODUCTION

Given the context of support service outsourcing in public sector higher education and the trend in its prevalence across public sector universities, I aim to explore and describe the meaning of transformation in post apartheid higher education through the lenses of the lived experiences of those who work in 'non-core' zones of work. As was addressed in the literature review, a significant number of jobs across South African universities have been affected by restructuring and outsourcing as a parallel process to post apartheid 'transformation' to make this an issue worth investigation. This thesis is a contribution to an already existing debate about transformation in higher education, marketisation and the implications that these change associated with globalisation have for work restructuring, particularly of support services.

A central aim of this research then is to reflect on how the definition of certain areas of work as 'non-core' under the emergence of market discourse has translated into lived experience for those people who work in these 'non-core' jobs. Another aim is to explore how this 'experience' can then add knowledge to the existing debates about institutional transformation in post apartheid higher education more broadly. In order to achieve this goal, I have selected the University of Cape Town (UCT) as the site for this research. The selection of UCT as a site for the research was motivated by several needs. Firstly, while existing research contributes to the broad development of the existence and prevalence of non-core work and to some extent to the meaning of work in non-core zones in selected sites, this research aims to explore the dynamics of one specific case of support service outsourcing in greater detail. As was indicated in Chapter 2, UCT is one of 21 universities that have outsourced support services in the past decade. It was chosen as a site for the research for two main reasons. The first of these concerns the conflict between the need for 'equity' on the one hand and 'excellence' on the other that is evident amongst HAs in general. In this section I

begin to introduce readers to UCT. There is a strong commitment in the University's mission statement to equity, redress and reform. In the university mission statement¹² it is stated that,

"It is central to our mission that we: Strive to transcend the legacy of apartheid in South Africa and to overcome all forms of gender and other oppressive discrimination, promote equal opportunity and the full development of human potential, and value and promote the contribution that all our members make to realising our mission".

The University presents itself as being committed to redress, social justice and employment equity. 'Transformation' is a subject of great importance at the university, to the extent that it has its own transformation program. As is described below, transformation has meant a number of things at the university. A thorough analysis of the university's commitments to transformation is not the point of this thesis. The point is to explore what transformation has meant from the perspective of what is happening in the realm of non-core work. This is a point well articulated by Sørensen.

In the existing debates around the use of outsourced labour in higher education, one aspect of the argument that is proposed by critics of outsourcing suggest that outsourced work continues to deny 'non-core workers' access to better work opportunities, protections and other benefits of post apartheid labour laws, and increased standards of living. Some writers go as far as to make the case that outsourcing may actually be reinforcing apartheid legacies rather than challenging and transforming them (see Bezuidenhout and Fakier, 2006). Existing research suggests that this has serious implications for institutional efforts to transform universities away from the apartheid work formation and towards a more just and equitable university. The University of Cape Town then presents a good example of an HAI lodged in the middle of the proposed contradictory forces of transformation in terms of equity and social redress on the one hand and marketisation on the other. Previous research suggests that UCT has adopted practices such as corporate branding, corporate management styles, an increasingly powerful administration and an intensification of academic work (Bertlesen, in Van der Walt et al, 2002). Shackleton (2007) indicates that despite the policy commitment to transformation in terms of 'gender equality', UCT has not made progress in transforming more engrained aspects of its gendered institutional culture. These factors make it a

¹² Available at <http://www.uct.ac.za/about/intro/>

suitable site to assess how and where these two of imperatives of 'redress' and economic pragmatism disagree.

My second reason for choosing UCT as a site concerns my own location as a student at the university and is related to the first. While completing an honours degree at the university in 2004 I witnessed public student reactions to outsourcing in the form of a protest march in solidarity with outsourced workers to UCT administrative offices located at Bremner building. This drew my attention to the fact that at least some 'outsourced workers' on the campus had been experiencing their working conditions as unacceptable and had organized in protest. Given this experience, and the existing critical theory offered by Bezuidenhout and Fakier (2006) that outsourced work is threatening efforts to overcome and redress the legacies of the systematic racial ordering of work, an exploration of the ways in which outsourced work is experienced by people in these jobs at UCT was a central aim to this thesis. The contradiction that therefore exists between this outward appearance of UCT as a liberal university committed to the 'progressive' values of equal opportunity, employment equity, and redress on the one hand and the choice to outsource jobs on the other, a strategy that potentially reproduced apartheid conditions of work for those who are most 'marginalized' as workers, struck me as worthy of study.

Finally, by 2007 the outsourcing of services defined as 'non-core' is well entrenched at UCT, with the first notable move towards outsourcing recorded as 1998. The presence of 'workers' in different coloured uniforms that indicate the different companies that they work for has become naturalized to the point that the conditions under which they came to work at the University and currently work have become invisible. The people that work in these outsourced jobs are therefore well established at the university and embedded in what it means to work through outsourced work at the University. Given these factors, UCT represented an ideal location to conduct this study.

Given the reasons for this choice of site, this chapter continues with an introduction to transformation at the University of Cape Town. A brief chronological history of outsourcing at this university from 1994-2007 is then offered to introduce readers to the particular debates and historical context in which outsourcing occurred at the university. This is followed by a description of the current context of 'non-core' work on the campus, which includes the range of services that

are currently outsourced and the number and location of jobs that were affected. Finally, the background data are linked to theoretical concepts outlined in the literature review; particularly marketisation, the distinction between core and non-core work, and outsourcing/externalization. In this background section, I also begin to describe some of the broader effects of outsourcing on workers and the union at UCT. 'Effects on workers and their trade unions' is the one area of research that has been documented in existing debates as important factors contributing to and framing the 'meaning of work' for all workers located in these 'non-core' jobs. As far as possible, the background section defines some of the dynamics and complexities that characterise the present context of 'work' for all of the non-core outsourced workers and their location on the campus.

The foreground of the research is based on the lived experiences of workers in one zone of 'non-core' service; that of cleaning work. The three in-depth studies that I was able to locate that focused on outsourcing in South African higher education researched the lived experiences of contract cleaners as a lens into the meaning of work in non-core zones (Johnson, 2001; Sørensen, 2004; Bezuidenhout and Fakier, 2006). This is despite the fact that across universities, other services have also been outsourced. The reasons why cleaning has been the focus of these studies have been stated outright in all three of these studies. Sørensen (2004) chooses contract cleaning specifically because it is a zone of work dominated by women workers and her interest is in the 'gendered consequences of outsourced work'. Similarly the study by Mhlongo and Fakier (2004) is based on a sample of women workers with an interest in 'the work and living conditions of female outsourced workers'. Both authors also justify their focus on contract cleaning in relation to a) the fact that contract cleaning work is increasingly being used across business in South Africa and b) cleaning work is the one zone of work in public sector higher education that has consistently been defined as 'non-core' and been widely outsourced. According to Johnson (2001: 7), "Across all institutions, cleaning has been outsourced to Supercare or Metro" which are two contract cleaning companies.

The nature of contract cleaning work is that it is a highly competitive industry, it is very low paid, and extremely labour intensive (Bernstein, 1986). Cleaning work more broadly has been constructed as 'women's work' in South Africa and has been dominated by black women in

Restructuring in the form of outsourcing 'non-core' jobs at UCT first began with the outsourcing of catering services in the student residences in the early 1990s. This was followed by the outsourcing of some areas of security services on a trial basis in 1998 (Kenny and Clarke, 2000). At this time, photocopying services were also outsourced, followed by cleaning work in both the residences and the main academic buildings in 1999. The evidence suggests that the first proposal to outsource security services in 1998 was rejected by the union²¹. In response to this the university management argued that the outsourcing was in line with the Strategic Planning Framework 1996 to 2001; a document that the union had apparently endorsed²². According to an interview with an ex-shop steward, it was on the basis of this agreement that the union agreed to the temporary trials of outsourcing of security services, not knowing that the university had plans to outsource further services.

Prior to 1998, the University had "one of the sharpest and strongest recognition agreements in the country as well as strong union structures" (Kenny and Clarke, 2000: 27). This recognition agreement and all that was contained in it was the result of a long history of struggle, organisation and mobilization in an apartheid context by workers to get recognized by the University. By the late 1990s, the union had developed a strong presence on the campus, with 22 shop stewards and a strong membership of workers in the lowest levels of the vertical stratification of work, pay classes 1-4²³. In a 1999 newspaper article it is stated that,

"There are currently 680 staff members at UCT in pay-class 1-4. These workers receive an overall cash average of R2301 per month. The total average package for workers in pay-class 1-4, including provident fund contributions, the maximum housing subsidy allowable, and medical aid is R4485 per month. Recent salary surveys show that this is higher than the wages earned by 90% of service workers"²⁴.

²¹ Kenny and Clarke (2000); Interview material with an ex-Shop steward still working at UCT; Document entitled 'Nehawu's response to the UCT rationale for outsourcing' (no date)

²² Interview with ex-NSS

²³ The University Professional Administrative Support Staff (PASS) staff are divided into 15 pay classes. Pay classes 1-4 are grouped together and are the lowest level pay-classes.

²⁴ Quote taken from a newspaper article entitled '*Labour Court grants interdict on strike*' on www.adminnews.uct.ac.za/docs/46f28947b73b9ca2ea639919f8d849ae.doc

The working conditions of UCT employees relative to other workers support services in South Africa are described here quite favourably, and given the history of workers struggles in South Africa and the context of racially stratified industrial relations system, this was a remarkable achievement in union activity and black worker solidarity on campus. According to Grossman (2006) a central strength of the recognition agreement was that it contained a Last in First Out (LIFO) clause. The clause meant that those employees that were employed last would be the first ones to be retrenched in the case of dismissal on the basis of operational requirement. In effect then, it “stood in the way of plans to retrench and outsource....Management was unable, while the agreement stood, to target particular departments, sections, and units for closure and outsourcing” (Grossman, 2006: 95).

By 1998 outsourcing had already begun. In the same year workers went on a strike in which 420 National Health and Allied Workers Union (Nehawu) members rejected managements wage packages and demanded “a guarantee from management that UCT will not retrench anyone in pay-classes 1-4 in the next two years”²⁵. UCT used court interdicts to protect “normal functioning” and its “private property” from striking workers and engaged in the use of intimidation tactics. Police were called in on day one of the strike and Nehawu was forced to call off the strike before the end of the week. One of the results of the strike was that Nehawu shop stewards were dismissed. The union refused to engage in negotiations with the university unless it reinstated the shop stewards. However, under Ramphela’s Vice-chancellorship, it was argued that the union had breached its agreement of “good faith” with the university by its refusal to participate in negotiations. This was then used as grounds to unilaterally cancel the recognition agreement with the union²⁶. The union office on campus was subsequently closed down and the university withdrew the union’s right to a full time shop steward and access to other resources (Kenny and Clarke, 2000). With the LIFO clause no longer standing in the way, the university followed its plan of retrenchment and outsourcing.

It follows that the major outsourcing of support services happened later on in 1999. According to Kenny and Clarke (2000: 27) “On 31 August 1999 267 UCT employees were informed that they

²⁵ Quote taken from a newspaper article entitled ‘Labour Court grants interdict on strike’ on www.adminnews.uct.ac.za/docs/46f28947b73b9ca2ea639919f8d849ae.doc

²⁶ Interview with ex-NSS; Grossman (2006); Kenny and Clarke (2000)

were being retrenched as of 30 September. The tasks performed by these workers were outsourced". In interviews that I conducted with two ex-Nehawu shop-stewards, this stage of outsourcing was referred to as the 'large scale outsourcing'. This confirms the position that prior to this time outsourcing occurred on a smaller scale with a few services being outsourced on a trial basis but no explicit intention by the university to implement outsourcing across more services.

Up until this point in the process of outsourcing, the existing documents and interviews reflect that the union's position against outsourcing was clear. Grounds for resistance to outsourcing from the union included that there were no wage negotiations, that it did not see the real need to outsource, and that it was not consulted adequately by management. For example, one of the rejections of the proposal to outsource was that the project team that was set up to investigate the viability of outsourcing only consisted of management members and management consultants²⁷; members of Nehawu and staff associations were not included in this process. One of the measures that UCT took to protect retrenched workers was engaging in an agreement with the contractors that retrenched UCT employees would be "favourably considered" for employment by the new contract companies²⁸. Evidence of Nehawu's position against this is visible in the Nehawu response to proposals to outsourcing which states that,

"There are ways in which work processes can be changed in order to achieve competitiveness without destroying jobs. Encouraging employees to apply for jobs in the outsourcing company is not a useful strategy" ²⁹

Therefore, while the university presents the strategy of offering retrenched employees jobs with the new companies as a positive safety net, this evidence suggests that the union's position was that this strategy was inadequate. Despite the conviction by the university that these 'non-core' areas of work needed to be outsourced to cut costs as well as increase 'efficiency' and service delivery, this suggests that unions seriously questioned the real necessity for outsourcing at this time. In particular, the union failed to recognize a link between outsourcing and the transformation of the UCT into a 'World Class African University' and actually believed the opposite to be true stating,

²⁷ In a letter to Council members from The Staff Association, dated 28 June 1999

²⁸ Constitutional Court case (2002:3)

²⁹ Document entitled "Nehawu's response to the UCT rationale for outsourcing"

“Nehawu believes that retaining the ‘non-core’ functions within the UCT staff structure is a prerequisite for attaining the goal of Africanising the University”³⁰.

In this submission it is visible that at the time Nehawu disputed whether there was a financial crisis at UCT highlighting that AIMS didn’t give financial crisis as a reason for outsourcing³¹. This begs the question; was outsourcing a response to a rational need based on a financial crisis or a shortage of managerial capacity or a change in ideological position towards how the university should be run (i.e. the adoption of a neo-liberal model of higher education)? While this is not the main focus of this research project, what is interesting is that the context was wrought with tensions, debates and struggle. It is from this history of struggle that the current outsourced workers have come to find themselves working at the University of Cape Town.

The tension between the university’s strategy of outsourcing and union resistance to it culminated when negotiations reached a deadlock and Nehawu took the university to the Labour Court in 2000. By this time, the outsourcing had led to the retrenchments of at least 200 workers, which meant a great loss of membership to Nehawu (Kenny and Clarke, 2000). In addition, those retrenched UCT employees that did find employment with the contract companies, through the UCT/Contract companies ‘agreement’, found that the conditions of employment with the companies were less favourable than those on which they had been employed by UCT. For example, while employed with UCT security workers earned a minimum wage of R15.00 per hour. When benefits are added to this, the average wage package for all security operations (including all security staff) was R32.96 per hour. The average wage cost for the same service was only R18.56 per hour for an outsourced Armourguard employee³². Similarly, UCT cleaning staff were paid a monthly package that included a housing allowance, a basic salary, and UCT’s contribution to the provident fund and medical aid. When this is converted into an hourly rate, UCT cleaning staff earned between R11.00 and R14.00 per hour. In 1999 a Supercare cleaner working at UCT earned R6.00 per hour, half of that of a UCT employee, with no extra provision made for retirement or medical

³⁰ The ‘Submission to UCT Council’ report (p. 3).

³¹ Document entitled ‘Nehawu submission on AIMS proposal to outsource CPS’, 17 August 2000

³² According to Kenny and Clarke (2000: 27) ‘Armourguard’ was the security company that provided security services to UCT in 1998. Since then, G4Security has taken over this contract.

fund. The gains in working conditions through Nehawu's recognition agreement with UCT were being threatened by outsourcing.

The basis of the court case then was that Nehawu had applied to the Labour Court asking that it find that outsourcing should have been treated as the 'transfer of a going concern' (van Niekerk, 2002). Section 197 of the Labour Relations Act (LRA) was intended to protect employees when a business or part of a business was transferred to a new employer. Nehawu argued that in terms of this law then, all employment contracts would be automatically transferred to the new employer. The conditions of employment with the new employer could therefore not be less favourable than they were with the old employer. This was a legal measure to protect workers from having to experience reduced conditions of employment in the process of outsourcing. This was followed by the application by Nehawu that the termination of employment by UCT contravened section 197 (2) (a) and therefore had no force or effect. According to (Burrow, 2002; 63) "It was hoped that this would ease the devastating effects of outsourcing on workers and unions by bringing this practice within the automatic transfer provisions of the section". However, Judge Mlambo who heard the matter in the Labour Court dismissed this earlier application and Nehawu took the case to the Labour Appeal Court (LAC).

Nehawu lost the court case on appeal³³ because the majority of judges dismissed the appeal and stated that,

"The phrase 'as a going concern' was only applicable in cases where both the assets and the workforce of a company were transferred. To say that there can be a sale of a business as a going concern without all or most of the employees going over is to equate a bleached skeleton with a vibrant horse" (Milton, nd).

Finally Nehawu took the case to the Constitutional Court in 2003 arguing that,

"The interpretation of section 197 adapted by the majority of the LAC infringed the rights of the workforce to fair labour practices conferred by section 23(1) of the Constitution and

³³ For a detailed discussion of the case see Burrows (2002); Milton (nd), and Constitutional Court document.

therefore the interpretation of the Constitutionality of section 197 was, in fact, a Constitutional issue” (Milton, nd).

The matter was eventually settled out of court at a cost of approximately R 6,7million to the university³⁴. This amount was paid by the university to the retrenched workers as compensation for their cumulative losses. Many of these retrenched workers however were not re-employed by UCT or the contract companies and the contract companies remained on campus.

The resistance to outsourcing from outsourced workers and other members of the UCT community did not stop with this out of court settlement however. A group of these workers began to organize under the Workers Forum (WF) supported by a group of academics and students called Workers Support Committee (WSC)³⁵. Together these two groups worked, through their activism, to put pressure on the university to account for its decision to outsource non-core work and the conditions that it had created for workers at the university. According to Sørensen by the end of 2003 Supercare employees received a meager R7.07 an hour amounting to R1224 per month (Sørensen, 2004). Pressure to improve these low wages and conditions of employment continued to mount to the point that workers and students organised through the WF and WSC and marched to the university administrative buildings at Bremner and presented a charter of demands to the university in 2004 (See Appendix C). Following this, the university took up the issue with this protest and set in place a process to address the concerns of outsourced workers. The end result of which was the 2007 UCT Code of Conduct for Outsourced Service Providers.

The Code of Conduct for Outsourced Service Providers³⁶ is described as,

³⁴ Interview with both of the ex-NSS

³⁵ According to Sørensen (2004) The Workers Support Committee was formed in response to the unfair dismissal of nine Supercare worker sin January 2003. It was originally formed to give support to these dismissed workers in preparation for their court case. In 2007 the WSC continues to support the ongoing struggle that workers have on campus and creates awareness of the conditions under which outsourced workers at UCT work and suffer.

³⁶ A copy of this Code is available on two website addresses:

<http://www.uct.ac.za/downloads/uct.ac.za/about/policies/Codeofconduct.pdf> and

<http://www.uct.ac.za/services/properties/Code/>. It can also be found in Appendix D of this document

“A new and progressive Code of conduct that will guide and improve the working conditions and wages of service providers contracted by the university” (Vice-Chancellor Professor Njabulo Ndebele, 2005)³⁷

As described earlier, when outsourcing first occurred on a trial basis the University of Cape Town made some provisions to “reduce the impact of the retrenchments” (Kenny and Clarke, 2000; interview with Director of Properties and Services). All retrenched workers were offered retrenchment packages and employment with the new companies. While some employees took the retrenchment packages and turned down the job offers, others immediately transferred to employment with the contracted companies. After the out of court settlement, outsourcing continued.

In tracking the development of the Code, UCT Council was where it was eventually born. In 2004 UCT Council had a number of committees but they didn't have a committee for outsourced work. This is because “it was regarded as a commercial thing” (Interview with Council Member). According to the Report on the Code of Conduct and interviews³⁸ the acceptance by Council that wages of outsourced workers were in fact too low and conditions worse than previous standards under direct employment with UCT was a central motivation behind the move to addressing the issues. The establishment of the Code was therefore not a legal requirement, but is described here as the ‘morally correct’ thing to do arising from a sense of social responsibility to uphold standards of dignity at the university. The Code was described by Council then as a formal response to a sense of a lack of good conduct from contract companies and constitutes a strategy to regulate the conditions of employment of external contractors at the university.

According to literature as well as interviews with the Council member and the Director of Properties and services, UCT management presented the first draft of a Code of Conduct to Council in 2004³⁹. Council rejected this version of the Code on the basis that it did no more than state existing labour law, which included the payment of minimum wages and the provision of basic conditions of employment. These conditions, they argued, are already stipulated in the Sectoral Determinations

³⁷ Varsity newspaper article 25th July 2005, in Varsity volume 24 No 15

³⁸ Interviews with ex Nehawu shop stewards, a UCT council member and Director of Properties and Services

³⁹ UCT Council meeting minutes, Wednesday October 6 2004

for Contract Cleaning Industry. Council then set up an ad hoc committee to re-write a more substantial Code. This new Code included clauses to protect the rights to; a) Freedom of association and collective bargaining, b) Working Conditions, c) Minimum wages, and c) Other Conditions such as maternity leave in which external companies pay the full maternity leave. One of the most important clauses in the Code (clause 3.1) states that:

“Minimum wages are paid in accordance with the Western Cape Supplemented Living Level for African households with an average of 4-5 persons”.

The Supplemented Living Level (SLL) is an estimate that is regularly set by the Bureau of Market Research (BMR) at the University of South Africa (UNISA). This effectively means that all persons that work for external contractors on the campus that are paid less than this minimum as an industrial wage will be given a top-up allowance by the University of Cape Town to bring their final monthly wage to the SLL. The increase was agreed to happen over a three year period, with an 80% increase in 2006, a 90% increase in 2007 and the full amount will be paid in 2008 (See the Code of Conduct).

The Code also states that both the University and the contractors “note and support” a) the Constitution of South Africa, b) the Bill of rights, c) labour legislation such as the Labour Relations Act, the Basic Conditions of Employment Act, and the Employment Equity Act, and d) the University's mission statement, which includes a commitment to promote equal opportunity and the full development of human potential. Furthermore, compliance with the Code is a condition of doing business with the University of Cape Town. This means that the University will only contract with companies that agree to the terms and conditions of the Code.

In June 2005 the Code was accepted by UCT Council and adopted. Implementation followed soon after in January 2006. It was noted in an interview with a UCT Council member that neither the Charter of Demands presented to the University in the 2004 march to Bremner nor any other input from workers or contract companies was used in the drafting of the Code⁴⁰. Although Council

⁴⁰ Interview with Council Member October 2006

decided upon the content of the Code unilaterally, at least some members of Council recognize that,

“People have fought for this. I think it would be a mistake to say that this just happened. All those protests made the ground fertile for the Code”.

Support Service Outsourcing: The Current Context in 2007

Services Outsourced

Under the implementation of this market ideology through the Strategic Planning Framework, the distinction was made between the core business of the university and the non-core business both in theory and in practice. Since the onset of outsourcing at UCT all cleaning, catering, grounds, sports grounds, and garden maintenance jobs have been identified as ‘non-core’ and outsourced on this basis. The security patrol function of general security at the university has also been outsourced where as more strategic matters of security, such as investigations and security management, have been kept in-house⁴¹. In all of these cases, the full time permanent UCT employees that were responsible for the provision of these services were retrenched and the jobs were outsourced to external contract companies. In total, approximately 600 UCT employees were retrenched between 1998 and 2007. According to the Director of Properties and services, “Most if not all [UCT staff] were retrenched, and opted for retrenchment packages. Of the 600 that were retrenched approximately 70 individuals elected to go over to contractors. Very few remain with them now” (Interview, 2007).

By 2007, there are seven main contract companies that have contracts with the University in the provision of non-core services (see table 2). The zones of work/activities that have been outsourced on the basis of being ‘non core’ at the University campus includes activities such as cleaning, cooking/catering, security, and ground maintenance. The University of Cape Town currently has approximately 900 workers employed through the seven contract companies working

⁴¹ Interview with the Executive Director of Properties and Services, University of Cape Town

on the campus⁴². This is an increase from the 600 jobs that were outsourced in the 1990s, which is, according to the Properties and Services division, largely a function of the increased size of the University. Both staff and student numbers have also increased substantially since 1997.

Table 2: Outsourced 'Non-core' Services at the University of Cape Town (January 2007)

	Services	Company at present	Number of Employees
1	Photocopying	Nashua	24
2	Residence Cleaning	Metro Cleaning	95
3	Grounds/garden maintenance	Green Perspective	40
4	Sports Fields	Turfmech	10
5	Campus Cleaning	Fidelity Supercare Cleaning	307
6	Campus Security	Group 4 Security	197
7	Residence Catering	Royal Sechaba	201
		Total	874

Source: Statistics provided by the Department of Properties and Services, University of Cape Town 2007

Table 2 represents the service provided, the name of the company that presently provides the service, and the number of employees working for each company at the University of Cape Town. Royale Sechaba provides catering services to all the catered student residences on campus. Turfmech attends to all the sports grounds; Metro cleans all the residences, while Supercare cleans all the buildings on the main campuses. Group Four Security provides security guards to patrol the campus and finally, Green Perspective does all the gardening and grounds work on campus. A gendered and racial breakdown for employees in each company was unavailable from the UCT Department of Properties and Services.

In addition to these seven companies, the university does business with other companies on both a full time and an ad hoc basis. For example, Rondebosch Catering and Zemon Foods are two companies that provide both the food and the 'labour' to the canteens on the Middle Campus, Upper Campus, and the Rugby Club. These food outlets are staffed by company employees that prepare and sell food to all members of the university community. Similarly, Sibanye is the

⁴² Interview with the Executive Director of Properties and Services, University of Cape Town

transport company that provides the transport needs on campus, primarily the Jammie Shuttle service that is provided to staff and students. When asked why these companies were not identified as outsourced contractors covered by the Code of Conduct, I was told by the Director of Properties and Services that these services have always been provided by an external contractor.

Support Service Outsourcing: A Theoretical Discussion

Given this background, a number of the theoretical debates over outsourcing that are represented in the literature are visible at the University of Cape Town. In this section, these are identified here under three subheadings; the core/non-core debate, effects on trade unions, and the externalised employment relationship and discussed as they relate to support service outsourcing at UCT.

Core vs. non-core: Grounds for outsourcing at UCT?

A similar process of tension and resistance to outsourcing from Nehawu and other anti-outsourcing groups took place at the University of Witwatersrand (Wits) in the late 1990s and early 2000s. The actual process of outsourcing at Wits was reviewed and critiqued in a report produced by Sociology of Work Unit (SWOP). In this paper it is stated that:

“..With respect to both workers and students, neither UMA nor SET is sensitive to the logical implications of marketisation in a context of poverty and high unemployment. Their proposals will reinforce rather than transform the apartheid legacy” (van der Walt et al, 2000: 5).

The critique of the outsourcing of support services at the University of Witwatersrand states that defining something as ‘non-core’ is no grounds for outsourcing it, since core functions can also be outsourced if it is in the interests on the business to do so (van der Walt et al, 2000). According to Kenny and Clarke (2000), the distinction between core and non-core that has been used at UCT and other HAIs is very narrowly defined. While some of these were skilled areas, such as photocopying and certain aspects of security, the majority are defined as non-skilled and presumed

to be the kind of work that “one might say that anyone could do”⁴³ since it is assumed that the performance of the work doesn't affect the main business of the university.

This critique highlights the importance of understanding context when designing and implementing policies and strategies of transformation. From the union's perspective, at UCT, this level of consultation that would take the local needs of employees as well as the broader context of poverty amongst working class people in to consideration is lacking from the process leading up to and including the decision to outsource. The question emerges then; what are the realities for those 'at work' within this tension between the values of the mission statement that seek to “transcend the legacy of apartheid” and “overcome all forms of oppression”⁴⁴ and the economic pragmatism of the new University order?

Effects of Outsourcing for the Union

Today Nehawu's presence is very weak on the University of Cape Town campus. The outsourcing was central to this weakening of the union since through outsourcing, the union lost the base of its membership of blue collar workers and since then it has been unable to secure a strong membership from workers on campus⁴⁵. Before outsourcing, the union had a membership of approximately a thousand people. According to Director of Properties and Services,

“We lost 600 jobs in the process; they were mainly lower paid jobs. In the process we decimated the unions, because their holding went down from probably a thousand to two or three hundred, and that was the major portion of it...when they originally started they had less people working because of the efficiency factor, so there was a double hit just in terms of the market related salaries and then this efficiency factor in terms of the actual number of people required. I would have to say that for most of the outsourced contracts it was like that”.

⁴³ Interview with the Executive Director of Properties and Services, University of Cape Town

⁴⁴ See the University mission statement via <http://www.uct.ac.za/>.

⁴⁵ Interview with Council Member; Interviews with two ex-shop stewards; Kenny and Clarke (2000); Grossman (2006).

After the recognition agreement was cancelled, the union was in a weak position to fight the changes. In 2007 membership is less than 300⁴⁶. UCT academic and administrative staff organise under a different union, called the Employee's Union (EU)⁴⁷. Many of the pay class 1-4 workers previously united under Nehawu are now employed by different companies that are located in separate industries. If these workers are unionized (and a large proportion are not) they belong to different unions depending on the sector that they work in (e.g. Catering, security or cleaning). Since outsourcing, the cleaning workers alone have struggled to organise under at least three different unions⁴⁸. The weakness of the union as an effect of outsourcing is a consistent finding across research of university outsourcing carried out at other universities.

According to the WSC, this division amongst the lower level workers and between the lower level workers and higher grades of workers at UCT challenges the possibilities for solidarity amongst all levels of employees, particularly those at the lower levels. Discussion in the WF was often around the inability of workers to unite with one voice while their different conditions of employment with different companies divide them. Through outsourcing then, a strong distinction between workers defined as 'core' and 'non-core' has been entrenched. Non-core workers are less likely to be unionized and have less access to protection, wages and benefits than core workers. This finding is also consistent with findings from research conducted at Wits and UWC (Bezuidenhout and Fakier, 2006; Johnston, 2001). This division of the workforce into a permanent core workforce and an outsourced non-core workforce has also created divides amongst support staff workers that work for different contract companies; a strategy designed to limit the cost to the University of employing workers at this level. One of the biggest challenges facing workers now then is representation by a unified union, as well as formal representation at other levels of decision making in the university. This lack of clear representation has been one of the challenges in implementing and monitoring the Code of conduct.

From Industrial Relations to Commercial Relationships

⁴⁶ Interview with Executive Director of Properties and Services, UCT.; Interview with ex-shop steward; Interview with Council Member

⁴⁷ For more information see <http://www.employeesunion.uct.ac.za/>

⁴⁸ Interview with ex-NSS and Contract Cleaner Interviewee

Through outsourcing at the University of Cape Town, the traditional employment relationship that existed between the university and its employees in support services as well as the industrial labour relationship between the university and Nehawu has been replaced with a series of commercial/business relationships between UCT and the seven different contract companies. According to Bezuidenhout and Fakier (2006), it is this externalised employment relationship that significantly informs the work experiences of outsourced workers and allows for the reproduction of apartheid conditions of work. The position taken in this thesis is that this externalised relationship has implications for the experiences of workers in these outsourced jobs. The foreground research aims to explore and describe these experiences from the perspective of workers. The background research provides evidence of the existence of an 'externalised relationship' from the perspective of the university. In a newspaper article in 2004, it is stated that,

"The director of Properties and Services, says that UCT 'Does not have a relationship with [cleaning] workers at all' as UCT's contract is with Supercare, not the workers. As a result, UCT cannot enter into wage negotiations between Supercare and its employees".

The earlier section presented about the emergence of the code suggests that the code of conduct was a means of introducing more accountability and stability into a working arrangement that was precarious from the perspective of the workers. According to an interview with a member of UCT Council, UCT is the only university in South Africa to implement a Code of Conduct that regulates conditions of employment under contract labour. Since its implementation, the Code has had several important outcomes. Firstly, it was via this Code that the payment of a minimum wage (the SLL) to contract workers working on campus was decided upon. The proposed minimum wage was to be phased in over a three year period, with 80% increase in the first year, a 90% increase in the second, and the final amount paid in year three. The phasing in of the increase was decided upon because it would manage the increase in the cost to the university over a period of time⁴⁹. Full paid maternity leave was also introduced. The term requires that all companies are responsible for making sure that all women on maternity leave are awarded full pay while on leave. Although maternity leave is the only gendered clause in the Code, in an interview with a Council member it is stated that,

⁴⁹ Interview with Council Member October 2006

“To the extent that workers are predominantly women, the biggest benefits [of the Code] have gone to women”

Although the university has instituted a Code as a measure of improving the experiences of workers in this commercial relationship (as well as the way it does business with the contractors) there has been a significant backlash from the workers around issues of implementation. This is evident amongst workers who organize through the Workers Forum. My observations indicate that workers in the WF meetings are opposed to the Code, stating that, “The Code is a dangerous weapon”⁵⁰. The basis of this objection from workers attending the WF is twofold. Firstly it comes from the observation of active steps by company management and UCT to prevent the organising of the outsourced workers. Secondly, the argument emerging from the Workers Forum is that while UCT says that the Code is a minimum, employers are treating it as a maximum. Workers from within the WF are arguing that although the Code contains within it good terms and conditions these are not being implemented as they should be. This position is substantiated in a *Critique of the UCT Services Providers Code of Conduct*⁵¹ in which it is stated that,

“The proposed Code of Conduct puts ultimately condones the present and continued poverty of contract cleaners [and] effectively endorses actions by UCT that run contrary to the UCT Mission Statement”

With arguments such as these, the WSC is building on a discourse of democracy and worker participation in resistance to outsourcing. Phrases like “some things are worse because of the Code”, “the Code is a dangerous weapon”, and “the Code is making things worse for workers and is being used to silence and discipline” are emerging from these meetings, and the opportunity to attend these meetings allowed me to understand these phrases and the context in which they are being used. This resistance by workers through the WF and support from the WSC is important in understanding the context of worker organizing in workplaces in which union presence is weak.

⁵⁰ Notes from observation in WF meetings and slogan on one of the pamphlets for a WF meeting

⁵¹ See Eppel (2004) ‘A Critique of the UCT Service Provider Code of Conduct and Employment Standards’

This 'complication' of implementing the Code do not only stem from the vantage point of workers and their supporters. Other weaknesses of the Code given the nature of the commercial relationship were identified by the Council Member,

"We built into the Code this reporting thing and how it works is that the employer reports every six months and the workers need to be given the opportunity to comment on the report. But the issue is who is going to do that for the workers? The space has been created, but someone has to take it up" (Interview, 2006).

At the moment, the Workers Forum is discussing ways of assist workers in being party to the reporting process. Under the Code, employees are given the right to actively participate in a reporting process through which compliance with the Code by the companies is reported to UCT Council. However, making use of this 'space' is difficult for workers because they don't have strong organisation/representation and no formal and direct route of communication with the UCT management. According to feedback from the WF meetings and interviews with cleaners, one way in which management of the various companies has tried to address the reporting issue is to set up internal Employee Representative Committees (ERCs) as a means of communication and solving workers issues between management and workers.

The Workers Forum is in the process of accepting and negotiating their position that this policy isn't being implemented in a way that is realizing the needs of workers. As a collective, the WF offers the time, space and resources for the occurrence of a democratic process through which workers are able to express their concerns and strategise ways to communicate with UCT management around their working grievances. This is challenging given their lack of access to institutional power in the form of both resources and decision making structures. My observation in these meetings is that this process of campus level organizing amongst workers independently of management structures is very slow and demanding given that workers are skewered between their management on the one hand and UCT on the other. It is the workers themselves who need to speak directly to UCT management, and this is hard to organize without an organized and united voice. This is perhaps and area worthy of further study.

In order to address these problems of implementing the Code, in August 2007 two external consultants were employed by the University to investigate implementation of the Code given these persistent complaints by workers and the challenge of monitoring implementation given the complexities of a three way relationship. The intention is that these consultants will provide a valuable and direct link of communication between the workers on the ground and the University Management. The Director of Properties and Services expressed that the University hopes that this will allow the University to transform the way it does business with external contractors and the way that these contractors interact with their employees. Whether or not this approach to managing the three way relationship will benefit workers remains uncertain.

Background Conclusion

Given this complex set of circumstances and the presence of a significant number of 'outsourced' workers on campus, the question emerges 'how can the experiences of people working at the university in areas of work defined as 'non-core' contribute to knowledge production about the challenges of higher education transformation in SA in this context of change?' Can the experiences of those who engage in the non-core work of our universities be excluded from these debates about 'core business' of universities - knowledge production and intellectual development - on the continent merely on the basis that the work has been defined, under neo-liberal rhetoric, as 'non-core'? Previous research and critiques suggest that the distinction between core and non-core has concrete implications for how work is valued, arranged, managed, treated and ultimately experienced by those who fill the jobs. What does 'non-core' work really entail? What has been the effect of outsourcing in the meaning of work defined as non-core? By asking these questions and attempting to answer them from the perspective of those who work in these jobs, I hope to provide knowledge that can subvert existing and dominant understandings of the inevitability of university marketisation in South Africa. The presence of existing debates in relation to UCT and the content that they offer indicates that there is already a foundation of writing upon which to build theory about the meaning of working in areas defined as 'non-core' in higher education under post apartheid market discourses. I hope that this research contributes to these existing debates.

3. METHODOLOGY

Cleaning Work and the University of Cape Town

The background 'research' did more than inform me about what had happened at UCT and provide different perspectives on the reasons for the use of outsourcing as a strategy. It also informed how I would proceed with the core focus of this research; to research aspects of work experiences of those who work through outsourcing at UCT. Like other universities, several services have been outsourced at UCT (see Table 2). The background research informed me that each company provides a different service, has a different number of employees working at UCT in various zones of non-core work, and provides different conditions of work for its employees. Given this context of multiple companies operating at UCT, all of which provide different services and conditions of employment, designing a methodology that would allow me to research 'aspects of the experiences of non-core worker's working *through* contract companies at UCT' posed a challenge. Who would I interview? On what basis would I select a sample? How many workers from each company would I interview? What 'aspects of work experience' would I focus on?

Having identified contract cleaning as the zone of work to focus on, I designed pilot interviews with contract cleaning workers at UCT. Through my previous engagement in the Workers Support Committee and initial pilot interviews with 5 contract cleaners, my first methodological challenge with 'cleaning work' as a zone to focus on was that 'cleaning work' constitutes a range of activities; not all cleaning work is the same and there are at least three companies on campus that provide these variations of cleaning services. Firstly, there is the cleaning work that is performed in the halls of residence. This would include, for example, 'cleaning activities' such as making beds, polishing work desks, changing linen, washing dishes, and cleaning public showers and bathrooms. It would also involve constant access to spaces that are very personal to students like their bedrooms and washrooms. This type of cleaning work at the University of Cape Town is performed by employees of a company called Metro. Secondly, Green Perspective is the company responsible for 'cleaning' the University grounds. Its employees engage in work such as emptying the outside dustbins, trimming hedges and keeping the gardens, fields and grounds tidy. Finally, Fidelity Supercare employees clean the administrative buildings and classrooms at the University.

In terms of work 'experience' then, the cleaning employees of these three different companies are required to perform a diverse range of tasks and activities. 'Activities' was an area of experience that I was interested in researching. In addition, workers that I interviewed in pilot studies from two of these companies reported different working times, wages, and conditions of work from their companies. These findings were confirmed by workers in the WF meetings and also constituted 'aspects of experience' that I wanted to research. My rationale was that since the companies provide different cleaning services as well as different conditions of employment for employees, I chose to limit my study to the experiences of workers working at UCT through one company only. Of these cleaning jobs, Fidelity Supercare provides the majority of workers to UCT, with a total of 307 jobs filled by Supercare employees.

The choice to focus on one company has also been the approach of other studies that have researched the meaning of work restructuring through outsourcing. The two other in-depth studies of University outsourcing are *Maria's Burden* and an honours thesis by Sørensen (2004) entitled *The Gendered Consequences of Outsourcing: a Case Study of Support Service Outsourcing at the University of Cape Town*. Both of these studies focus on the lived experience of contract cleaning workers working at two different universities, Wits and UCT respectively, through employment with the contract cleaning company Fidelity Supercare. The research by Bezuidenhout and Fakier (2006) in particular presents a useful framework from which to 'read' the relationship between managers and employees and the relationship between the contract company and the University of Cape Town. Here, notions of increased management surveillance, increased worker control, the reproduction of apartheid conditions of employment all informed what I was listening for in my interviews with cleaners, as well as the eventual themes that emerged from data analysis. Given these observations, I identified Fidelity Supercare (from now on FSC) as the company from which I would select a sample of 'workers' in order to research the experiences of working in 'non-core' work at UCT.

4. METHODS

Methods: Sample

Selection

The sample of interviewees was selected through the use of snowball sampling of contract cleaning employees that work for Fidelity Supercare Cleaning Company (FSC). FSC started providing service to UCT in 1999 when all the cleaning work on the upper campus was outsourced to the contract company. FSC had a five year contract with the University that was renewed in 2005. The existing three year contract is up for renewal at the end of 2008 and FSC will tender again for this contract⁵².

Sampling was also influenced by the context of heavy surveillance under which cleaning workers work, the short lunch break in which interviews took place, and by micro-politics such as language barriers, class differences and access to spaces where interviews could be conducted. I selected participants who could speak English and were willing to engage with me for long enough to get sufficient information to use in analysis⁵³. I stopped sampling when I felt that the material I have gathered was no longer producing new material.

Profile of Sample

The final sample consisted of 26 'contract cleaning workers' all employed by FSC (See Table 3 below). As a result of my snowballing technique of selecting cleaners, my final research sample consisted of a range of cleaners and most of them were located on Upper and Middle Campus buildings, with only two cleaners working on Medical campus interviewed. This is not necessarily a weakness of the study since I am not claiming to have a representative sample.

⁵² Interview with FSC Contract Manager, September 2007

⁵³ The majority of people I encountered when approaching for interviews spoke limited English. Those who could engage more fluently in English did so as a second or third language, with either Afrikaans and/or Xhosa as first languages.

In terms of race, only one of the interviewees is white, the rest are either black or coloured. Although I did not restrict the sample to women only, since the gendered emphasis of this study is on the zone of work rather than the bodies that fill the jobs, the majority of the sample is female, with only 5 out of 26 interviewees being male. Although full gendered breakdown of Supercare employees at UCT wasn't available, my observation over the period I spent in the field was of far more women than men working as Supercare cleaners on campus.

The general education level achieved by the sample is low. However, 7 people having attained standard 10/grade 12 or Matric⁵⁴. None of the people I interviewed have tertiary qualifications. The majority (19) are also parents of at least one child. The relevance of these variables to understanding the quality of work experience through a contract company at UCT will be discussed more in the 'Findings' section.

Table 3: Sample of Supercare Contract Cleaners Interviewed

	M/ F	Age	Building/Campus	Kids	Worked UCT	Worked since	SC	Education	'Race'
1	F	50s	Medical (Medical)	Yes	Yes (11)	1999		Std 5	African
2	F	30s	Kramer (Middle)	Yes	No	2000		Std 8	Coloured
3	F	20s	Bremner (Middle)	No	No	2005		Std 6	Coloured
4	F	30s	Bremner (Middle)	Yes	No	2000		Std 8	Coloured
5	F	30s	Extra Curricula (Upper)	No	No			Std 10	African
6	F	30s	Kramer (Middle)	No	No	2000		Std 10	African
7	M	40s	Hoerikwaggo (Upper)	Yes	No			Std 8	African
8	F	40s	Student Union (Upper)	Yes	Yes (3)	1999		Std 6	African
9	M	30s	Jameson Hall area (Upper)	Yes	No	2004		Std 4	Coloured
10	M	30s	RLSS (Upper)*	No	No	2006		Std 8	Coloured
11	M	30s	Jameson (Upper)	Yes	No	2004		Std 6	African
12	F	30s	Hoerikwaggo (Upper)	Yes	No	2004		Std 6	Coloured
13	F	30s	RLSS (Upper)	Yes	No	1999		Std 8	Coloured
14	F	30s	Kramer (Middle)	Yes	No	2003		Std 10	Coloured
15	F	30s	Kramer (Middle)	N/A	No	2005		Std 9	White

⁵⁴ The Matric qualification is the highest high school qualification in South Africa

16	F	40s	EGS (Upper)	Yes	No		Std 7	Coloured
17	F	20s	EGS (Upper)	No	No	1999	Std 10	African
18	F	20s	Zoology (Upper)	No	No	2006	Std 10	Coloured
19	F	40s	Night shift (Upper)	Yes	No	1999	Std 5	African
20	F	30s	Beattie Building (Upper)	Yes	No		Std 10	Coloured
21	F	50s	Jameson Hall area (Upper)	Yes	No	1999	Std 4	African
22	F	50s	Computer Science (Upper)	Yes	No	1999	Std 4	African
23	M	50s	Graduate School H (Upper)	Yes	No	2003	Std 7	Coloured
24	F	50s	Medical	Yes	Yes (11)	2004	Std 5	African
25	F	40s	Botany (Upper)	Yes	No		Std 10	Coloured
26	F	40s	Student Union (Upper)	Yes	Yes (3)	2004	Std 7	Coloured

*Robert Leslie Social Sciences Building

Methods: Foreground Data Collection

Research on the effects on outsourcing on workers and trade unions generally portrays a negative picture (van der Walt et al, 2002: 29; van Niekerk, 2002: 1). Studies by Andrew Levy and Associates (1999), Kenny and Clarke (2000), van der Walt, Mokoena and Shange (2001), and Johnston (2001) all show that outsourcing at universities on various campuses in South Africa resulted in retrenchments, weakened unionism, lower wages, and poorer conditions of work. Some even indicate lowering morale and deterioration of a cohesive institutional culture (Johnston, 2001; Van der Walt et al, 2001; Grossman, 2006). It was difficult, given such representations of a worsening working life under outsourced work, to assume that this would *not* be the case at UCT.

Within the limited number of previous studies on university outsourcing in South Africa, researchers have focused on 'the effects of outsourcing on workers and their unions'. These studies have focused on 'effects' in terms of 'hard' indicators such as concrete conditions of work (i.e. wages, hours, trade union representation, and material benefits). Wages and conditions of work such as union representation, hours of work and benefits are important indicators of 'quality' of working life

particular (Cock, 1980). Contract cleaning therefore typifies areas of work that have been most predominantly selected for outsourcing in South Africa (Kelly, 1999). Finally, at the University of Cape Town, cleaning work is the zone of 'non-core' work that has the largest number of outsourced workers working at the University. In total, by referring to table 1 below, there are approximately 442 outsourced jobs that can be defined as 'cleaning' jobs. Given that contract cleaning was the zone of work that a) has been outsourced at every university b) has been the most investigated of all services outsourced in higher education and c) is the zone of work with the highest number of jobs affected by outsourcing at the University of Cape Town, I have focused the research on the experiences of contract cleaning workers at UCT. The experiences of cleaners that work at UCT through Fidelity Supercare (FSC) is researched in order to understand more about how outsourcing on the basis of work being defined as 'non-core' had affected the meaning of work. The access to this meaning is through the lived experiences of people that work in these jobs at the university. The reason for the selection of FSC as the contract cleaning company is described below under *Contract Cleaning and the University of Cape Town*.

The use of a feminist methodology is used as a means of challenging the position that the move towards the market university, characterized specifically in this case by the outsourcing of jobs, is natural and inevitable. The method used is to focus on the micro-level or campus level responses to break away from homogeneity to a more diverse view of the meaning of globalisation in higher education. Feminist epistemology, and standpoint theory in particular, allows for a way to subvert dominant knowledge systems by documenting and alternative 'reality' and/or 'truth' to the one offered from the perspective of the dominant or hegemonic knowledge. It does this through revealing the tensions, heterogeneity, ambiguities and contestations that arise when alternative and other 'partial' truths are presented in the production of knowledge. In this way, the methodology is decidedly 'feminist' (Bhavnani, 1994).

Finally, the methods that were used to collect and analyse the data, both for the foreground and background sections of the research, are described and reasons for choosing these are presented. Challenges and ethical considerations that arose during the research process are discussed. The method is to use the conceptual frameworks developed in the existing literature to describe the

working context and illustrate that through outsourcing 'non-core' workers get sandwiched into an externalised relationship which allows for greater exploitation of the workforce.

2. BACKGROUND

Transformation at the University of Cape Town

Like other South African universities, the University of Cape Town has been on its own particular trajectory of transformation since 1994. As a previously advantaged white liberal and English-speaking University, UCT has been faced with the challenges of adapting to the urgency of redress, building democracy, and the push for greater equity and accountability by the South African government through various higher education policies. It was also one of the few institutions that was not affected by the 2000 mergers and is considered to be one of the most well resourced universities in South Africa.

In terms of 'transformation' as it relates to redressing past inequalities, UCT's mission is to be "flexible on access, active in redress and rigorous on success" (Mission statement: 1996). The transformation agenda has been directed by the White Paper on Education (1997), the Higher Education Act (1997) and the National Plan on Higher Education (2001) requirements to address past inequities through redress. Student equity at UCT has been based on the principles of: diversity, redress, non-racialism, transparency and fairness, reliability and validity in admissions process, equity of access, equity of outcomes, and integration (Hall, 2004: 2). Access for students that were previously disadvantaged has been a central aspect of university transformation. The university has expressed a commitment to de-racialising student enrollment through the increased intake of black students. Redressing gender inequality has also been through increasing intake of female students. In 2003, 49% of all students were black and 50% were women. Since 2003, changes in these figures have been marginal with approximately 50% of all students being black and 51% being female.

In terms of academic work restructuring and employment equity, the University of Cape Town does have race and gender equity transformation goals, and like all other universities in South Africa, is required by government to submit an annual employment equity report to the National Department of Labour (Shackleton, 2007: 4). In 2006 there were approximately 2400 permanent staff employed by the university. Fifty three percent of all permanent staff were women and 32% were academic staff. Of these academic staff, 22% were black, and 34% were women, reflecting dominance in academic jobs of white men. The majority of women are still highly represented in the administrative jobs, with black and coloured women occupying most of these administrative jobs.

Table 1: Employment Statistics for UCT 2005 and projected targets for 2007

SECTOR	SEPTEMBER 2005	2007 TARGET
Academic	769	784
Black	171 (22%)	208 (27%)
White	598 (78%)	576 (73%)
Male	505 (66%)	500 (64%)
Female	264 (34%)	284 (36%)
PASS	1663	1715
Black	1085 (65%)	1130 (66%)
White	578 (35%)	583 (34%)
Male	639 (38%)	669 (39%)
Female	1024 (62%)	1046 (61%)
All Staff	2432	2497
Black	1256 (52%)	1338 (54%)
White	1176 (48%)	1159 (46%)
Male	1144 (47%)	1169 (47%)
Female	1288 (53%)	1330 (53%)

Source: Figures taken from <http://www.uct.ac.za/print/about/intro/ee/profile>¹³

¹³ According to the figures in table 2, there were approximately 1715 PASS jobs and 784 academic jobs in 2007. However, figures in the 2007 UCT Institutional Climate Survey Report (2007; 19) indicate that there are 1240 academic

In 2007, women represented 50% of the deans and 43% of executive directors, indicating progress towards the liberal goal of attracting more women into leadership positions at the university (Shackleton, 2007: 3). The commitment to gender and race has also extended to an engagement with issues on sexual harassment and sexual violence on campus and after much work by the African Gender Institute, the university has implemented a sexual harassment policy.

In a similar trend to other universities in South Africa, quantitative measures have been the dominant route into analysis of gender questions at UCT. However, according to Mama and Barnes (2007: 3), "beyond the familiar story of quantitative inequities in African higher education lie the institutional dynamics and processes that produce it". While getting the numbers right has been on the agenda at UCT, the substantive gains have not shown a deeper commitment by the university to gender equity as a core aspect of building democracy on campus. Recent research on gender and institutional culture at UCT reveals that there is a lack of focus on gender in institutional transformation programmes, and that UCT is an institution in which gender relations are not considered to be an issue (Shackleton, 2007: 16). This then is what serves to perpetuate a conservative and patriarchal culture that is dominated by the hegemony of the male norm. In terms of race, institutional culture findings indicate that both staff and students still experience the institutional culture as racist (Louw & Finchilescu, 2003; UCT Institutional Climate survey, 2007).

In the context of increasing globalisation and the emergence of the market university in South Africa, like other HAs in South Africa, transformation at UCT has been parallel to a process of increased corporatisation of the university. This process of marketisation is generally tracked to the adoption of GEAR by the post-apartheid government more generally and the Vice Chancellorship of Dr. Mamphela Ramphele during the period 1996-2000 (Bertlesen, 1998; Orr, 1997; Kenny and Clarke, 2000 Grossman, 2006). As Vice Chancellor, Dr. Ramphele introduced neo-liberal policies of transformation in line with the goals of increasing 'competitiveness, efficiency and effectiveness' (Grossman, 2006). As part of this strategic transformation the university

staff (lecturers, senior lecturers, associate professors, and professors) and 2494 PASS staff (pay classes 1-15) which is a total of 3734 staff at UCT. These figures are far higher than the employment equity statistics represented in table 2 above.

initiated a restructuring process that involved the mergers of faculties, the closing down of departments, and the outsourcing of services defined as 'non-core' (Kenny and Clarke, 2000; Grossman, 2006).

These changes have also had implications for the university climate and culture. Bertlesen (1998) identified language and market discourse as an indicator of this corporatisation at UCT in her 1998 analysis of university marketisation. At this time she asserts that, "a thoroughgoing commoditisation of knowledge and instruction is well under way, and in the process the universities are being systematically transformed into a pliant service industry for the late capitalism market system" (Bertlesen, 1998: 130). According to her research, academic staff have struggled with increased managerialism, a high surveillance culture amongst academics and administrative staff, performance appraisals and outcomes based work, a lack of faith in management structure, a breakdown in collegiality and competition amongst academic staff. In terms of students, a central concern is that black working class school leavers are being excluded from entry into the university as fees increase (Grossman, 2006; Nash, 2006; Barnes, 2006a). This threatens to re-racialise rather than de-racialise access given the legacies of race that are so embedded in the South African class systems. Finally, working class employees at UCT have been retrenched and their jobs have been outsourced (Kenny and Clarke, 2000; Sørensen, 2004; Grossman, 2006).

Bertlesen (1998) demonstrates that while transformation is "plausibly democratic" it had become market driven already in 1998. The contradictions between marketisation and transformation have led Grossman to conclude that "part of the consequences is that embedded in the progressive goals of redress and equity is the values of the capitalist market that undermine and prevent their achievement" (Grossman, 2006: 97). This thesis does not try to summarise all of the goals, achievements, challenges and failures in the realm of transformation. The observation however is that debates about transformation at UCT in this changing and dynamic post apartheid context have been directed at what has been defined in recent years as the 'core' zones of work; teaching and research. Much less has focused on what the implications of transformation have been for non-core work and how knowledge about non-core work might contribute to our understanding of the university as a whole. In order to begin to interrogate what transformation has meant from the perspective of non-core work, a history of outsourcing and a discussion of some of the debates that

emerge from this history are needed. What does it mean for the life and work of a university if apparently progressive goals are linked to attacks against workers and their organisations? (Grossman, 2006: 98)

A Different Transformation: Outsourcing at the University of Cape Town (1990–2007)

Introduction

This section of the Chapter examines some important background questions concerning outsourcing at the University of Cape Town. It briefly documents aspects of the history of outsourcing; such as when it occurred as well as a description of the services that have been outsourced and the number of jobs that have been affected. This is to demonstrate the extent of outsourcing at the university over the period 1990-2007. An analysis of the data collected for this section is also necessary as an introduction to the logic behind the university's approach to restructuring in line with its broader 'transformation' agenda.

An interesting aspect of the 'history' of outsourcing is the presence of ongoing resistance to outsourcing from the union, Nehawu, and other constituencies at the University, such as staff bodies and students. During this stage of the research, and through the analysis of the material found, resistance to the outsourcing was also found to be an aspect of this process of outsourcing which is worth mentioning here as part of this thesis. If outsourcing is viewed as part of a transformation strategy linked to the adoption of neo-liberal or market discourses in higher education, the resistance to this reflects an alternative and subversive approach to the dominant discourses. As is suggested by Bertlesen (1998: 155) "Discourses are always open to contestation and revision, and whatever is articulated can be dis-articulated and re-articulated....intervention is still possible at an institutional level". The history of resistance at the institution is important because it suggests that the move to outsourcing wasn't easy nor was it necessarily inevitable.

The main thrust of the background section is to provide a lens through which to view the current context of 'non-core' work restructuring at UCT in order to begin to access and understand the meaning of work experiences of people that work in what have been described as 'non-core' jobs. The experiences of workers in 'non-core' jobs then offer a new source of knowledge, or standpoint,

from which to view the meaning of transformation at the university. Taking the perspective that knowledge is partial and situated (Bhavnani, 1994) this new standpoint can add to and potentially subvert the dominant perspectives or discourses that inform 'transformation' and that currently determine the value of different zones of work in higher education.

Support Service Outsourcing at the University of Cape Town: The Process

In line with the commitment to restructuring the university towards the market model, the outsourcing of support services at the University of Cape Town began in the 1990s, under the Vice-Chancellorship of Dr. Mamphela Ramphele. The Vice Chancellor introduced neo-liberal policies of transformation in line with the goals of 'competitiveness, efficiency and effectiveness'. At this time, the university management team, Senate and Council was engaging in an important restructuring exercise. The Strategic Planning Framework of 1996-2001 was the document that informed the transformation of the University into a 'World Class South African University'¹⁴. According to key informants at the university and analysis of related documents¹⁵ the decision to outsource certain activities defined as 'non-core' at the university was part of the strategic transformation that has been taking place at the University since the early 1990s that was tied up with the neo-liberal approach to university restructuring backed by the Vice Chancellor.

In terms of other processes of outsourcing of jobs in South African higher education, the reported trend (Johnston, 2001; Bezuidenhout and Fakier, 2006) has been for external consultants to advise the universities about restructuring and outsourcing. At the University of Cape Town, this was also the case (Kenny and Clarke, 2000). The initial phase of this examination of the university was conducted by an external consultant¹⁶. It involved a scoping exercise of the University as ground work for restructuring. Analysis of the scoping exercise document indicates that this was followed by a process called AIMS (Audit and Integration of Management Systems), in which external consultants assessed the provision of services through Properties and Services and then advised the University on outsourcing. It seems that this scoping exercise was central to selection process by the University and the external consultants of those services that would be the best targets for

¹⁴ Interview with ex-NSS; Kenny and Clarke (2000).

¹⁵ See Appendix E

¹⁶ See Scoping Exercise Report by Heidi Wheeler and Associates

outsourcing¹⁷. The overall aim of strategic transformation was stated by the Vice-Chancellor as “to make UCT run like a ‘well-oiled machine’”. In the same document, the Vice Chancellor continues further stating,

“AIMS will free up academic’ time to concentrate on teaching and research; it will give service providers best-in-class tools to perform their duties effectively. Overall the University will begin to operate at a much higher level of professionalism and efficiency” (Dr. Mamphela Ramphele, 1999)¹⁸

Strategic transformation as defined at the time was necessary to “improve the efficiency, effectiveness and the quality with which the University goes about its business” (Dr. Mamphela Ramphele, in Grossman; 2005). The AIMS consultants stated in a document that the purpose of the University wide audit would be,

“To ensure that the support and service structures and processes are aligned with the functionality and the needs of the core business. Through alignment, the aim would be to optimize the cost/revenue ratio thereby enabling appropriate resource allocation. Given this, the project crucially has to do with the question of the type, quality and cost of support services required and where these are best located” (Heidi Wheeler and Associates, 1999).

Under this restructuring of the university, teaching and research activities were defined as the ‘core’ business of the university while those jobs defined as non-core were all the support services identified as “services that are not directly involved with academia”¹⁹. One of the main reasons given by the Director of Properties and Services for outsourcing was that management capacity was dwindling and outsourcing was to free up resources that could then be redirected towards the core business of the institution²⁰.

¹⁷ See Scoping Exercise Report by Heidi Wheeler and Associates

¹⁸ From letter to UCT staff from the Vice-Chancellor called ‘Launch of AIMS project’, November 8th 1999

¹⁹ Interview with the Executive Director of Properties and Services, University of Cape Town

²⁰ Interview with the Executive Director of Properties and Services, University of Cape Town

and can provide a lens through which to understand the meaning of work. However, these quantitative measures, although significant, do not allow for more nuanced and textured analysis about the actual quality and meaning of working through outsourced work on a day to day basis. My participation in the WSC had allowed me access to a lot of this 'concrete' information before I had even started interviewing workers. Therefore, rather than asking about these aspects of working life only, it was my goal to ascertain from interviewees information about their qualitative experiences and from this draw some conclusions about the meaning of working in 'non-core work'. The theoretical motivation for choosing a qualitative approach to meaning of work in this context is that there is "limited value of quantitative analysis in providing insights into issues of human relationships and about power inequalities within the research process" (Bhavnani, 1994: 26).

The background section suggests that the context in which workers experience their daily lives at the university is characterised by political and economic complexities. Wages and hours of work do not offer much insight into *how* this context might affect the lived experience of workers on as well as off campus. What they do offer is an indication of how the work is treated and valued. Therefore, I have included them here. Other qualitative measures in existing studies have been used to examine whether 'blue collar' workers found working life more 'pleasant/unpleasant' through employment with external service provider than had been the case when in university employ. These have also included indicators of treatment such as,

"whether management regulated workers' breaks more closely, whether worker felt more closely watched by management, and whether workers felt that management was more 'harsh' in its approach towards them" (Van der Walt et al, 2002: 32).

Similar criteria were used in the study conducted by Bezuidenhout and Fakier (2006) to explore continuities and discontinuities between the apartheid work order and the conditions of work under contract cleaning arrangements at Wits University in Johannesburg. I identified these measures as equally important indicators of 'quality' of every day lived experience at work. 'Softer' aspects of work such as issues like human dignity and respect, the right to health and safety, and the quality of relationships with management are also important aspects of the intended reforms of labour

legislation which are upheld by the new Constitution. For these reasons, I have not only focused on the quantitative measures of 'meaning of work'. I was listening for how people experience work at the institution and how they experience the 'skewered' position of working in a triangular employment relationship. What was also important was investigating how workers get positioned and repositioned into undervalued areas of work under this new (neo-liberal) work arrangement. The question of citizenship, belonging, and value at work, as well as visibility and the political meaning of working in 'soft' areas of work that have been out rightly defined as 'non core' by the university were the issues I was listening out for in my interviews.

The approach to the research taken here is therefore one that values qualitative data and takes on an epistemological position that lived experience is a valid basis for knowledge production. Lived experience is a valuable source of 'knowledge' for those populations that have been consistently invisibilised by dominant knowledge systems, disciplines, and institutions that produce knowledge. This approach hoped to reveal more intangible indicators of the complexities of working in a skewed position of a 'non-core' worker at the University of Cape Town. Researching 'the marginalised' also has challenges however for issues of credibility and representation. These are discussed in a later section below.

Observation

Observation included selecting sites on campus where I would sit, observe, and take notes about the actual work and social activities that cleaners engage in. This participant observation took place intermittently over a period of 12 months, from April 2006 to May 2007.

Researcher Journal

I kept a researcher journal throughout the research process in which I made notes on experiences that I had of the research process. The journal was also used to make interview notes when I wasn't allowed by the participants to record sections of the interviews. These journals were very useful in documenting events and facts as well as ideas and insights. This helped to develop an understanding about 'experiences of cleaning work at the university' through the *process* of actually doing the interviews. Some of these issues are described here under the section

'Challenges of the Research Process'. Other material from these researcher journals is better fitted for the conclusion and findings and will be raised again in more detail in Chapters 4 and 5.

Interviews with Supercare Cleaners

Content of interviews

Semi-structured open-ended interviews were conducted with a sample of 26 contract cleaners from FSC. I used open ended questions to allow for the people that I interviewed to say as much as was possible about their own experiences of four broad aspects of work. I began all interviews by asking interviewees about themselves and posed questions about their employment history with Supercare. These questions were followed by me asking variations of the following four broad areas of 'questions' or 'opportunities' to talk about work experiences: 1) what are the things that you like about your job? What are the things you like about working at UCT? 2) What are the things that you dislike about your job? What are the things you dislike about working at UCT? 3) What has been your experience of the Code of Conduct? 4) What advice would you give to someone who started working as a Supercare employee in this building with you tomorrow?

By asking about these four broad aspects of work experience, I presented interviewees with the opportunity to engage with their own experiences of work as contract cleaners working for Supercare at the University of Cape Town. I chose to locate visceral experience as a useful way to collect data about 'quality' and 'meaning' of work, and from this I could then gain access to facts of working such as wage, times of work, and other aspects of work life. This approach meant that the diversity, contradictions and tensions of the experiences of cleaners could also be accessed and discussed as part of the findings. All interviews were recorded and for analysis purposes I played them back repeatedly as well as transcribed these interviews.

Duration of interviews

My first pilot interviews took place in April 2006. The final interview was conducted in July 2007. Interviews took place on campus and always during the lunch break of Supercare employees. Lunch breaks are from 13:00 to 13:30 Monday to Friday. Interviews were therefore limited to a minimum of half an hour given this short lunch break. On some occasions, participants would allow the interview to carry over for longer periods. The interviews therefore vary in length from

half an hour to an hour and 15 minutes, with the average interview length and 25 minutes. While in the field, I also had interactions with various participants in the sample that were not recorded. Since I spent a lot of time on campus as a student, I would often see participants that I had interviewed and they would talk to me about experiences and ask me questions about the progress of my research. When this happened I made notes in the researcher journal and used these as raw data as well.

Location of Interviews

On Middle Campus, I conducted three interviews in a departmental office offered to me for the purposes of research by the African Gender Institute (AGI). The other middle campus interviews were conducted in the change room of the cleaners. On upper Campus, interviews took place in a range of places given that I interviewed cleaners in different buildings on campus. In addition, it wasn't feasible to go back to the office on middle campus given the short lunch break. Venues therefore varied from change rooms and store rooms in basements, to the student union building, to empty classrooms, and benches outside. One interview took place sitting on the floor in the last cubicle of the 'Ladies' toilets in the Student Union Building since this 'space' constituted the participant's work rest room.

I preferred to go to the workers and speak to them from where they work and rest as opposed to bring them into my work space. Space therefore became important, because what is work space to me as student on campus means something very different to a cleaner and vice versa. Issues involving 'space' developed as part of a central theme in the 'Findings' (See chapter 4). Related to this approach of researcher 'ethics', in return for their time I always offered tea/coffee to interviewees and often bought lunch or cool drinks to have in the interviews. I also offered to make my research available to any interviewees that were interested in the final research report. At least three interviewees stated that they had been interviewed by students on their experiences of work in the past and had not seen any outcomes from the research. They were disappointed with this previous experience, but willing to assist me nonetheless.

Strengths and limits of the interview method in this context: A discussion

The first Supercare employee that I interviewed as a pilot interview worked in the department that I am located in. My proximity to her allowed me to easily invite her to participate in my first pilot interviewee. I asked her if she would be willing to participate in an interview and she agreed, immediately asking if she could invite a friend to be a part of the interview process as well. I agreed to this and discovered from this technique of conducting an interview with two people at a time that the presence of another person can stimulate discussion. After this I continued to be asked if interviews could happen with friends present and conducted interviews in pairs on four different occasions. This also posed a challenge however; on two occasions it led to one interviewee speaking more than the other. I chose to use this approach when it appeared to encourage the flow of conversation, and when it was apparent to me that the pairing was not appropriate I asked for the paired interview to end and held single interviews instead.

The first interview drew my attention to the fact that interviewees often spoke about aspects of their experience that I hadn't directly asked about. In this way, it appeared that the interviewees were setting their own agenda for the interview. This also influenced my decision to keep questions as open ended as possible, with the focus on listening to the experiences that participants raised as significant. After these two interviews, I approached other cleaners in the same building for interviews as well. I soon realized that the particular building consisted of a 'team' of seven cleaners and a team leader (what cleaners refer to as a 'head girl' or 'head boy') and that this 'team' has its own internal dynamics. I decided that in order to avoid the research process becoming part of internal conversation amongst workers in a team, it would be better to expand my sample beyond the one building.

I also got a sense of insecurity about participation in the research by some of the cleaners in that building. They were concerned that they would lose their jobs if they participated in the research. This highlighted the importance of informed consent and taking extra special precaution to ensure confidentiality to people employed by the company, since they have experienced people being fired for talking about working conditions⁵⁵. Two people stated that participation in other research that

⁵⁵ Interview with a group of 3 contract cleaners, September 2006

they had participated in on campus had threatened their jobs before and they wouldn't allow that to happen again.

This prompted me to use snowball sampling. I asked interviewee 1 if she knew of anyone and she recommended a cleaner on upper campus. I also began to 'recruit' and select cleaning workers from Upper Campus. I approached people in Supercare uniforms during their lunch time break and asked if they would be willing to participate in the research process. Some people were far more willing than others to participate.

During this process it was immediately clear that English is not the first language of the majority of FSC employees. In my selection process and through observation I noted Xhosa and Afrikaans as the more visible languages spoken by Supercare staff. Since I wanted to conduct and transcribe all interviews myself, I was therefore only able to interview people who had fluency in English. More discussion about the challenges that I experienced in the research process will be detailed below.

Another variable that influenced my sampling was the buildings in which cleaners work. As comment such as, 'we work harder here in this building', 'it's nicer to work here on this campus', and 'we are glad we don't work there', emerged, I assumed that there may be preferences amongst Supercare cleaners about work location on campus. I took this to mean that experiences of work varied across different buildings. My awareness and interest in this prompted me to try to select people from as many different buildings as possible given the time limits of the research. I later realized that departments also have very different approaches to how they relate to their cleaners, and this will be discussed more in the 'Findings' section. For now, this reinforced my decision to get a variety of experiences from people working in different locations of campus, as opposed to the experiences of people that all work in the same building.⁵⁶ It also added information about the relationship of different workers to the University space. The table that reflects the sample profile also includes a list of the various buildings experienced by the workers in this sample.

⁵⁶ Research of people in the same building has been conducted however. In Eppel, S. (2004) study of the experiences of contract cleaners working in an office block in the Cape Town CBD, the researcher used an ethnographic methodology and he focused his research on a 'team' of workers working in the same building over a period of time.

Choosing to conduct interviews during lunch hour meant that I was only able to conduct one interview per day. The semi-structured open ended interview made it hard to draw across the board comparisons during the analysis stage of the research because while I centered questions on broad themes, I didn't ask all of the interviewees all of the same questions and not all interviews generated the same discussions. Some people refused to answer certain questions, or the conversation didn't develop enough for me to be able to illicit substantial responses from interviewees. Since I only conducted one interview with each interviewee, there was limited time to build rapport or really interrogate responses for deeper meaning. For this reason, table 4 in Appendix B uses N/A where information was not ascertained from the interviews. I learned that preliminary interviews may have been a better option in order to identify areas that could then be probed in more detail. Since the responses to these questions were open-ended, a range of responses about personal experiences of working at UCT through Supercare were shared in the interviews. Sometimes these were painful issues for the participants which required careful responses from me.

Methods: Background Data Collection

The background section was written on the basis of participant observation in the Workers Support Committee (WSC) and Workers Forum (WF), semi-structured interviews with two ex-Nehawu shop stewards, the University Executive Director of Properties and Services, one UCT Council member and an interview with the Fidelity Supercare on site contract manager. This section was also developed on the basis of notes from my researcher journal documenting observations both within and outside the WSC meetings and WF meetings. These two bodies will also be discussed below. Other sources of data that I worked with to compile this section include published journal articles, newspaper articles, a university report in preparation for outsourcing written by an external consultant, UCT Council meeting minutes, and correspondence between the trade union (Nehawu) and the university management documenting some of the communication around the time of outsourcing.

The purpose of this section was to develop a contextual background of outsourcing at the University of Cape Town, in the form of a narrative, against which to present my findings. The background also allows me to link ideas of 'marketisation' in the literature review to UCT as a case study and view outsourcing as an aspect of transformation that emerged from a specific context - one that can be described as the increased emphasis on 'efficiency' and 'effectiveness' .

Participant Observation

The Worker's Support Committee (WSC) is a group of academics, other UCT staff and students that emerged out of an interest in the working conditions of outsourced workers at the University of Cape Town in the 1980s. The Committee holds meetings every Tuesday to discuss its work and I was invited to participate in as well as observe these meetings as part of my research. A central function of the WSC is that it helps organize monthly Workers Forum (WF) meetings for *all* university workers. The emphasis that outsourced workers are university workers is central to the WF as it promotes solidarity amongst all the workers that form part of the university community. In this forum, workers have the space to discuss issues pertinent to their work life on the UCT campus. It is also a space in which problems are clarified and potential solutions to these problems are communicated amongst workers and strategies to empower workers are devised. I attended regular WF meetings throughout the research process and it provided me with a broader understanding of the challenges that the 'non-core' workers face in their relationship with the university and their management.

Interviews

Initial interviews were held with two ex-Nehawu shop stewards, and a UCT Council member. These interviews were semi-structured and recorded for transcription purposes. I used different questions for each interview because I hoped to get different perspectives from the three interviewees about aspects of the history of outsourcing on campus; when it began, why it began and any other useful insights to assist me in constructing a narrative of the context of university outsourcing at the University of Cape Town.

Access to the initial interviewees for the background section was enabled by attendance at the Workers Forum. It was through this body that I was able to arrange interviews with the two ex-shop stewards from Nehawu. I chose to interview the ex-Nehawu shop stewards because they have worked at UCT through the years 1992-2007 and have witnessed the shift towards outsourced work on campus. Access to the council member required that I locate names and contract details from the UCT website. I then emailed the council member to request an interview and was permitted to conduct an interview. An interview with a council member was necessary to understand why the university chose to embark on outsourcing and also understand the process through which the Code of Conduct came into being. There were of course certain political and institutional issues that could not be discussed in this interview. The interview with the Supercare contract manager was organized through a direct visit to the Supercare offices in the Beattie Building on the University's upper campus. There I met with the contract manager and was able to secure a time for an interview.

Interviews with the Director of Properties and Services and the Supercare contract manager were conducted after I had interviewed my core sample of participants as an extra mechanism to protect the autonomy of the cleaners. Interviews with these key informants were very valuable, but based largely on memory, which has its limitations as well. Some of the information, such as the exact number of workers on campus at present, was difficult to obtain because I was dependent on emailing executives and managers at the University and getting responses from them. Staff at UCT are generally busy and it took time in some cases to get responses.

Documents

I was able to gain access to useful documents through my interviews with key informants (two ex-shop stewards, a university council member, and members of the WSC). Other material was available on the University of Cape Town website⁵⁷. The UCT website was a valuable source of information about the employment statistics at the University and aspects of the history of UCT in particular. Through my search of documents and literature, I discovered that outsourcing at the University of Cape Town has been documented to some extent, but that this documentation

⁵⁷ www.uct.ac.za

includes few published articles. Much of the material comes from non-academic documents, such as newspapers, letter, reports, minutes from meetings, and information on websites. Where possible I used published material to validate information from other sources. A list of all websites, UCT documents and letters that I used are presented as part of the bibliography at the end of this research dissertation. Given the scope of a Masters thesis I could not possibly document the entire historic process of restructuring at UCT; nor would it have been a productive exercise for the particular purpose of this thesis. Therefore, what was presented as 'background' is a partial account of what happened at UCT to set the background context to the main focus of the research.

Methods: Analysis

Following Glesne (1999), analysis began early in the research process through the taking of notes in which I began to link responses I observed in interviews and through participant observations with theoretical issues in the literature review. Of centrality to this process was my particular awareness of where my observations were potentially linked to findings from this study by Bezuidenhout and Fakier (2006). I also noted observations that were new, different and/or contradictory.

In relation to interviews, as a novice researcher it was challenging to listen to 'strangers' tell me about their experiences with the ability to actually hear what they were saying and differentiate between different types of information that I was 'listening for' for the purposes of my research. Transcription was useful in this listening process. Often things that I didn't pick up in the actual interview became apparent during transcription and analysis. My own conclusion from this experience is that audio recording, transcription and immediate note taking after interviews is essential when researching challenging areas in which the researcher has to be attentive to many things at the same time. My experience is that it was easier to interview people with which I could identify in my honours research (young black middle class South African women) than people and situations that I actually knew very little about.

The transcripts were then analysed to identify 'themes' or 'codes' that illuminate the meaning of work as a contract cleaner at UCT. Given that I was not working with a structured interview

schedule the material generated from each interview and therefore the 'quality' of the responses (in terms of content and length) varied. For example, while one interviewee talked extensively on one issue or aspect of experience, another talked to a range of experiences but in less depth. Some people were also more willing to engage in the interview than others, which also contributed to interviews varying in length and content. I therefore approached the transcribed interview material in two ways. Firstly, the themes highlighted in the findings chapter represent experiences of work that are most frequently observed in the interview material (i.e. experiences repeatedly talked about across interviewees). Secondly, I also listened for experiences that were central to one particular interviewee. Sometimes that was the case, that an interviewee would emphasise one issue and say very little with respect to other aspects of work. This was a direct consequence of the research being exploratory and the use of semi-structured interviews.

I began to select material from the interviews that resounded with, added to or contradicted the findings from the studies conducted by Mhlongo and Fakier (2004), Bezuidenhout and Fakier (2006) and Sørensen (2004) that have been fore-grounded in the literature review on 'effects of outsourcing on contract workers in higher education'. The themes I developed follow a similar pattern to those outlined in these studies and they focus on experiences that illuminate the quality of work from the perspective of the workers.

Methods: Challenges of the Research Process and Ethical Considerations

"The Semi-structured interview requires sensitive and ethical negotiation of rapport between the interviewer and the interviewee" (Carla Willig, 2001).

The research was conducted in a particular historical moment characterised by the real tensions of outsourcing on the University campus described in the background section. Doing qualitative research with a sample of people in a context of high surveillance was also challenging. Time constraints, attitudes, my own preconceived ideas, and of course notions of what is valuable to research all contributed to a sensitive research experience for both me and in some instances the interviewees.

While in some instances my position as a student at the university gave me access to information, in other ways it was a factor that didn't permit me full access to information. I am a 27 year old black, middle class South African woman. I am fluent in only one of the eleven official languages of South Africa; English. Given the limitations of language, time, and the sensitivities of talking to a stranger often about sensitive work issues, developing rapport with participants was a challenge. Interview content did however get quite personal, and occasionally it was clear that what were being shared were difficult and painful experiences for the interviewees. I noticed that in some cases, as workers developed familiarity with me and a comfort with talking about their experiences, their story would change slightly. When this happened, I witnessed interviewees starting to 'open up' as the interview progressed. In some cases this also presented contradictions, tensions and ambivalences in the interviewees own position to their experiences of working as cleaners at the University. More about this is discussed in the 'Findings' section (See Chapter 4). Given the limited amount of time to build rapport, it would have been beneficial to conduct second interviews. Where this was possible I arranged for second meetings.

In writing about qualitative research methods, Carla Willig (2001: 22) suggests that, "The researcher needs to know what the interview means to the interviewee to fully understand the interviewees contributions". This has relevance to my experience as a researcher because in the process of inviting participants to engage in the research, I often felt a sense of there being a gap between my understanding of what the interview was about and the cleaners' understanding of what it was about. For example, with retrospect during the analysis stage, I recognized that on occasion I asked the wrong questions because I was simply not clear what I was really listening for at the time of the interview. What seemed obvious to the cleaners was not obvious to me, and what felt obvious to me seemed unclear to them. A related but different point is that I recognize that I worded some of my questions incorrectly at the time. For example I posed the following question: "Some cleaners have complained that they are required to do too much work. Is this your experience?"

I didn't say 'complained to me' which is what I meant. In the way this interviewee answered the question I can see that she thought I meant 'complained to the bosses'. That is not what I was asking. So when she says she "No I don't complain and I won't complain" she is saying that she

doesn't complain to UCT or to Supercare. She does 'complain' to me however about heavy workload as an aspect of her work experience in the interview however. The difference in meaning has important implications for findings.

Some of the participants had never seen a Dictaphone before, and were uncomfortable with me recording the interview. Here I had to sacrifice my need for data for their need for security. I interpreted this to mean that the whole notion of a recorded conversation was foreign to the participant. Due to the short amount of time available in the half hour lunch break for the interview there was a limited amount of time to explain what was happening and therefore I often felt a gap or a sense of incompleteness. What was happening? Why was I asking these people about their working experiences, having them sign pieces of paper? These pressures, many of which I realize arise from difference, meant that although I was following ethical guidelines in conducting the interviews I still had a sense of discomfort. It was also difficult to explain to some of the interviewees that the work I was doing was for a Masters degree and nothing else. Interviewees sometimes asked me questions which were directed at serving interests of their own: Can you help us get better wages? Will you help us get a representative? Can you teach us and give us computer lessons? We can talk to you but you also need to help us! Will you tell UCT about our problems? Since I was unable to do any of these things, I note them here as aspects of the work experience that are central and pressing for these workers and return to some of them in Chapter 4 (*Analysis of Data*).

This language barrier and experiential barrier that was very much determined by class (in that some interviewees had never experienced an interview of this nature before) was particularly difficult in terms of developing rapport. On occasion, interviewees would also ask me for favours such as money for lunch, lifts to and from work, and to pass messages onto people on other campuses. I limited these 'favours' to what I felt was ethically comfortable, realizing that power imbalances in 'access' to resources determined by class position in the 'real world' played out in the interview process.

Other than the interview time being short for reasons mentioned above, interviews often took place in unusual places, like empty lecture theatres, changing rooms, or sitting outside on benches

during a break with a sense of tension about who was watching the interview. Access to spaces where cleaners work and rest sometimes required asking a UCT Staff member or other UCT workers (such as Security guards) that work in/for the department to help me find cleaners in their buildings. Other contacts were therefore important in locating interviewees. Another issue was visibility. When interviews took place in more public spaces, I was often watched when interviewing workers, either by other cleaners or by supervisors. The cleaners that I interviewed were also watching their surroundings to see who was watching them. In one of my earliest interviews, the interviewee was concerned about being spotted talking to me, either by another cleaner or a supervisor, and losing her job. In response I also became acutely aware of the context in which I was conducting research, and was sensitive to this air of suspicion by asking people if they felt comfortable with the interview and the space. The atmosphere of 'surveillance' also encouraged me to interview people from different buildings to avoid talk amongst cleaners in one building about the research. This was an important consideration in my use of snowball sampling when interviewees suggested that I interview people from the same building as them. This experience of anxiety is shared by others who have engaged in interviews with contracted staff at Universities. Johnston (2001: 8) states,

"What was striking throughout the interviews with workers was their constant nervousness, nervousness of getting caught not working and chatting, and a fear of exceeding their tea and lunch breaks".

On one occasion I approached a woman cleaning worker and suggested that the interview take place alone in a private space. In response she displayed what I describe as resistance to this surveillance by refusing my suggestion and protesting, saying that there was nothing that she needed to hide from her colleagues and that they would be able to tell me similar stories. In this instance, I conducted an interview with her in a group setting in the cleaners' change room with other cleaners working in her section. Where others were willing to participate I made use of their input as well. This had ethical implications since I had asked one person and then been invited into a space to discuss with others and conduct a group interview. I informed everybody of the research purpose, process, and their rights as participants, and I was asked clarifying questions beforehand.

Previous discussions in this chapter reflect that there were several ethical dilemmas that I was faced with during this research process. The way I overcame these was to always provide consent forms to all interviewees (FSC employees and other interviewees) before the onset of the interview, ensuring that all participation was informed and consensual. Consent forms were read out loud to those participants who struggled to read English. All the names of participants that form the core sample of interviewees have been omitted on request of the interviewees to meet ethical requirements of anonymity, and participants are represented using numbers (e.g. interviewee 14).

University of Cape Town

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF DATA

INTRODUCTION

The cleaners that I interviewed for this research are employees of a contract cleaning company called Fidelity Supercare (FSC). The motivation for interviewing cleaning workers employed by one company was stated in Chapter 3. This Chapter introduces further detail about the company and the nature of its contractual relationship to UCT that is relevant for understanding and framing the meaning of work for the employees of the company working at the university.

The research was conducted in a context of change and dialogue around the implementation of the Code of Conduct for service provider. As far as possible, this context has been described in Chapter 3. This makes the analysis and findings original because as far as the available research on outsourced support services in higher education suggests, other South African universities have not instituted such a code⁵⁸.

As with other research projects that research the experiences of people who are usually hidden from knowledge production processes, analysis of interviews is based on an approach that accepts the responses of interviewees as honest representations of their lived experience. This is a valuable method of analyses of interview material in contexts where previous research on the topic is limited, such as in studies of subaltern experiences (Mama, 1995).

Through the process of analysis described in Chapter 3, the findings are presented here under different themes. I have selected these themes because they illuminate 'meaning' of work in terms of the quality of everyday life and work in this particular zone of non-core work. Themes were based on findings from previous studies, in particular, the study by Bezuidenhout and Fakier

⁵⁸ According to an interview with a UCT Council member no other South African University has instituted a Code of Conduct. The complexities and diversities of campus specific responses to globalisation in the form of state policy and neo-liberal ideology is an area of research that has been explored by various authors (See Subotzky (1997); and Van der Walt et al (2003)). The author suggests that research on campus specific policy responses such as the Code are important contributions to this debate around the monolithic character of 'globalisation' in relation to changes in universities. Further research is needed in the area of outsourced work.

(2006). In Chapter 5, the conclusion, I then summarise how the findings from this research compare and contrast with findings from existing studies.

The first theme describes the '*Nature of Contract Cleaning*' in terms of two sub-themes; Entry into Cleaning Work; and the Shape of the Working Day. This theme introduces readers to how the sample of interviewees entered cleaning work with Supercare as well as how the work day at UCT is structured and experienced from when the interviewees wake up in the morning to when they leave work in the evening. Unlike Sørensen (2004) and Bezuidenhout and Fakier (2006), this study does not explore the relationship between work and home in depth. The research is more concerned with aspects of employment experiences at work than with those away from the workplace, although I do recognize that the two are related.

The second theme describes the concrete characteristics of Supercare cleaning jobs at UCT; *Wages, Hours and Other Conditions of Employment* and how these are experienced by the sample of cleaners. The ways that these differ from conditions of work prior to outsourcing and the ways in which the code has affected these are also aspects of experience that came out quite clearly in interviews with cleaners. The third theme builds on the first by including a detailed description of the *Cleaning Activities* involved for workers and how these are experienced. This theme is central to exposing the diversity and complexity of the meaning of cleaning work and experiences of cleaning work from the perspective of cleaners. This was considered a central theme as it highlighted the theory of 'hidden' work and the 'invisibilisation' of women's work offered by feminist authors (Oakley, 1976; Meis, 1988; Mama, 1996; Sorensen, 2004). This theme allows for the development of a social constructionist view of cleaning work as *constructed* as valueless work as opposed to it being naturally so.

The fourth theme is that of '*Relationships*'; it presents findings that illuminate the experience of cleaners' relationships to both UCT and Supercare Management. This theme is structured to highlight experiences of ambiguity, confusion and vulnerability that arise from being positioned within an externalised relationship. This externalised relationship, it is argued, is central to the construction of vulnerability and powerlessness of contract workers (Von Holdt & Webster, 2005; Theron, 2005; Bezuidenhout and Fakier, 2006). The fifth theme is related to relationships and

focuses specifically on '*Surveillance*' as a central mechanism through which workers become constructed as powerless. Theme six is entitled '*Degradation*' and it highlights the experience of powerless that gets constructed through various aspects of the arrangement of non-core work outlined in the previous themes. It also discusses the ways in which the positioning of cleaning work into the 'non-core' zone translates into non-valuable at the University of Cape Town. Finally the last theme explores the '*Survival and Resistance Strategies*' that cleaners employ in order to overcome and live with the conditions under which they work and get re-inscribed into through working in contract work.

What I include that other studies do not include is a section of actual activities under the theme 'Cleaning Activities'. This is important because it deepens the relationship between the construction of 'powerlessness' and the deliberate invisibilising of the complexity of the work actually involved. A discussion of entry into cleaning work is also new to this area of research and was intended to access data about and represent demographics and previous work experience of interviewees. This was intended to locate workers in a specific class of people/workers (black, female, working class) and show that their presence in the contract cleaning industry is related to broader changes in the economy and that previous work experiences also influence the 'quality' of this experience.

Many of the themes are related and interact and overlap. In writing about thee as separate themes I could not avoid some degree of repetition. I have however tried, as far as possible to reduce repetition to a minimum.

1. THE NATURE OF CONTRACT CLEANING

1.1 Entry into Cleaning Work

This sub-theme explores respondents' feedback on how they entered employment with Supercare and came to work at UCT. The narrative of how outsourced work came to exist at UCT is described in the background section (Chapter 3). This sub-theme briefly explores how individual workers came to find employment through Supercare at UCT. The interviews began with the

researcher asking respondents how long they had worked for Supercare and how they had entered their cleaning jobs. Linked to this question was an interest in why the job with Supercare was sought at the time. Methodologically I hoped this would be an opportunity to introduce people to connecting with their experience of working for Supercare at the university which would also encourage them to speak about their work experiences more broadly. Three categories in relation to 'entry into work' as a cleaner at the university through Supercare emerged.

As was described in Chapter 3, when UCT retrenched support service cleaning workers in 1999 all of the UCT cleaning employees were reportedly offered employment with Supercare⁵⁹. The first interesting observation was that of the sample I interviewed, two interviewees reported being transferred immediately from employment with UCT to employment with Supercare in 1999. One of these two remained in the same department or cleaning job/position in the University of Cape Town and continues to work with some of the same UCT staff that she worked with under UCT employ. I also learned that three of the interviewees currently working for Supercare used to work for UCT then took the retrenchment package and sought work elsewhere only to return to apply for work at Supercare. It was through this route that they returned to work at UCT. These three cleaners all had previous experience as UCT employees but had either worked somewhere else or been unemployed in between being retrenched in 1999 and taking up employment with Supercare years later. A third category of cleaners however were introduced to UCT for the first time through employment with Supercare. These 21 interviewees were either a) employed by the company already and were transferred to work at UCT or b) began working for Supercare at UCT for the first time. This last group therefore has no previous experience of working at the university and entered cleaning work at the university for the first time through the company.

These findings clearly illustrate that experiences of workers in relation to UCT and Supercare are diverse. Supercare employees working at the University of Cape Town are a mix of people that either: (a) Used to work for UCT as cleaners and then moved to Supercare either immediately or years later; (b) worked for Supercare on other sites and then got moved to UCT, or (c) started working for Supercare and started working at UCT immediately and haven't worked on other sites

⁵⁹ Interview with the University of Cape Town Director of Properties and Services, October 2007 and interviews with cleaners that used to work for UCT prior to the outsourcing of cleaning jobs

at all. The relevance of this to the research is that “contract cleaners” working for the company Supercare are not a homogenous group of “outsourced” workers; experiences of workers and their relationship to UCT and to Supercare is one critical form of diversity amongst cleaners. Members of the sample of cleaning workers interviewed have therefore worked at UCT from within a range of 9 months to 12 years, indicating different levels of familiarity with Supercare, UCT and working in the context of work *through* Supercare at UCT.

I also asked all respondents about the process of being recruited and selected to work at Supercare. The rationale for asking about entry into employment with Supercare at UCT is that entry is an important starting point to developing an understanding of how people experience work for Supercare at UCT. Once again, there was diversity amongst interviewee responses. Firstly, respondents describe different processes of getting their jobs with Supercare. Respondents describe that jobs with the company were generally found through word of mouth amongst friends and family members. Twelve interviewees have other family members on campus working either for Supercare, UCT or another contract company on campus. These family networks were the most frequently cited means of hearing about available jobs with Supercare. When this is compared to the amount of years that some people have been working at UCT, it shows that in some ways the work may be seen as casual or temporary, but they have actually been at work at UCT for many years and have family work ties to the institution. Family networks and other relationships are an important aspect of work experience that will be discussed more later on in this chapter under the theme *'Relationships'* and the broad theme *'Survival and Resistance'*.

The experience of applying for the job and getting the job varied across individuals with 5 reporting that they were told that they needed a matric qualification⁶⁰, while 6 state that matric wasn't an important qualification for getting the job at all. Surprisingly, a total of 7 out of the 26 people interviewed have a matric qualification. While the lowest school qualification was a standard 4, the presence of people with matric qualifications working as cleaners indicated that cleaning jobs are occupied by both formally 'educated' and 'uneducated' employees. Why some were asked for this qualification in applying for the job and others were not remains unanswered however. One suggestion is that request for qualification might correlate with the entry point into employment with

⁶⁰ Matric is the high school leaving qualification in South Africa

Supercare at UCT (i.e. whether they were transferred across from UCT employ or whether they applied for the job independently).

A third aspect of entry into cleaning work concerned previous work experience. I asked about this because I hoped to understand more about *why* and *how* interviewees had come to enter work as contract cleaners with Supercare. Amongst the people interviewed, there is a variety of previous working experience, which is not surprisingly also related to the age of the person interviewed. Two cleaners were high school graduates and had not worked before, making the cleaning job their first job. For these two cleaners the job was described as something temporary that was just until they found something more “promising and meaningful” (Interviewee 5). For older women, the most common forms of employment prior to Supercare were jobs in shoe and clothing factories and jobs as domestic workers. Four of the women that worked in clothing, textile and shoe factories before had lost their jobs because of retrenchments in those factories. This finding can be explained by the impacts that trade liberalisation has had on the clothing industry in South Africa (See Gredendonk, 2003).

Factory work in textiles and clothing and employment in domestic work are typically female dominated areas of work. A possible relationship between the recent changes in the clothing and textile industry and the presence of people in these contract cleaning jobs is evident here. For men interviewees, previous jobs were in construction, the printing industry, and joinery. Five cases of unemployment were also reported by both men and women prior to employment with Supercare. Similarly, these findings are important for understanding movements in labour and the way in which people are being ‘pushed’ into contract labour as a result of the changing nature and availability of more secure work in other industries. More is written about this in the later section called ‘quality of work as a contract cleaner’.

Eight interviewees explain that they sought a job with the cleaning company because they needed more money because of a change in the family status (e.g. a house was purchased, a child was born, a spouse became unemployed). This was the case for both men and women. I found that asking this question was useful in situating employment in cleaning work in a broader context of changes in the arrangement of work in South Africa. Further research is needed here however to

make significant correlations between the presence of lower level workers, black and coloured men and women in particular, in the contract cleaning industry given other changes in the work economy and labour market in recent years. This is not the aim of this study.

A final aspect of entry into work was whether entry was into a permanent or a casual cleaning position. One of the first things I observed through the interviews with cleaners is that cleaners described two different types of cleaning jobs available for Supercare cleaners that work at UCT; what are referred to by cleaners as 'casuals' and 'permanents'. I learned about casual jobs through interviews with people that started off working at UCT as Supercare casuals and then became permanent Supercare cleaners. Eight interviewees reported working anywhere between 3 weeks and 3 months as 'casuals' before being placed in a permanent cleaning position at the University of Cape Town. When asked what a casual worker is, I was told that casuals are employees of Supercare that 'work half days' (interviewee 12) and 'help out permanent workers' (interviewee 3). Casuals, as the name suggests, work on a flexible basis in the form of half day work or work full days but when this happens, unlike permanent cleaners, they do not have one place in which they clean; they are moved around campus to assist other cleaners as the need for extra help arises. For example, 8 interviewees made reference to the fact that when people go on maternity leave, or when there are employees absent from work because of sickness, their jobs can be filled by casuals who will work in their position until the person returns. Permanent workers on the other hand are located in a cleaning job in one building/department and work at the University on a full-time basis. The findings in this research were based on interviews with cleaners that work as permanent staff only. What is important is noting that there is a range of different experiences of cleaning work through employment with Supercare campus and this research, in terms of this variable, represents the experiences of one group only.

1.2 The Shape of the Working Day

1.2.1 *Transport*

According to interviewees work as a Supercare contract cleaner at UCT officially begins at 7:00am. This means that FSC cleaning workers have to wake up early, in some cases as early as 3:30am

in order to be at work by 7:00am. Ten interviewees shared experiences of waking up early in the morning to prepare food for children to eat and then children must be washed, dressed and taken to school all before their parents travel to work. Two women reported leaving home as early at 5:00am to miss the rush hour of thousands of other people leaving the townships to work in the urban and suburban areas⁶¹. In winter especially, the walk to the train station is cold, dark and often dangerous. On the crowded trains people stand the risk of being robbed, and when trains and/or taxi's are late because of vandalism for example⁶², employers are often unsympathetic; workers arriving at work late report that they get deductions whether or not they say that have a valid reason for being late. More will be said about this later under the section *deductions*.

All of the people interviewed live in the 'Cape Flats' areas; Gugulethu, Khayelitsha, Mannenburg, Bluedowns, Langa and the closer Athlone areas and need to travel long distances via public transport to get to UCT. People use a combination of buses, taxis and the train to get to the nearby train stations in Rondebosch, Rosebank and Mowbray. They then take the university Jammie Shuttle to Tugwell, Middle campus, Hidding Hall, Medical School and Upper Campus, depending on where they work. The university shuttle service is for all UCT students and staff and contract workers are also allowed to use this service. Two women that I interviewed report that Supercare employees are frequently told by their managers that the Jammie shuttle drivers complain that they make too much noise on the shuttles, and have requested that cleaners please be quiet.

"The Supercare management called us again to tell us that they complained about us; that we must be quiet. How do they know that it is us who are making all that noise on the shuttles? There are other cleaners, like the Metro cleaners. Why is it always Supercare who gets into trouble?" (Interviewee 12)

⁶¹ The term township usually refers to the (often underdeveloped) urban living areas that, under Apartheid, were reserved for non-whites (principally black Africans and Coloured's, but also working class Indians). Townships were usually built on the periphery of towns and cities and remain the areas where the majority of black and coloured working class people in and around Cape Town reside.

⁶² Vandalism of trains in Cape Town has been a serious issue this year (2007), and in previous years with thieves stealing train cables for example, and commuters being heavily impacted as a result of this (see www.metrorail.co.za/Regional-CT/Detailed_News.html).

It is on this journey to work that some cleaners already experience their status on campus as 'outsiders'. With no transport subsidy provided as part of their wage package (see sub-theme 'benefits' below), the cost of the use of public transport falls onto workers, and this is very expensive relative to what they are paid. Six cleaners report that they can spend up to R15 a day on transport costs. This is approximately R300 a month alone on travel expenses out of a basic salary of R2100⁶³. I was approached on two occasions by interviewees for transport money with an explanation that the price of taxi fares had increased and they were desperate for money to eat and to then travel home. The long amounts of time spent traveling to and from work (in some instances 3 hours a day) are also hour spent being 'unproductive,' which is another form of disadvantage.

1.2.2 Change Rooms

Once at work, cleaners need to change into their Supercare work uniforms. Cleaners get changed in rooms provided by UCT. Nine of the interviews took place in cleaners' rooms and it was through this arrangement that I recognized conditions of 'living' space at work as an important aspect of the work experience. In total therefore, I saw 9 different rooms in which cleaners eat, rest and change, and all of them varied in one way or another. Some of them are kitchens, some appear to be old student change rooms with lockers, basins and toilets, and some are store rooms that have been turned into rooms by the cleaners themselves. They vary in size, in the availability of utilities (sinks, chairs, tables, kettles, mattresses, heaters, lockers) and in levels of comfort. From the outside some of the rooms can look like normal classrooms or cupboards, but inside they have been transformed into cleaners' rest rooms.

In an interview with the Director of Properties and Services I asked about the provision of rooms to cleaners and he commented that the cleaners *are* provided rooms by the University in which to change, eat, and rest. However, he indicates that this was not always the case. It was when the Department realized that a cleaner was changing underneath an outdoor stairwell in public view

⁶³ According to an interview with the Director of P&S, UCT has increased the wages of night staff to account for transport costs.

that the availability of change rooms for cleaners was treated as an issue for UCT to address⁶⁴. Clause 2.1 in the current Code of Conduct also states that, “A safe and hygienic working environment is provided” while clause 2.3 makes provision for “access to clean ablution and changing facilities.....and if required sanitary facilities for food storage”. Finally clause 2.4 states that “accommodation where provided is clean, safe and meet basic needs”. While UCT states that it does provide space for cleaners, my observations and interviews with cleaners told a more detailed story around rooms.

The first observation I made is that the rooms that cleaners occupy tend to be small but used by up to 7 cleaners, and are often situated in hidden places. They are on the top floors of buildings or in the basements. They are ‘hidden’ in the far corners of corridors, and in the back of buildings. The doors that lead into them often look as if they lead nowhere at all. The experience that I had in learning about these spaces was that these are spaces that students and staff do not generally visit or even know about. This was very clear to me in the way it felt to enter these spaces, and in the responses I got from cleaners. When visiting two cleaners in the basement of the Bremner⁶⁵ building the response I got on arrival was,

“How did you get here? Did you come alone? By yourself?” (Interviewee 24)

While this response could be made in many circumstances, it felt clear to me that what was behind the question was amazement that I had made the trip down there alone, and what these two cleaners meant was no one (i.e. students and perhaps staff) ever comes down here alone. The experience then is of being separate and invisible from the core business of the university as well as people who are involved in the core business.

While distance from other members of the university community can mean being ‘hidden’ by an external decision-maker, two older interviewees chose to have their own room on the top floor of their building, away from other Supercare cleaners and away from UCT staff. Without speaking to them, it would be easy for me to see them as ‘excluded’ by the policies and practices of the

⁶⁴ Interview with the Executive Director of Properties and Services, UCT

⁶⁵ Bremner is the main University Administrative Building and is situated on Middle campus.

University and Supercare management. In this case, they took on agency for being positioned upstairs. It was a choice that they made to be together and have some autonomy and comfort of their own. They had set up two comfortable chairs, a heater, and a blanket on the landing, with a view out of a window. Inside the small room (roughly 3x3meters) they had an individual student desk with their clothes neatly stacked, a kettle, milk, tea, coffee and food for the day that they had bought to work for them selves. There was no visible indication of “access to facilities for food storage”⁶⁶. An additional two cleaners said that they bring their own kettles to make tea because they are not allowed to use the department kitchens⁶⁷. For these two women, choosing to be separate from other people (both UCT staff and other Supercare employees) was seen as a choice for some privacy and comfort.

While these two interviewees and 7 others in this study expressed contentment with the space they share and use, one interviewee made it clear that she knows of other cleaners who have no rooms at all and it was on this basis that she expressed her appreciation with what she has. This ‘fact’ was raised by interviewee 25 in her response to how she feels about the size of the room she uses. She says,

“In this job you just have to adapt to things. The other room was bigger and more comfortable than this one, this one is small, but you must make it comfortable yourself. So I am quite happy. There are some departments who don’t have a room, at all”.

Three other people gave this as the reason for being satisfied with their space; the fact that at least they had a room as opposed to nothing at all. The view that you have to make your room nice for yourself and accept what you are given was also expressed by 5 other interviewees. Seven interviewees describe that they bring in their own things from home; cushions from home, they bring kettles and posters and tea cups and radios to personalize these spaces at work. In relation to this, what struck me about the rooms was the level of innovation that went into making them comfortable and personalized: Posters on the walls, kettles and tea cups, calendars, sugar and

⁶⁶ This is a stated provision in the code of conduct (See Appendix D).

⁶⁷ Further evidence for issues around managing ‘space’ and access to facilities for cleaners were drawn from my researcher journal. One entry describes the sign on the kitchen door in a building on upper campus that reads “Access to Supercare cleaners in this building only!” This raises questions about the possible events that led up to the need for this sign on the door.

milk, heaters and in some cases foam mattresses on the floors for sleeping on. This indicates the importance of having a personalized and dignified living space as part of the work environment.

In one instance however, the interviewee made it clear that there is no choice involved about the location of rooms and those that are available for workers to use can come with experiences of discomfort. In the Graduate School of Humanities, there is a change room without any windows and not enough space for the 10 workers that share it during night shift⁶⁸. The condition of this room was clearly a source of pain for the person I interviewed that uses this room to change in, eat in, and sleep in with the other 9 colleagues, both men and women. Reference to the room actually brought tears to her eyes. At night, she reports, it isn't experienced as a comfortable and safe place for ten people to use as a rest/eating place. She says,

"We've got a place but that place is too small. That place hasn't got a window and we are 10 people".

The woman is a night shift worker and she took me to view the room on one occasion during the day. The room has no windows and the walls contain posters of semi-naked women put up by her male colleagues. It contains a few lockers for all workers to share and one small table with all the cups and plates that workers must bring in from home. After our meeting she says,

"By coming here today for this meeting I have lost my sleep. Now I will go to that little small space and sleep before night shift begins".

From observations and through interviews it was ascertained that rooms are used during lunch and tea breaks to make tea and food, eat, drink, sleep, rest, chat and change back into clothing at the end of the day. A lot of activity goes on in these rooms, making them important spaces for workers during the working day. They are also important because they can provide some degree of safety, security, dignity and privacy for workers. Yet, as these interviews illustrate, space is not

⁶⁸ Interviewee 19. During the course of the research, this very same changing room in the Graduate School of Humanities was identified by UCT staff as a health hazard to cleaning workers in a staff meeting. This information was provided to me through an informal conversation with a member of the UCT WSC and in conversation with a UCT staff member present in the meeting.

guaranteed to these 'non-core' workers and when it is provided, it is not necessarily dignified or safe.

2. WAGES, HOURS AND OTHER CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT

2.1 Wages

Throughout the course of interviews and participation in the WSC, I learned that under the implementation of the Code of Conduct and the SLL wage level, Supercare employees working at UCT are paid a 'top up' wage by the university to bring the industry wage paid by Supercare to the SLL wage level. This top up by UCT is referred to by workers as an 'allowance'. Eight interviewees report that they are paid an additional R800 a month on top of the industrial minimum, and get paid, on average, a wage of R2100 per month.

Ascertaining how workers related to wages was challenging given that during interviews there was a trend amongst some interviewees for the type of information that they shared about their experiences and opinions of wages to change as the interview progressed. This ambiguity made it difficult to make any single comment about how cleaners experience their wages. A number of points can be made however.

Firstly, for workers, initial responses to the question about wages tended to be that the amount of money paid in total was acceptable. When five interviewees declared sentiment such as "I am happy with my wages" (Interviewee 25), I was very surprised given both my pre-existing assumption that workers would be dissatisfied and the literature review that states that contract cleaners are generally poorly paid. A total of 8 interviewees directly stated that their wages were not enough and that they wanted more money for the work that they did. Of these 8, 2 stated outright that it was Supercare and not UCT who was responsible for their low wages.

On further analysis of transcripts, I observed that as these very interviewees grew more comfortable in the interview process, their responses changed and my understanding deepened. What I observed from the interviews is that what workers chose to share about wages varied from

dissatisfaction with the amount received to a satisfaction with the wages because any wage is better than no wage at all. This shift in response may represent that the original expression of acceptance of the wage is a survival strategy given the atmosphere of intense surveillance and the experience of powerlessness. The grounds for my statement is that experiences such as “I am happy with my wages” were followed by “what can I do?” in four of the 5 cases. The wage is generally appreciated on the grounds that it is some payment rather than no payment at all.

“I’m okay with wages. I can’t do otherwise. I need the money and I can’t stay at home. I don’t like to stay home (laughter)” (Interviewee 10)

The expression of satisfaction with wages is contextualized; in this instance it represents being satisfied with having something rather than nothing. In addition to the expression that poor wages are better than no wages at all, there was also an indication from at least 10 interviewees that there is no room for workers to negotiate the amount of wages that they are paid.

“They say take it or leave it. I am taking the mop out of your hands if you do not agree. You say okay because you don’t have another place to work and you have to pay your debt and your child needs you. You need the money. The children need to go to school, I got a house to look after and lights and food. When you go to Pick ‘n’ Pay the bread is R5.50. It is R5.50 for everyone, it won’t say oh Supercare you don’t have money your bread is R3.00. So what can we do?” (Interviewee 16).

For this interviewee survival on these small wages is a struggle. As the only breadwinner for a family of 4 plus extended family, school fees for children, paying off the mortgage, and other forms of debt, clothing expenses, electricity and water, food, and taxi fares are some of the expenses that she struggle to pay on a monthly basis. Eleven out of the 26 interviewees expressed that they were the sole breadwinners and this is experienced as a heavy responsibility given the low sum of wages. Three of the interviewees that do have employed spouses expressed great gratitude for the contributions that their partners are able to make to the household income.

Two workers also expressed resistance to the increased wages in the form of what they refer to as the UCT 'allowance'. Nine of the interviewees equated the wage increase with the increase in hours worked. These two however argued that money isn't everything; dignity, they say, is also important, as well as the freedom to choose. This view was expressed very clearly by interviewee 16. She states,

"Sometimes it is better to work. Money, you need money. But you also need to look after yourself, your family, the way you want to live, not somebody who rules you how to live, so me, I don't know. I am just fed up and angry with how these people is treating us and I don't know what to do" (Interviewee 16).

This suggests that she is under the impression that the increased wage is treated by Supercare as being conditional on working longer hours. In her experience, this agreement of more money for more work wasn't discussed with her or other workers; they were forced into it. She concludes her argument by stating that if she had been asked she may have turned down the extra wages in favour of going home earlier.

The most obvious implication of the UCT 'allowance' for Supercare workers is that it is better to work at UCT than elsewhere because of the 'extra' money that is paid to workers. Five interviewees recognized that working at UCT gives them the added benefit of higher wages in comparison to cleaners on other sites, and this was valued. They describe the extra income as 'helpful', and UCT is described as "being on our side" for paying them extra money. One woman states,

"UCT gave us an allowance to help us with more money because Supercare doesn't pay us at all. So UCT did help us with that" (Interviewee 16).

However, despite an appreciation for the material advantage that more money provides workers expressed some objections to the allowance as it has emerged through the code. The anger at not being consulted and forced into signing contracts was stated by 5 interviewees. The second of these is in the form of skepticism that they will even get the increase.

"Yes, but we just have to wait and see if we are getting that increase. Here the rules is always changing"

Interview 18 also says,

"Supercare! They will come with corners and stuff like with your money for instance, there is always something wrong with your pay like they call you and say you will get that but you wont really see it. They have their way how to twist and turn things their way".

In total, nine interviewees expressed one experience or another that indicated that payment of wages by Supercare is inconsistent. Three cleaners express a lack of trust that the increase that is due to be paid in January 2008 will actually be paid. Four expressed uncertainty the wages will be paid consistently across the months. One of these was a night staff employee. Night staff are meant to get a 10% increase on their wages for working night staff. Here, a night staff cleaner, interviewee 19 says,

"The other thing is the wages. Sometimes our wage is R2900 sometimes we get R3110, this month we get R3335. I don't know which one is right, really you see?"

The third complaint about wages emerging from the interviews was also related to objections towards the perceived dual system of payment. Five interviewees experience this dual system as receiving two separate payments in the form of a wage from Supercare and the UCT allowance. They express that this dual payment system complicates the experience of payment issues amongst different employees of the contract companies. Four employees expressed the opinion that Supercare is taking their money.

"UCT says we will get the money but at the end of the month when we go to the bank, we don't see it. UCT gives the money to Supercare and they pay us our allowance separately. It is UCT via-ing Supercare and when you go to your supervisor to ask what happened to my money it doesn't make any sense the way they explain it to you. All of us

don't get the same wages either. We don't get the same salary. UCT must just give us our allowance; they mustn't mix it with Supercare” (Interviewee 17).

The sense from these interviewees is that Supercare management is not trusted and workers can not feel secure about the payment of their wages. This is also explained as follows,

“UCT gave us the allowance saying we are happy with your work! They didn't say that we are giving you an allowance and now you must start working at 7. We did our work without the allowance of UCT and they [UCT] said we did a good job, they didn't say your jobs is slacking so we must add more time. They said we appreciate you, here is more money!” (Interviewee 17).

The responses indicate that there is a perception amongst workers that the increased wages have been at the cost of more time at work. This exchange is perceived by this worker as unfair since workers were not consulted. Another issue is that on the one hand it is acknowledged that the extra money is needed and has contributed to workers' survival. However, the 'allowance' has meant that working at UCT has become an advantage; while Supercare workers on other sites are paid the industry wage only, UCT workers get an extra 'allowance'. This has been alleged to have been used by Supercare management as a threat to silence and control workers⁶⁹. Given the vulnerable position of workers in these jobs, exasperated by the scarcity of other employment opportunities, the extra money is very important to survival. While the allowance was perhaps designed to improve their security, it has in some ways become a means of creating greater dependency by providing another mechanism for Supercare to exercise power over workers.

Within this spectrum of responses to wages there are experiences of uncertainties about payment, objections with the allowance scheme, struggles with meeting monthly expenses and a sense of powerlessness in the negotiation of wages. The power over payment is experienced and perceived as being totally in the hands of Supercare and the University of Cape Town. The gross misconception amongst cleaners that there is in fact an allowance and that the increased money is something that UCT has instituted because they are happy with work, but that Supercare has

⁶⁹ Notes from WF meetings and interview with Council Member

exploited to get more work out of them is also visible. This represents the distance between what is happening at a formal level of policy and what is being experienced and understood by workers on the ground. This lack of communication between Supercare, UCT and Supercare employees is experienced as confusion amongst workers as to what is really happening at the level of decision making.

2.2 Hours

From the interviews I ascertained that officially Supercare employees' work starts at 07:00 and ends at 16:30. There is a half an hour lunch break at 13:00 and two 15 minute tea breaks; one at 10:00 and another at 15:00. This amounts to a 45 hour week. Prior to the Code, Supercare employees worked a 40 hour week and had an hours' lunch break⁷⁰. A central objection to current working hours by interviewees was around these two changes.

"The changes were bad, very bad. We started work at 7:30, now we start at 7:00 until 4:00 with only a half an hour break at lunch" (Interviewee 12).

However, only two interviewees stated that the Code had anything to do with these changes. Further interviews reveal that the objection to a shorter lunch break is more than an objection to less time off to rest, although rest was also a vital factor given the long hours at work and early mornings to get to work on time. For 18 interviewees lunch breaks are also viewed as being very useful times for socializing, looking for alternative employment, as well as doing shopping for the home. These interviewees complained that since the implementation of the Code the lunch break is not long enough to engage in these activities as effectively as before. Interviewee 13 states,

"With Supercare now you can't do what we used to do when working with UCT. At Supercare now we have only got a half an hour lunch break and what can you do in half an hour? With an hour you can do a lot in that time. Before, I would go to Shoprite and do my shopping, or visit my friends to talk and have lunch".

⁷⁰ Notes from WF meetings, interview with Council Member and interviews with cleaners

During the lunch breaks, food is not provided by either UCT or Supercare for the cleaners. They are required to bring food or buy their own food on campus. On two occasions I was asked by interviewees to lend them money to buy lunch, indicating that buying lunch on campus is perhaps not always affordable to some workers. Two interviewees say that sometimes lunch will consist of just a packet of crisps because this is all that they can afford⁷¹. Three interviewees expressly state that they often don't eat lunch at all because they can't afford it. In addition, given the heavy workload and the challenges that workers experience in saying no to the extra work, lunch and tea breaks are often spent working. Nine interviewees state that on some occasions they do not eat lunch because they are too busy working. Five cleaners also say that extending the working day was a bad idea because they are done all of their work by 4:00 and just sit around waiting to be released.

The heavy workload, shorter lunch breaks and longer working day that characterise work with Supercare also have consequences for the domestic responsibilities of the cleaners that I interviewed. In the evenings, having traveled for up to an hour or more to get home, it is regarded by workers as too late to go shopping for the household. Five interviewees explicitly stated that it is a struggle to find time to get shopping done during the week and to engage in other household duties given these conditions of employment. They state that they are tired when they arrive home but still have to cook and see to the needs of other members of the family, like children and spouses. One interviewee states that the ending of work half an hour later has also complicated the picking up of children from schools and crèches. Interviewee 16 says,

“Crèche stops at 4:00 and the children stand outside or the children go next door. You know what is happening? Some children get raped. You can't trust your neighbours. You can't trust your own uncle. Your uncle is raping the children in your own home, so what about next door? And the people are panicking, who is looking after the children? It's either that woman standing there waiting for you, and then you need to pay her extra money that you don't have because she's going to get fed up because she also has to go home to cook”.

⁷¹ From interviews with Interviewees 7, 4 and 5

According to this sample of cleaners, the increase in the working hours and the decrease in the lunch break are two of the biggest objections from Supercare employees to the working conditions at UCT under Supercare employ. The reduced lunch break and longer working have a negative impact on the domestic responsibilities of workers as well as their health (i.e. not enough rest).

2.3 Deductions and Overtime

Cleaners express that added to the difficulties that they experience in getting to work on time, is the burden of deductions that are made from monthly wages for late arrivals at work and for days missed. For lateness, there was a general agreement that the amount that is deducted from the monthly wage depends on how late the person arrives at work and whether or not the supervisor is informed of the lateness and/or absence from work. For days missed, the impression was that the deduction is a fixed amount of R80 or R90⁷². It was frequently stated by workers that the rule at Supercare is that if you will be late or absent from work, you must make a phone call to management to inform them.

“I mean sometimes people stay out and they don't phone. I mean the policy is that if you stay out you must phone, I mean it's simple. But a lot of them they stay out for two three days without phoning and they expect to have their jobs back. That is taking advantage of the supervisors” (Interviewee 25).

The rule is that if you don't make the phone call to management, the penalty could be anything from a deduction and/or a warning to a dismissal. There were however ambivalences amongst workers as to whether this rule is justified or not, and whether it is consistently applied across all workers. While interviewee 25 feels that the rule is clear and justified, other workers have a different experience. The matter of deductions is more generally expressed as a problem for workers with 6 interviewees expressing that it is unfair to get deductions when they have no control over public transport and access to telephones to call if they will be late. It is expressed amongst these workers that employers are not sensitive to their dilemmas and the conditions under which they have to live. One woman explains,

⁷² Interviewees 1, 2, 10 and 12 shared this experience.

"You know, some people don't have a place to stay, so they are lodging at the Shebeen⁷³. Because 11 O'clock the Shebeen is closing. You can't say 'put down the music!' or 'Stop making noise!' So you don't sleep, but you must be at work on time for no deductions" (Interviewee 11).

Another interviewee resists this practice stating that even when employees do bring sick certificates there is no guarantee that they will still have their jobs. She states,

"There are a lot of people that I will stand for. Another guy was working here and he had no single cents to call. He came two days late with a sick certificate and when he came they said 'no you are late and we have taken you off so there will be a hearing'. For what? The man doesn't have any money and a lot of people are like that. If we had from work nice money he could buy his own phone. But he was dismissed, and he didn't want to appeal because he was sick and tired of this" (Interviewee 12).

There is one way that workers can avoid deductions for being late or absent. If a person is absent from work, they can avoid the deduction by working an extra day to make up for the day missed. Conversely, if Supercare asks employees to work 'overtime' the employees are given hours and days off for the time that they work rather than over time pay.

"They say they can't pay me for overtime. If I work then my supervisor just give me the day off for those hours. Like I am in on 7 o'clock, maybe she says I can leave at 1 o'clock. She gives me a half day because she owes me for those hours" (Interviewee 10).

The effect of deductions was used by 7 workers to account for the variation in wages at the end of the month that is discussed above. This doesn't take away from the frustration that they experience with the deductions and inconsistency of pay however. Further analysis of the experiences of workers of these deductions and of no pay for overtime work is presented in the later section on '*Surveillance*'.

⁷³ A 'Shebeen' is a place that sells alcohol in the townships and resembles a bar.

2.4 Benefits

“My mother used to work for UCT and now works for Supercare, but not at UCT. She said that they had medical aid and this housing support, but UCT didn't want to pay them that anymore, so they outsourced” (Interviewee 4)

Very few interviewees made direct reference to benefits and I didn't ask what benefits they receive. I knew from background research that Supercare offers few if any benefits. The cessation of benefits for cleaning workers at the University as a result of outsourcing has put strain on workers, their families and their communities. Under direct employment with UCT, cleaning staff had access to medical benefits, housing subsidies, and education subsidies for children attending the University (Kenny and Clarke, 2000). Lack of benefits was another factor that cleaners identified as a source of struggle in their lives away from work. Sometimes this was direct, in the form of statements like “we don't get medical aid”, and sometimes it was implied. The latter is clearly stated by Interviewee 19:

“There are a lot of things in my house. Because I have two grandchildren, I must pay for the house, I must pay for water, I must pay for food and clothing you see? I must pay for everything that belongs to me. But I can try by all means that it will all be coming right. I can pray to God that is it all coming right”

For the cleaners in this research, both male and female, working is a means of supporting one self and often a family and an extended family. Some of the most pressing expenses that people reported include paying for school fees, phone calls, doctor's visits to get sick notes, child care and medical costs, clothing, and food, travel (taxi, bus and train) and paying off debt in the form of credit and housing loans. This is difficult since the wages have been reduced, and is aggravated by the fact that workers do not get paid benefits.

At the workplace, 6 interviewees share that workers struggle to get sick leave and often work while they are sick because they can't afford to take the time off to see a doctor. The removal of housing subsidies meant that two people were unable to buy houses that they had planned to buy, and report that this put strain on their relationship with their spouse as well. One man in his late 30s states that he lives at home with their parents because he can not afford to buy a home of his own. In particular, the cessation of subsidies for education of workers' children at the University has excluded these learners from the opportunity to enter better employment; an aspiration that most working class parents have if not for themselves then certainly for their children. In response to the conditions of work as a cleaner, one interviewee states,

"It must come to a standpoint. It's going to happen to our children and our children's children so somebody must stand up and say something! My children? I tell them go to school and don't look back. I want education for them, they must not be like me scrubbing and polishing and things like that because things have changed. A lot now things have changed. If they can go to school and get a good education that would be the best thing for my children because my mother did suffer I am suffering and now my children are going to suffer. It's not right" (Interviewee 16)

"Things have changed" indicates this woman's personal experience or opinion that apartheid is over and black people, at least in Constitutional and legal terms, now have better opportunities to go to school and the potential to move out of poverty. The decision to outsource has excluded people from the benefits that came with full time employment and curtailed the possibility for education opportunities for at least this group of workers. This indicates how the removal of jobs from the secure protection of legislation and the provision of benefits has actually removed the benefits that workers received for their work.

3. CLEANING ACTIVITIES

3.1 Various Activities: The Diversity of Contract Cleaning

Depending on where on campus a Supercare cleaner works, his/her duties vary. The 300 Supercare cleaners are responsible for cleaning up after approximately 21,570 students and 2497 staff. That is a total estimate of 24,067 people that use the University premises over the course of the year. The cleaners are responsible for cleaning the classrooms, seminar rooms and lecture theatres, some computer labs⁷⁴, libraries, eating areas, stairways, corridors, offices, halls and conference rooms, kitchens and all the ablution facilities in the 56 buildings that make up the University campus⁷⁵. Through the interviews it became apparent that cleaning work is organized in a structured way. Each building has a 'team' of cleaners responsible for cleaning that building, and possibly surrounding buildings as well. The number of cleaners in each building and/or department depends on the size of the building/department. From interviews it was ascertained that each cleaner in a team is allocated a floor or an area to clean. Therefore, each cleaner has specific duties and responsibilities. This is clearly described by interviewee 2,

"X works on level six, I am on level five. Each one has a level. I'm cleaning all the offices, and my toilets, and the passage way on that level".

I interviewed cleaners from 12 different buildings located on Upper and Middle campus (See table 3). On a day to day basis, cleaning activities include the sweeping, mopping and polishing of wooden and tiled floors. Carpets in the offices, the libraries and the lecture theatres must be vacuumed and upholstery must be kept clean. This involves the use of vacuum cleaners and buffing machines that must be carried either up and down stairs or transported using the lifts available on campus. This can amount to heavy physical work. In lecture theatres all white boards and chalk boards must be wiped, desks and tables polished and windows washed. Rubbish must be removed, thrown away and rubbish bins must be emptied and bin liners changed. In addition to

⁷⁴ In interviews with Supercare management and cleaners it is evident that some computer labs are cleaned by UCT employees

⁷⁵ From interview with FSC Contract Manager, September 2007. All University campuses include Upper Campus, Middle, Lower, Baxter, Hiding and Medical Campus. Offices in Groote Schuur that are occupied by UCT are also cleaned by UCT.

the day to day cleaning that is required, at the end of term when the students are away on holiday, the cleaners must remain on campus and engage in what is called 'deep cleaning'⁷⁶. This is an intensive cleaning task in which all the buildings are cleaned thoroughly and inspected by the supervisors.

This level of institutional cleaning requires the use of large amounts of equipment and chemicals that can be dangerous to ones health if used incorrectly. Cleaners need access to protective clothing; especially gloves for cleaning toilets and handling rubbish, masks for cleaning extremely dusty areas, and raincoats for cleaning outdoors. According to the FSC Contract Manager, these materials are all provided by FSC management. FSC also provides the everyday uniforms to employees at "no cost to the employee"⁷⁷. Cleaning equipment ranges from sponges, clothes and mops to floor strippers and buffing machines. Training is also required for the correct use of some of this material and tools. As one cleaner expresses, cleaning work at this level requires a certain level of skill that is often hidden or masked by those who do not engage in it:

"I mean I'm 40. Everybody is supposed to know what is cleaning. But when you start at a cleaning company you learn the proper way of cleaning you see. I was like you buy that toilet duck, you put it in the toilet and you expect the toilet must be clean. It looks clean. But the way I was learning to clean a toilet here is a totally different experience. That was the most interesting part of it. The experiences you gain working at a cleaning company is valuable. Now I can go buy the stuff and I can go make my floors at home like I used to do here. I never thought polish would make that black marks and stuff like that on the floor. Now I can go buy the stripper and that and go clean it myself whereas I didn't know about it before. I would put a carpet in because there was mark on the floor and the tiles didn't look nice. Now I can I even picked up the carpet because my dad got a five in one machine and I can buy the strip and I can strip my own floor and do it shiny. You see, so that was good".

⁷⁶ Interviewees 1, 2, 12, 14, 19

⁷⁷ Interview with FSC Contract Manager, September 2007

In addition to this, cleaners are also responsible for what is referred to by them as 'running kitchens'. 'Running kitchens' means making tea and coffee for the department staff, cleaning dishes, as well as preparing lunches/teas for workshops and other faculty/departmental events. The University also hosts departmental conferences and seminars in various halls and conference areas and it is the Supercare cleaning staff who often prepare for these and tidy up once they are over.

While the above duties are what one might imagine form part of industrial or commercial cleaning work, in addition cleaners sometimes perform office duties such as photocopying for the department, delivering post from the post office to the departments and delivering all the internal mail. During examinations, Supercare supervisors have the authority to collect all exam scripts and take them to the examination venues⁷⁸. Ten interviewees explain that cleaning staff are also responsible for setting up examination venues and handing out materials used in exams. At graduation time, 5 interviewees stated that they assist in graduation ceremonies by either cleaning the venues, setting up the venues, or by handing out graduation gowns to students. Finally, being some of the first people on campus and the last to leave, cleaners also have possession of keys to the University buildings and carry the responsibility of locking up, opening up and making sure the keys are well kept. This list of activities can also be found on the UCT website, where it states that:

"All areas, with the exception of residences and areas that need specialised cleaning, such as laboratories, are serviced by Fidelity Supercare as follows:

- cleaning of all offices, administration areas, kitchens and ablution areas
- cleaning of teaching venues
- setting up venues
- preparation of test and exam venues
- assisting at graduations
- daily removal of litter from the campus offices and public areas"⁷⁹

⁷⁸ Interview with FSC Contract Manager

⁷⁹ See UCT website address <http://www.uct.ac.za/services/properties/estates/cleaning/>

There is a night shift as well that consists of 10 FSC employees. Night Staff work two shifts; one from 6pm-3am and the other from 8pm-5am. These cleaners are responsible for cleaning the major lecture theatres on Upper campus only during the night. When asked why this was necessary, the FSC manager explained that:

“They are responsible for cleaning the venues and lecture theatres because it is very difficult to do during the day...and the busy walkways that you can't really clean in the day”.

From the activities described above what emerges is the reality that cleaning work involves a large variety of tasks. The meaning of ‘cleaning’ work at a concrete level at a University varies in different spaces from cleaning the residences and the administrative buildings to keeping the outdoor grounds clean. Partly as a result of this diversity of what cleaning work constitutes across different zones of the University, the research was limited to cleaning work through Supercare. What the findings suggest is that even within one zone of cleaning work there is considerable diversity in the type of work that is done and this has implications for how work is experienced. Cleaning toilets for example is found to be experienced as more degrading than the cleaning of office spaces. One set of interviewees also claimed that cleaning the Baxter theatre was a sought after cleaning position amongst workers because the hours are more flexible. This diversity is expressed by one cleaner as follows;

“I like working on Upper campus. But now here [on middle campus] we clean offices and that's a whole different experience. There I cleaned the foyer and just normal work with a broom and a mop. But here it's vacuuming, dusting, all these other things. Here we also have to do work that men do and that isn't fair” (Interviewee 1).

The density and difficulty of what is involved in this zone of cleaning work alone is masked through the reduction of cleaning work to ‘just cleaning’.

The diverse workload and long working day is linked to complaints from workers about heavy workloads. The use of numerical flexibility as a means of exploiting workers is common under labour intensive industries like cleaning. One man says,

“We are the people that do the stuff. It’s now exams time, we put the tables out for students, the books we put them out. Like now there is an exam in Jameson Hall. When this class comes out we must prepare for the next exam. Then tomorrow maybe there is a function, we must take all of that stuff away then we put the chairs up and the other chairs out and the tables away. It’s heavy” (Interviewee 20).

3.2 Intense Workloads

An observation across studies of contract cleaning in specific and outsourced work in general is a trend that outsourced work comes with an increased intensity of workload (e.g. Bernstein, 1986; Johnson, 2001; Bezuidenhout and Fakier, 2006). Within this sample, some cleaners experience the amount of work that is expected of them as a heavy burden. This is in the form of the type of physical labour required and the amount of work required. Those cleaners who used to work at UCT comment that under Supercare employment they are made to work more floors a lot more quickly and this often means less effectively. As one interviewee says,

“Twenty toilets! You can’t do that! And they need to be cleaned from top to bottom so you must rush. That time I was working in the pressure if you know what I mean, you must work like a fire!”

Later on in the interview she reiterates that,

“With UCT I worked one floor but now I work two. I can’t manage to work two floors and I did go to my Supervisor to say look now my standard of cleaning is going down” (Interviewee 12).

A regular complaint that workers expressed is that the preparation for various events on campus will often be the responsibility not of the departmental cleaners but of the cleaners that work in the venue where the event is being hosted. Preparation for these events includes the moving of tables

and chairs and the setting up of other equipment (e.g. projectors). This work can be a lot more strenuous and physically demanding than other 'cleaning' work. 'Hard' work such as this also includes the removal of old furniture from buildings when it is broken or otherwise no longer good for use. Cleaners also experience this kind of work as very time consuming and view it as 'extra' work that stands in the way of their everyday cleaning duties. This experience and the complexities of engaging in multiple activities will now be discussed further under the theme 'relationships'.

The increased workload is possible because work is labour intensive. While work is argued to improve efficiency it is often at the expense of workers through numerical flexibility. Hiring fewer workers to do the same or a larger amount of work is a means of reducing costs for the companies.

4. RELATIONSHIPS

4.1.1 Work through Supercare at UCT (the ambiguity in having two employers):

"I enjoy working here with the UCT staff. I love being here. But for Supercare it's another thing. The rules and regulations are always changing but there is nothing you can do. You don't have a choice actually. You come here, earn a days living and that's it"
(Interviewee 1).

The interview material has reflected a series of complex experiences of work for cleaning workers that revolve around wages and workload. One of the clearest challenges of work for these cleaners is linked to experiences that illuminate what it means to be employed by one company while providing the actual service in another organisation. The first of these arises from the experience of working for two different sets of people; the employer (Supercare) and the client or agent, which in this case is the University of Cape Town. In general, the Supercare staff are aware of themselves as Supercare employees working at the University of Cape Town. As one employee says,

"I know that I belong to Supercare I am working for Supercare and that's that. I am not going to pretend that I am a UCT worker; I'm not going to do that, that's not me. There is some people here who don't like to recognize this and they say they work for UCT" (Interviewee 25).

However, six of the cleaners that I interviewed worked at the university prior to outsourcing, three of which remained working within the same department. The longest serving cleaning worker at UCT in my sample had worked at UCT for 12 years (see Appendix B). A common theme that emerged from the interviews was the experience of a positive relationship between Supercare cleaners and different aspects of the University⁸⁰.

"It's very nice here at UCT. They [UCT staff] respect us. If they have tea, a special tea they will call us. They invite us and give us presents at Christmas time. They call us we are doing everything together" (Interviewee 17).

This affinity that is described by 21 workers in the sample is experienced as providing a sense of 'belonging' and a feeling of being 'appreciated' by other members of the workplace. Interviewee 25 shares her experience of the UCT staff in her department stating,

"They let you feel welcome, they let you feel basically at home and I enjoy it. They don't let you feel like you are just a cleaner. They include you. Like this guy Stuart⁸¹ graduated and we been told, 'put down your cloth and come sit because we are having lunch'. So that was wonderful for me, they don't look at you like a cleaner"

The sense of belonging is contrasted here against the sense of exclusion of the basis of being viewed as 'just a cleaner'. Six other cleaning workers associated this sense of belonging with the experience of being treated as more than 'just a cleaner'. Other positive aspects of working at UCT include the experience of the University space as 'dynamic'. Three cleaners state that they enjoy being part of and observers to the various social activities that occur on campus and the

⁸⁰ The University meaning students, staff, workers from other companies and the space or activities that define the culture of the University

⁸¹ Name changed

opportunities it provides cleaners for better jobs. One cleaner explains that she appreciates working at the University because the environment interests her. She says,

“You meet more people here. For 12 years I worked in a factory and I only knew factory people. But here you can go out and I can go by Jameson hall and see students doing all sorts of things there. It’s also nice to be in different departments to see what different work people are doing. Like here they bring in dead fish and it’s like what (laughter)? I enjoy that” (Interviewee 25).

Another aspect of the workplace that was described as enjoyable and positive was the relaxed atmosphere of the university environment. Four interviewees described UCT as a “relaxed” and “safe” environment in which to work. One interviewee stated this in comparison to another site, the Golden Acre Shopping Mall, which had been experienced as “too busy and full of people you know”. The comparison of work at UCT to experiences of other workplaces was made by six other cleaners. When asked whether working as a cleaner was better or worse than working in a factory, for example, four of the women who previously worked in factories said that the conditions of work were actually better under contract cleaning than in the factories. Various reasons were given. One interviewee said that factory work has also *become* contractual and insecure, with employers offering employment for up to three months at a time only. Despite her experience that the wages in the factories are better than they are under contract cleaning with Supercare, she preferred to work as a cleaner because the more insecure length of the contracts in factory work countered this benefit.

Three other women gave insecurity of factory work as a reason for preferring cleaning work. Factory work was also described as more violent, with women being aggressive and “threatening to stab each other with scissors if the fights got serious” (Interviewee 24). For these interviewees, in comparison to working in clothing factories, cleaning the administrative offices in Bremner is a “very nice job that is quiet and without any troubles” (interviewee 23). A mere quantitative study of the conditions of employment does not allow for these more nuances experiences of working through contract work and the benefits, losses and gains that individuals have experienced in comparison with other employment experiences. Other positive aspects of working for UCT

include the immediate availability of resources and job opportunities on the campus. This was identified as a theme that was central to survival at UCT, so is discussed further in the later section on *Survival and Resistance*.

While 21 workers expressed that they enjoy working at UCT for reasons stated above, the downside of working at UCT was also expressed in interviews. The most frequently stated negative aspect of working for UCT was the pressure of the 'double workload' (Interviewee 8) that is experienced by cleaners and the confusion that this creates about their lines of duty and responsibility. The experience of a heavy workload is attributed not only to lots of buildings needing to be cleaned by too few staff, but also to the sense of having two different sets of jobs (or having two 'employers'). Eighteen cleaners make reference to 'cleaning work' and 'extra work' and they express a sense of confusion in relation to these two different sets of work. They do however make the distinction that 'cleaning work' is what they are paid to do by Supercare and 'extra work' (also referred to by cleaners as 'agent' or 'client' jobs) is work that they do but that they are not being paid for by Supercare. As was stated in an earlier section, cleaners do a variety of 'work' activities at UCT. Cleaners identify work activities that are 'more than cleaning' as the additional work cleaners do for the departments. This work includes making tea, setting up lunches and teas for meetings and workshops, running the kitchens, delivering post, handing out gowns to students for graduation, photocopying, filing, and setting up venues (i.e. laying out tables, chairs and books) for exams. The other side of this predicament is that doing extra work can be viewed as skills enhancing.

"I gain a lot of experience especially with the workshops because when they ask me can I do a workshop, I can say yes" (Interviewee 25).

This cleaner said that doing additional work for the department, such as the preparation for workshops, provided her with skills and competencies. This was seen by her as valuable. Four other workers had similar sentiments. When reflecting on her experience of doing non-cleaning work for her department Interviewee 21 says,

“In the beginning it was fine because I learned a lot about admin and meetings and things but then after three years in the same department I had had it! I said no ways because I wasn't being paid for it”.

The goal expressed by these cleaners is to move out of cleaning work and into office jobs at UCT; this extra work experience is viewed by cleaners as a contribution to realising this goal. While the skills that get developed from this 'extra' work for the 'client' are perceived as important and valuable to the attainment of this goal, it is clear that some interviewees express anger and upset that they are 'forced' to do the extra work. Central to this anger and frustration about doing 'extra work' was the experience that sometimes this extra work is expected to be performed for free.

“I am tired of doing this double work. And I don't get paid to do this work. Some people understand that I am busy and they can wait, other people don't understand and ask me to do things when they need it like I am not busy. It's too much” (Interviewee 8).

Their ambiguity of the involvement in double work therefore a result of valuing the extra work for a) the opportunity for skills development it provides and b) the sense of belonging that it creates on the one hand and resenting the work because it leaves them feeling exploited on the other hand. Seven cleaners recognize that jobs are scarce in general and their experience at work is that the company uses this fact to intimidate and silence people when they express dissatisfaction with the amount of work they are required to do. Combined with the fear of saying 'no' to the 'client', as this may lead to being moved to another building or another site, cleaners remain silence since being move threatens the sense of belonging that they value in the fist place. Interviewee 15 expressed her dissatisfaction and a real sense of exploitation;

“At the end of the year we are standing there by the gowns and we take and give it to the children the gowns and they [Supercare management] don't appreciate it. Every year the same people stand there to give the children the gowns, we must work in our lunch times and our tea times. And they don't pay us extra for that. They don't appreciate it and we can't say anything! And if you talk too much they chase you out of the building, they chase you out! You must just keep quiet. There are a lot of people looking for the job”.

The 'extra' payment it seems is dependent on the will of each department rather than being across the board or enforceable in any way either by UCT or by Supercare. What also emerges from the above quote is that lack of payment for work and/or confusion about what type of work is really legitimate isn't the only objection to this skewed positioning. Having two directives also puts pressure on the workers. Interviewee 7 explains this clearly,

"If a client comes in here now and they ask me please, please these things must be removed, I must do it. But I didn't come here to remove them, I came here for my special job, under my special what do you call it? It's called my SOP, my Standard Operating Procedure. Like I clean, mop and vacuum this place. Like, when I do that I put in some extra time and that is where the supervisor she monitors you: 'But you went in there, what were you doing?' 'I didn't want to tell her no, she asked me to move the cupboards.' 'I told you no, don't do that'. You see then I am in shit".

This interviewee is also referring to 'surveillance' of the types of work that he can do according to the directives of his supervisor. The experience is that the Supercare job description involves particular activities and he is reprimanded by management for doing work that doesn't fit this description, even if it is for the client who is meant to 'always come first'. This poses a contradiction in the life of the cleaner that, because of his vulnerability, he is ultimately responsible for managing.

Linked to this is the observation that fifteen of the people I interviewed complain that casuals are not used to assist cleaners when the work load is heavy. As was mentioned earlier, several interviewees report that Supercare employs both casual and permanent cleaners. Eight interviewees explained that they themselves worked as casuals prior to being permanent staff. According to interviewees, one of the reasons why casual staff are employed is to help out when permanent staff are missing or unable to work (e.g. are off sick or are on leave), or when the workload of both 'cleaning work' and 'agent work' is particularly heavy. However, one of the most common complaints from the sample I interviewed about working conditions was the experience of frequently being over worked. Central to this was the experience of refusal by Supercare

managers to bring in casuals to assist teams of workers during demanding working times. When interviewees were asked why Supercare management doesn't bring in casuals to assist when workload is heavy, the answers were for the most part straight forward;

"Supercare management doesn't want to pay for extra labour, and they don't care about the well-being of their employees" (Interviewee 20).

Interviewee 19, an African⁸² woman in her 50s goes on to say,

"We wanted the men especially because when we go to Jameson hall that chairs and tables is too heavy, it's too heavy but the management they don't care about us. They don't care about us. They promise that, but they don't give us the other people. They don't like to bring casuals because they don't want to pay".

One of the results of this is that when there is extra work load the cleaning workers don't manage to complete all the cleaning work that they are allocated on a day to day basis. This means that offices can remain dirty. Interviewee 2 describes,

"When they give us too much work I don't think I would complain because like I said, I like working here and I try my utmost each day to get all my work done. But the extra work means I can't get my cleaning work done and that isn't good for me" (Interviewee 2).

Here, the interviewee is referring to extra work that consists of the 'setting up' work that takes place on Friday afternoons for functions at UCT over the weekend as well as arbitrary 'client jobs' the cleaner is called on to assist with in another building where there was a shortage of staff. She says,

"But now at this time of the year, most of the staff will be on leave, but I will be here so I am going to have to do the work because they always ask me. I don't know why. If she needs someone to go to somewhere else to clean then it is always me that has to go, even if I am busy with something else and then I must continue with that when I get back".

⁸² African refers to black people in South Africa

When this happens, if cleaning work is not done, it is usually the cleaners themselves that bear the brunt with a warning for not completing their work schedule. With regards to this issue, Interviewee 2 says,

“There are things I hate here. When someone is absent they don't call a casual. There are so many casuals there on Upper campus by Beattie building, but she just took one of us to replace another person. Then I don't get to my cleaning work”.

The representation here is that there are plenty of casual workers who *are* available to work, but Supercare doesn't use them when this cleaners' team is short of staff because Supercare doesn't care and doesn't want to pay. She then goes on to explain an example,

“On Friday I was working there by X and in my place also, when Y is absent always she asks me to work there by her place too for her. Then if you refuse because you have too much work, she's going to phone there on upper campus and you get a warning”.

For one cleaner, the demands of cleaning and work for the department reached a level where she asked to be moved to another building. She says,

“I was only there in clothing, otherwise I worked for UCT. What I don't like about Supercare in general is when they exploit people. We are here to clean right and yet some people give you something to do as a favour and then next thing you know they make it your job!” (Interviewee 21)

By this she meant that she was wearing a uniform that said she was a cleaner for Supercare, but she expresses that she spent the majority of her time doing jobs for UCT. This arrangement also seems to create an internal conflict for some of the respondents. Supercare cleaners frequently stated that they like doing departmental work for UCT because they have created relationships with the department and they feel valued by the department. As one interviewee says,

"I had 49 offices that I had to clean and then I had two kitchens that I had to run. It kept me busy and I could do it. No one could tell me that I am not doing my job. Vacuum everyday, emptying the bins, polishing the desks, you know? Sometimes I even work through my lunch if there were meetings. But I loved to do it you know, I feel like they couldn't do without me you know. It felt good" (Interviewee 18)

In addition to these complexities and ambiguities that arise from having to meet the demands of Supercare and the 'client', cleaners are often told by the management that 'the client comes first'. In adhering to this policy, eight cleaners express that they do not feel that they can say no to the client when work is requested, even if they are busy doing something else at the time of the request. As has already been mentioned above, often the responsibility for managing the excessive demands falls squarely on the shoulders of the workers in the form of 'overtime' work, and working through lunch and tea breaks. In response to my questions about overtime work, interviewee 25 states that,

"No, we don't work overtime; we are leaving here at 4:30. If I must work late for the department then that is my problem, it's not Supercare's problem, that's my problem, just go sign out and then come back. Then I can't say tomorrow that I am tiredit's okay to do this as it doesn't clash with my cleaning duties.....I rather work through my lunch to make it easier for me you see".

With this response she is quick to clarify that after hour work for the UCT department is one thing and work for Supercare is another. When asked about pay for this after hour departmental work, this interviewee responds,

"Yes, they [UCT staff] do give me money, they take us out with them when they have functions, they gave us every year they give us some money as well.....I didn't really expect it, I am getting paid to do my work, I didn't expect them to give to me more money, because I earn my wages as a cleaner, so I was quiet surprised I was the one to say wow why?"

One woman, a night staff employee, also reports being moved off campus in the night to go and clean at the Waterfront Shopping Centre⁸³ and at a Shoprite Checkers in Brackenfell⁸⁴. When they return to UCT they are then meant to complete all their cleaning work at the University as well. In addition, her experience is that the work that she does away from campus is not actually paid for. She says,

“Sometimes they take us to go to Shoprite in Brackenfell. I don't think we must go out to Brackenfell because we must go around here! But sometimes they take us to Brackenfell. Sometimes they take us to the Waterfront to clean there also. But they didn't give us that money for that work you see” (Interviewee 19).

Given the complexity of the situation, a common theme that I observed was a sense of ambiguity and ambivalence not only between different cleaners' experiences, but also within each individual in the form of internal conflict of interests at work. Part of this ambivalence is rooted around a dichotomy of wanting to do the work on the one hand and a sense of exploitation on the other. These responses from cleaners, especially those who have worked at UCT for a long time, indicate a desire to do the extra work for the client because they gain a sense of belonging and appreciation from being treated as part of the departmental staff. The interviewees also value doing the 'extra work' because they acknowledge that it can improve their skills base. However, it increases the workload substantially and the fact that some of this work is neither appreciated by Supercare nor paid leaves a sense of resentment at the exploitation that is experienced as part of their position in this relationship with Supercare and UCT. The strict surveillance from Supercare management means that expressing this dissatisfaction without consequence is almost impossible.

⁸³ The Waterfront is a Shopping Mall based in the Foreshore area in Cape Town.

⁸⁴ Brackenfell is one of the northern suburbs of Cape Town.

4.2 Favouritism

"If a Supervisor likes you, she selects you" (Interviewee 2)

Racism (See 'Surveillance' below) was perceived by some workers as one of the mechanism used by Supercare management to favour certain workers over others, both in terms of workload and access to opportunities for better positions in the company. Throughout all of the interviews there was the communication of a sense of irregularity and inconsistency in the way that cleaners are treated by supervisors and in the way that the rules at Supercare are implemented. According to seven interviewees in particular, the different treatment that workers get from their supervisors is attributed to a type of favouritism. Difference in treatment is most simply stated as a function of being liked or disliked by supervisors; if the supervisor likes you, she will treat you well. If he dislikes you, he will treat you badly. 'Treatment' here refers to a number of things which include being moved to another building, being given warnings, getting time off when it is requested, getting deductions when late and/or absent from work, and being asked to do 'extra' work.

"If the Supervisor doesn't like you, then she will play with our money. There is one girly who is pregnant and they are playing with her money and I don't like it.it's not just one supervisor there are plenty of supervisors who do it, who doesn't like their staff people. There is plenty" (Interviewee 20).

In relation to 'deductions', 5 cleaners state out rightly that some supervisors won't deduct from wages if they are friendly with the employees. The converse is also true; as interviewee 8 states,

"If they don't like you they will just deduct wages. If they like you, you might be okay".

This different treatment is a source of frustration and anger amongst the workers that spoke about it, as it is perceived as being unfair and unjust and leaves workers feeling confused and powerless. According to the Supercare employees I interviewed, favouritism is another word that is used to describe it when a supervisor likes an employee and treats them better than others as a result. While 'being liked' could seem like an arbitrary factor based on personality for example, on further

analysis this favouritism appears to be more complex than this. The sense is that it is whether the cleaner is prepared to do favours' for the supervisors that will determine whether he/she will be liked in return. Interviewee 20 explains that;

"Sometimes she asks me to do favours for her and that's the thing that counts the most. If the supervisor asks you to do something, do it! Don't moan and groan just do it because tomorrow you want to go home early, you ask her and she will say yes. But if you don't do it and ask her for something she will say no. Why? She'll remind you. She will say I did ask you to do that for me in your lunch time and you said 'no it's your lunch', so now I am saying no" (Interviewee 20).

Two other interviewees describe this relationship as 'having an understanding' with their supervisor. This effectively means that doing work for supervisors when they ask for it can give an employee a sense of agency that can be used to avoid getting deductions and as an opportunity to get other 'favours' from the supervisors. The frequency with which these ideas were repeated in interviews indicates that this is a well established practice. Analysis of this practice revealed a complex politics of compliance and survival as well as the complexities of voicing participation in such a system. For example, four interviewees state that the supervisors always chose their 'favourites' to do the certain extra work that needs to get done. To those workers who identify themselves as 'favourites', this is understood or represented as a function of trust between supervisor and their favourites' ability to perform. When asked why he is the one he says,

"She trusts me to get the work done. Sometimes when I am sick I don't call just to make them panic a bit. And they do panic. My supervisor when I am out is worried who is going to do this place now? She always comes to me first because she knows I can do it" (Interviewee 20).

This representation gives the impression of having power in the work place to make demands from his supervisor, which makes this interviewee feel competent and valued. Another worker goes on to say that this trust can be used to get what is needed to do the job properly as well. He describes an experience in which he is able to use his leverage as a favourite to make requirements of his

supervisor, for example, being a 'favourite' gives him agency to ask for extra workers when they are needed.

"When she asks me to work I can say 'yes' and then ask her 'I want four other boys as well'. She can say 'no, just two' and then I say 'ok then I am not going work' and she says 'okay, I'll give you all four'. Then we all work. We then all of us get a day off from the work we do for overtime, and I am the last person to take the day off, and that is what they [other cleaners] like about me, I put them before me" (Interviewee 9).

However, there is a cost to this relationship. Doing 'favours' for supervisors often includes working through lunch and tea times. For those who are the favourites, they may develop agency to avoid getting deductions, but they often work the hardest as well. One cleaner says that he is the favourite. When I ask him what advise he would give to a cleaner joining FSC he says,

"You mustn't be the next favourite boy after me, because if you are, if she likes you then she will make you do anything. I am getting tired now" (Interviewee 7).

At the time I was not sure what to make of it. On the one hand being a 'favourite' comes with a degree of agency and authority and the potential to move up in Supercare. This opportunity comes with displaying hard work and developing what is described as a sense of trust or understanding in the relationship with supervisors. However, the position of favourite wasn't recommended precisely because of this hard work. Those workers who identify themselves as favourites display some ambivalence as to whether this position is beneficial, because it gives a degree of agency, or exploitative, because it demands that you are always available for the supervisors and this is unfair. There was also some indication of guilt or discomfort with participating in such a system of favouritism.

An extension of the theme of flexible labour through numerical flexibility (more work through less people) and deductions based on favouritism is the mechanisms of 'overtime work'. If extra hours are worked for Supercare, employees get given time off. Although cleaners do overtime work, they would much prefer money for the work that they do. Another complication with days off is that the

company doesn't deliver on its side of the agreement. This approach of 'flexi-work' has led one person complained that he is owed 6 days off, but is still waiting to get these days off.

"Don't get, don't get no overtime! Me and him are both owed 6 days off" (Interviewee 22).

The use of this language shows frustration and repetition of the same story for this cleaner and for other Supercare employees. The story is that the cleaner perceives himself as not getting what he asks for or what he is promised by his employer; that although the system of favours works in theory it doesn't always happen in practice.

"If they ask us for something, we do it, but then they don't meet their side of it. It is wrong what they do!" (Interviewee 22).

5. SURVEILLANCE

The geography of the University of Cape Town means that Supercare cleaning workers are spread over a large and diverse area that stretches from the main campuses in Rondebosch to the Business School and Drama department in the centre of Cape Town. A central aspect of the experience and quality of work as it is experienced by cleaning workers at the University of Cape Town in Surveillance. This theme explores the nature of Surveillance as it is experienced by these cleaners at UCT under the sub-themes; *Warning, Moving Around, Racism, and Control through Abuse*.

5.1 Hierarchy of Surveillance

One of the first characteristics of working life through Supercare that I noted as a researcher is what I have referred to here as the Internal Structure of Supercare (described in Chapter 3). This structure effectively has four layers of management that extends from the Supercare management offices based in the basement of the Beattie building on the University Upper campus to the head girls that work directly on the floor with the cleaners. Supervisors and assistant supervisors then

have rooms/offices all around campus from which they manage their surrounding areas where one supervisor is assigned to supervise a group of workers in an area. For example, middle campus (which includes three or four buildings) FSC workers are all under one supervisor. The Supercare cleaners refer to their supervisors as 'Makhulu'⁸⁵.

With this hierarchy of control in place, cleaners work in a context of intense supervision. Supervision is in the form of supervisors watching very closely over the work of cleaners.

"Sometimes my supervisor comes and tells me what to do. But I know what to do and I told him 'don't stand there and tell me what to do. I know what to do, don't stand there by me. Rather go take a walk or something'. I know what to do!" (Interviewee 20)

According to all the interviewees, when supervisors are not directly present with cleaners, head girls and head boys watch over the work and behaviour of cleaners from the close proximity that their position as semi-management/semi-worker affords them. Head girls are positioned as close to workers as possible and described as "assisting workers with their cleaning". Seven workers used this terminology of 'assisting' to describe the job of head girls. While the head girls/boys do assist with cleaning, through interviews with two head girls and with other cleaners, it became apparent that their role is primarily a supervisory one. In this way, it appears that head girls are used as disguised managers because while they do assist cleaners with work, they also report to management and are actively watching the work that cleaners do while 'assisting' them. In this position, cleaners have a mixed response to them. While five cleaners report not trusting head girls, three report liking and getting on well with them.

5.2 Warnings

"They come with their warnings and disciplinary hearings and at the end of the day if you refuse duty then you are out of a job" (Interviewee 1).

⁸⁵ Makhulu is a Xhosa word that translates to mean "big mother" or even "grandmother" and is used to denote a relationship of authority.

According to interviewees, surveillance is also practiced through the handing out of warnings. In general, workers report that the first and second warnings are verbal, the third is written and the final warning warrants dismissal. The objection to warnings is strongest when discussing the reasons for which warnings are given. One reason given for the issuing of warnings is poor performance at work. According to both the three interviewees that referred to this and the Contract Manager of Supercare, supervisors have a list of activities that need to be completed everyday and these are listed in a book that is kept by supervisors. Incomplete work is noted in the book and can result in the issuing of a warning. Workers comment that this book is used at a whim by managers to “get rid of workers” (Interviewee 18). One woman says “They look in that book whenever the management is tired of you and want to get rid of you” (interviewee 19).

Other than unfinished work and/or for simply not cleaning ones area to the required standard set out in the book, Supercare employees report that they are given warnings by their supervisors for being late to work, for ‘talking back’ to their management, and for making mistakes on the job. In terms of making mistakes on the job, seven interviewees complained that on at least one occasion they were given a warning without any correction or feedback on what exactly they had done wrong.

“We are not here to go and lose our jobs. Every single little thing! You make a mistake and you get a warning! Warning! Warning! (She says clicking her fingers every time she says ‘warning’). They can’t sit and talk to you and show you the way forward. It’s only warning when I break something, a warning when you do something wrong, it’s a warning, warning, warning!”

Eight cleaners add to this account of the use of warnings as a means of control by stating that challenging a supervisor about conditions of work that are experienced as unfair, such as heavy workloads or being asked to do an agent job while busy with cleaning, is seen by supervisors as ‘refusing duty’. According to interviewees, ‘refusing duty’ is grounds for a warning as well. When I asked ‘with whom do you take up genuine workplace grievances?’ one interviewee responds,

“Supervisors, systems managers, and managers as well, but I don't trust any of these people. I don't know who to believe anymore. They tell you that you are lazy and you are just refusing duty and then it comes to one thing - you get a warning”.

The fear of losing ones job was one reason why some people refused to participate in the research from the start. According to these interviewees, the threat of being fired through this system of warnings is used as a means of keeping workers silent and controlling them. These are vulnerable workers who need the jobs to survive and 6 cleaners explicitly recognise that Supercare uses this vulnerability to silence them.

5.3 Moving Around/Being 'Transferred'

All of the people I interviewed had either been moved from one building to another at least once or, if they had not been moved, they knew of someone who had been moved. This movement was generally experienced as unfair and undesirable because it was recognized as a means of management control over workers. Interviewees indicate a sense that being moved by Supercare management is used as a form of punishment as part of a broader system of surveillance of worker behaviour. For example, eight cleaners referred to being moved as a form of punishment for talking about conditions of employment to UCT staff and/or complaining about conditions to the supervisor.

“They don't want us to talk about our problems with people, about the way they treat us here. If you talk to UCT staff or complain about the way they treat you they [Supercare management] will chase you out of the building” (Interviewee 15)

Thus, creating the fear of being moved to another building is one of the mechanisms that management uses to silence employees from talking about their dissatisfaction with aspects of their working experience. Intimidation through fear of being moved was a central theme observed both in the content of what interviewees said and in how they responded to the research process. Interviewee 4 was particularly hesitant to participate in the research stating in an interview,

“I am talking too much and I don't want to lose my job, I have a little baby to look after, I can't lose my job so I can't talk anymore”.

This view that speaking about work experiences can lead to being moved, to a warning or to being dismissed was common amongst cleaners that were interviewed and those that I didn't interview. One of the longer standing interviewee had worked at UCT for 12 years in total, having been with Supercare since the company began its contract at UCT. She explains that giving advice to other cleaners was met with threats of being moved to another building. This cleaner describes herself as an older more experienced worker, having worked at UCT prior to outsourcing. In her experience, whenever she has tried to give newer employees advice about how to manage themselves in the workplace, as well as advice about their rights, this information was rejected by the newer colleagues. Therefore when asked, “What advice would you give to a new Supercare employee?” this interviewee said,

“The people here [meaning the cleaners], when you try to show them the way they take you to their supervisors and then the supervisor moves you. That is why the people move around. I don't give people any advice because if the supervisor sees you giving people advice they will move you because they say you are trying to act like a supervisor” (Interviewee13).

What is interesting here is that the cleaners themselves have internalized what Bezuidenhout and Fakier (2006: 472) refer to as 'the management gaze' and will also report to supervisors if they are given advice from someone other than Supercare management. Intimidation was also perceived by five workers as being central to how management has made decisions around conditions of employment and the implemented the Code of Conduct.

“Take it or leave it', that is what they say. We are taking the mop out of your hand if you don't agree. You say okay because you don't have another place to work and you have to pay your debt, the children need you” (Interview 17).

That one “can’t do anything about it” is a common place response as well as a material experience of working life for outsourced cleaning staff at UCT.

5.4 Racism

Racism at work was an experience expressed by five African interviewees. These five interviewees stated that Supercare prefers to employ ‘coloured’ and white supervisors and all of them identified the fact that only two of the eleven Supercare supervisors working at UCT are Africans. Coloured supervisors were identified as racist towards Africans by three interviewees. One of them states,

“You know most of the supervisors, there are only two African supervisors, the rest is coloured and they are so racist. They [management] don’t care about the coloured’s but they are always following the amaXhosa. It’s not good. It’s not right. Oh it’s difficult being black to get a job as a supervisor here. So that is why I am saying [there is] a little bit of racism here; not a little, a lot!” (Interviewee 2)

This particular interviewee also gives an example of how race determines who gets access to better job opportunities within Supercare. She explains how a new white employee was selected for the position of head girl rather than a coloured colleague who had 7 years of employment experience with Supercare. She states:

“If the supervisor likes you she selects you. Y was here for a long time but when Z came she was here only two months, don’t have any experience, and the manager tells us she is head girl. She was new, knowing nothing! Even now, I am sorry, even now she is a bit better, she doesn’t know how to use machines and things like that but the manager just told us ‘she is your head girl I don’t need any questions!’. We didn’t say anything because now she is the head girl. But Y was here for a long time, she was knowing everything here, so why she didn’t take her as a head girl? That is why I say there is racism here”.

In total, four of the interviewees report that even if you are experienced and competent as a cleaner, if you are black you are less likely to be promoted to head girl and supervisors than white and even coloured cleaners, and that this likelihood is irrespective of the level of skills or competency. Another interviewee says,

“I said oh, to be black! I am proud to be black but I am also crying to be black because if I was not black maybe I would have been supervisor a long time ago” (Interviewee 12)

This talk of skill and competency also reflects that cleaning workers view their work as requiring skill and not as a natural ability, which is how cleaning work is generally constructed. It is the experience of 4 black cleaners that they are also given the worst jobs, such as cleaning toilets. One cleaner says,

“In X building, me and Y we are made to scrub the toilets, just the two of us alone. It was a lot of work for just two people. But the other coloured ladies were there walking up and down in pairs just to put toilet paper in the toilets. I told the Supervisor ‘you are giving us a tough job, what about those people?’” (Interviewee 9).

The notion of ‘worst’ and ‘best’ cleaning jobs also indicates further diversity in activity and experience of cleaning work, outlined in an earlier theme. In this instance diversity is perceived as operating in relation to race, with the tougher jobs being assigned to black cleaners. Race then is experienced as a variable for how jobs are allocated both vertically and horizontally.

5.5 Controls through Abuse

Four cleaners expressed that they have experienced their supervisors shouting at them in front of other people. All four also express that they feel that the shouting is not justified, and that it is inappropriate and humiliating for their supervisors to shout at them in public. Interviewee 2 says about her supervisor,

"It's not nice to work under Makhulu. She don't treat us good. Her behaviour is bad! Sometimes early in the morning you ask her something or for a chemical to work with and oh she shouts; angry, angry, angry! And you don't know why. It is not right. She doesn't care if there are people or students around, if she wants to she shouts".

In addition to being shouted at, these cleaners also report being spoken to without any respect or appreciation. One cleaner stated,

"They treat us like a fool, sorry for that language. If say they send you to do something they don't ask you nicely. If I am cleaning the floor they come and say 'leave that and come here', instead of 'Please, we can see that you are busy but please, there is an agent job can you please come and help?'" (Interviewee 12)

Poor communication between the cleaners and Supercare management is a problem that is cited by 13 interviewees. According to 6 of these interviewees, when workers ask questions concerning their working condition, they are often told to stop 'moaning' and/or 'refusing duty'. The end result is that workers feel victimized and intimidated and don't feel that they can express how they really feel about their working conditions to their supervisors or in public forums with other workers⁸⁶.

"They don't discuss things with us or ask us how we feel. If we ask them what is going on with our wages, they don't want to tell us. They say 'don't worry about that just get on with your work. Don't work on my nerves'" (Interviewee 11).

While Supercare employees state that they enjoy working for UCT, their sentiments towards Supercare are not as positive. Supercare is perceived as an employer that has no respect for the human side of the employment relationship. One woman says,

"My child was in hospital for five weeks and she didn't ask me how my child or anything is. And she tells me it's not her problem that my child is in hospital. And if you ask her to go

⁸⁶ In the WF meetings workers are often afraid to say what they really feel about working conditions through Supercare at UCT because they are worried that other workers present at the meeting will tell management that they have spoken in the meetings. This, they fear, will have negative consequences.

home for anything, she says it is not her problem. They don't care if your child is dying from sickness" (Interviewee 15)

Six other cleaners report other incidences in which they experienced feeling disregarded by their managers. The use of warnings to intimidate is a constant reminder that workers are replaceable. Abuse can also extend beyond verbal abuse to physical abuse where workers can not take off sick leave, or when they are forced to work under appalling conditions. One interviewee who worked cleaning toilets requested to be moved from this job while she was pregnant. She says in the interview that this request was denied. She states,

"I was sick! I told them about the toilets, that I didn't want to clean the toilets. I even threw up you know. I get sick to my stomach. Even when I was pregnant I had to clean up the toilets and that was just too much for me. The smell and everything was too much. Then she [the supervisor] didn't want to listen to me, so I took sick leave. I went to the doctor because my blood pressure was too high. I worked myself up because they never listened to me and then he [doctor] put me off for a week" (Interviewee 18).

For Supercare workers the experience of relationships is a complex one that is defined in many ways by ambiguity. There is an intense sense of insecurity that is experienced by workers through the power of Supercare surveillance mechanisms. At the University of Cape Town, Supercare employees express that another feature of tight surveillance is in the form of aggressive supervision by Supercare management. However, the development of relationships with UCT on the other hand is experienced as valuable in mediating the tactics used by Supercare to control and exploit workers. This description of treatment by Supercare is in contrast to the way that UCT staff are experienced; as showing respect and generosity and a generally higher sense of appreciation and dignity for workers.

6. DEGRADATION

"In the old South Africa of apartheid, workers were supposed to be grateful if they had a 'good' employer. In the new South African part of the global village, as with 'precarious' workers elsewhere, they are supposed to be grateful if they have a job at all" (Grossman, 2004: 1).

The central effect then of how cleaning work is being constructed at the University of Cape Town through outsourced work is degradation of the work and the people that do it. Cleaning work is very important and yet it is generally not valued in our society. Despite the position that much paid domestic work and perhaps much more unpaid domestic work socially useful and socially necessary, it is "denigrated and devalued in a patriarchal capitalist society" (Grossman, 2005: 78). It is work that is taken for granted and assumed. As is stated by Msimang (2003: 2), "a woman's work is the only work that is noticed when it is *not* done".

During interviews it was apparent that workers do not feel appreciated by Supercare, although they often feel more valued and included into departmental activities by the University staff. The above-mentioned forms of surveillance operate to construct a position within a series of power relations that lead to the experience of powerlessness. The experiences in relation to wages reflect the dependency that workers have on the company for a wage, since for all of the interviewees, unemployment is not an option and for those who express the desire to leave Supercare (6 interviewees) other work opportunities are simply not seen as being available. Since people have to work and cleaning is the only available job, they are forced to make do with the conditions of the employment that they have found. The vulnerable or precarious position of these workers, a combined result of a weak economic position, poor union representation, bad management practices, low wages and conditions of work, low levels of education and few other work opportunities, means that they have little bargaining power and must take the conditions of work that they are given. The findings suggest that this employer institutes practices that give employees very little choice; it clear that unless their conditions are accepted, the cleaners can and will be threatened with their jobs.

Given these conditions of work, a central experience of work life at UCT by cleaning workers is one of degradation. Through a lack of appreciation for the work that they do, not only in the form of the low wages that they are paid, but also in the way that they are treated by their bosses and their clients, workers experience very degrading conditions of work. Combined with the real lack of access to basic resources at work, such as safe and hygienic rooms in which to change, and access to eating and food storage facilities, one can ask the question; What dignity is there in having to 'beg' students for transport money or ask more familiar 'clients' for lunch money and weekend char jobs when one is 'fully' employed?

Further examples of how cleaners are degraded and dehumanized on campus occurred during my field work. I refer to one of these here as an excerpt from my journal notes:

"I was walking through campus to interview a contract cleaner and as I walked I bumped into Charles⁸⁷. He was pushing a big black dustbin, and he stopped to ask me how my research was going. As we stood there talking, a young white male student approached, didn't say excuse me (we were having a conversation) and presented Charles with his can of coke that he was about to throw away. He said to Charles, 'there is a bit left, do you want it?' Charles said, 'no thanks', lifted the bin lid and the boy threw the can away, and walked on. We resumed our conversation like nothing had happened. This did not hide the sense of shame and disrespect that was now present between us; a sense that any sensible person would have felt".

In an interview, another direct experience of degradation was described as follows,

"I mean toilets, men just walk in and out and wee in front of you, they don't worry, you know I am sick and tired...they are messy. Men is like, how can I tell you, like they have an organism in the toilet and I have to clean it up. There was also mucus. Someone spat a whole mirror full of mucus. I often find and clean up some dirty male condoms there too"
(Interviewee 19)

⁸⁷ The name has been changed to protect the identity of the interviewee

Another cleaner comments that what she dislikes most about her job is the way that people take her work for granted. She says,

“What I dislike about work? Cleaning after everybody, especially when they can see that you are busy and they still make a mess. That just pisses me off” (Interviewee 5).

Workers report that they are silenced through the fear of losing their jobs. The fear is not irrational but based on the experience of being given warnings, being moved around, getting deductions, as well as witnessing other people getting fired on the basis of what seem to workers as completely unreasonable grounds. The relationships that cleaners form with UCT staff are sometimes able to support them and sometimes not.

7. RESISTANCE AND SURVIVAL STRATEGIES

Writing about survival and resistance in the context of this thesis is important for two reasons. Firstly, the theme of survival and resistance emerged clearly from the interviews. As the above themes have attempted to illustrate, workers that are employed as contract cleaners work in a very precarious position. Work is characterised by a combination of intense forms of surveillance and management control, low wages and benefits, long working hours and intense workloads, and day to day denigration. This combined set of circumstances constructs an experience of powerlessness and dependency through working in jobs that are constructed as meaningless. In turn, the people doing the work are re-inscribed as meaningless workers and not worthy of the basic rights of citizenship, belonging and dignity afforded to ‘core’ workers. The research process and findings (as well as everyday life) indicate that cleaning work is highly valuable. This is expressed by the cleaners themselves, some of whom describe their work as skills enhancing, rewarding, and enjoyable. However, through various form of exploitation and disrespect, the work, the knowledge and skills it involves, and the people who do it are constructed in a particularly negative light.

Despite all of the above, experiences of work are not at all limited to a 'silent' tolerance of these conditions; Workers report and display active resistance to these conditions and engagement in other strategies of survival. That there are elements of survival and resistance in the experience of cleaners indicates that the people are not just passive victims that are tolerant of their situation. The second reason why it is important then is that an analysis of these strategies also complicates issues of agency and power and has the potential to re-imagine and reconstruct the 'contract cleaner' as a 'core' worker at the University of Cape Town.

7.1 Resistance to Mobility

According to Bezuidenhout and Fakier (2006) at Wits University, Supercare cleaners working at Wits get moved to different buildings by Supercare management as a means of controlling worker organisation as well as a means to interfere with the ability of workers to settle down in a building and feel comfortable and secure there. Similar findings have been presented in this research under the heading 'Surveillance'. In this thesis it has also been suggested how this movement is central to the creation of a sense of powerlessness that is experienced by workers. Despite the effectiveness of management's systematic control, three cleaners working at UCT report active resistance to being moved from building to building by the Supercare management. In these instances UCT staff are reported as a major support in keeping cleaners stationed where they are. One of these interviewee's states,

"They can try to move me, but my Staff like me and they'll have to bring me back. It has happened before, and look I'm still here" (Interviewee 16).

Through cleaners' experiences it is indicated that some UCT staff have been able to negotiate with Supercare management that cleaners be brought back to a department. The exact nature of this negotiation needs further research. Here, the relationship established between UCT staff and the cleaners can be useful in survival and resistance strategies to surveillance by Supercare management. This presents the possibility that cleaners, through the relationships that they establish with the client, do have some degree of agency in negotiating their location on the

campus, but that this is dependent on the relationship between UCT staff and Supercare and the power that the University staff have to make demands on Supercare management. The development of relationships with UCT staff therefore has become central to resisting the arbitrary movement of cleaners by Supercare as part of management surveillance and control.

7.2 Resistance through Mobility

During the interviews I realized that what is missing from other research is a discussion about agency with regards to being moved. The ability of workers to influence remaining in one department has been presented above. In the interviews it was also suggested by four cleaners that they had asked to be moved. This happened when a cleaner was dissatisfied working in a building, or if his/her health required that they be moved to a 'safer' working place, and on one occasion the cleaner reported being moved because she wanted the opportunity to study. Interviewee 18 was moved to a lighter load job in another building when her job became too demanding because she was pregnant.

Another cleaner could no longer work in a science department because she was permanently injured by exposure to noxious chemicals in that department. She was moved to another department as a result. Finally, one interviewee reported that she asked to be transferred to another building because she was doing too much work for the UCT department and not enough work as a cleaner. She says "I was only there in clothing, otherwise I worked for UCT" (Interviewee 21). These present instances where being moved to another building was a result of agency rather than punishment.

Although there were three successful cases of employees requesting moves to other buildings, there were also reports of unsuccessful requests. One cleaner stated that she had been complaining about working conditions to her Supervisor for over a year and yet her request to be moved was continually denied for no apparent reason. She states,

“I have been unhappy in this job cleaning toilets for three years now. The supervisor isn’t fair. She knows I am unhappy here and I have told her about it. When I asked her for a transfer she didn’t tell me why she doesn’t want to give me one”.

Other than requesting movement to more suitable working conditions as a means of resistance and survival, there is also indications from the interviews of action taken by cleaners to move out of cleaning work altogether. In interviews with cleaners, with the Director of Properties and Services and with the Contract Manger of Supercare, it is stated that Supercare employees are allowed to apply for office and other higher grade jobs at the University when positions become available. Knowledge of this is common amongst the people I interviewed and it is an attractive option for those who aspire to get out of employment with Supercare.

Eighteen of the cleaners that I interviewed expressed knowledge that they can apply for jobs at the University, and in some instances they say that they actually are given first preference for application to these jobs.

“UCT is taking some of them [Supercare cleaners] back. If there are jobs open they have the first opportunity” (Interviewee 13).

A common perception amongst the interviewees is that UCT as a site of work does offer opportunities that other sites do not necessarily offer, and this was discussed earlier as one of the perceived advantages of working at the University stated by some of the cleaners.

“Good things about UCT is you got more advantage. Working here you can keep your eyes and your ears open and listen” (Interviewee 7).

Given this opportunity for mobility out of cleaning work at the workplace, four interviewees made reference to people that they knew used to work for Supercare but now work for UCT in different capacities (e.g. one as a lab technician, one as a driver, and two as clerks). I interviewed one of these people briefly about her experience of moving out of contract cleaning into a higher grade position at the University. In her representation of what happened, she was able to get a job at

UCT as a clerk because she put herself through a computer course and was permitted by the University staff to use the facilities (computers) to practice. She attributes this to the fact that while working for Supercare she cleaned in a building that offered computer training and was fortunate to be allowed to study and use the computers by the UCT staff. In this case, mobility through Supercare eventually assisted her in moving out of Supercare and into employment at UCT. Her account of this move was that the UCT administrative staff in the building in which she worked encouraged her to move out of cleaning and into an office job and assisted her by allowing her to make use of the UCT computers. However, this is area of opportunity that is not without its challenges.

While these stories represent resistance and strategies of survival that must be presented here, they still only reflect individual cases. For those less fortunate, resistance and survival must take other forms. According to all the interviewees Supercare does not provide education and/or training and employees struggle to negotiate time off to improve their education levels. The only time that they get off is their annual leave, and those interviewees who spoke of wanting to seek further education, four in this sample, do not want to use their annual leave to pursue studies. Interviewee 2, for example, comes from the Eastern Cape and wants to go home during the holidays to spend time with family.

“I won’t study in that time. I must go home to Eastern Cape that time to see my family”.

For cleaners that do have an interest in studying and seeking employment at the University, another message that they get is that the resources at the University are for use by UCT employees and students only. Interviewee 2 reports that this was the response she received when she asked University staff about the availability of computer training on campus for Supercare employees. Six of the people I interviewed acknowledge computer training as being really essential to getting a better job. At the end of one interview, the participant asked if I could organise computer classes for her and her friend. The interview took place in an office at the AGI and there were several computers in the office. As she asked me she looked at the computers and said,

"Since you have a lot of them, can't you teach us to use computers" (Interviewee 2).

The structures that keep the majority in these dead end jobs remain in need of change. For some of the cleaners who have not yet managed to find jobs on the campus, success is attributed to luck, which depends on where a cleaner gets placed at UCT. Having access to sound relationships with UCT staff is a primary factor identified by cleaners in enabling the move into better working conditions at UCT.

"What can I do, I will die a cleaner. I just hope my children will do better than I did" (Interviewee 25).

For the younger employees, the attitude was different. As two interviewees said in a joint interview,

"We are young and don't want to grow old here working as cleaners" (Interviewees 1 and 2).

If one just observes the cleaning staff at Supercare it is visible that many of the employees are in their twenties and thirties. All of the interviewees in this age group that I interviewed expressed that they don't want to grow old as Supercare employees. They recognize however that education and skills development is essential to the possibility for people to move out of Supercare into better paying and more secure work.

"Here you don't have any choice. You come here, earn a days living and that's it. I want a better life that's why I want to study an admin course man. But I don't have time or money now. I can only hope" (Interviewee 23).

The sense from interviewees is also that there is little prospect for advancement within Supercare, and this seems to be the case particularly for black people. As was stated earlier, of all the supervisors at Supercare, only two are Africans⁸⁸. For most workers, low education levels stand in

⁸⁸ Interviewees 2, 12, 16, 17

the way of pursuing other work opportunities. This is aggravated by the additional lack of working experience in other areas of work. The general lack of any sustained and/or recorded skills development at the work place also prevents people from moving out of the work. For these cleaners, working in an outsourced cleaning job doesn't allow people any opportunity to build their human capacity, and this is recognized by these Supercare employees, particularly the older generations. Where skills are developed on the job, these are not necessarily paid or formally recognized by UCT or Supercare (e.g. there is no certificate or 'qualification').

Of the sample I interviewed 10 interviewees reported having applied on numerous occasions for administrative jobs at UCT but were turned down repeatedly. When asked why they were turned down, the common response was "I don't know why". This is an area of great upset, frustration and anger. One interviewee says,

"I just want to know why if I apply and apply I am not getting it. Why they don't employ me? They just say that they'll consider me next time if there is a vacancy because they have my CV" (Interviewee 13).

Therefore, despite the visibility of opportunities that are available at UCT for job applicants, these applications are not always successful. One interviewee explained that she had an appointment on campus for a job interview but had never been for a job interview before, and was therefore inclined to not go at all. This one experience made me realise that the cleaners working at the University also have little support and encouragement/advice to assist them in building a career and seeking better job opportunities. While the core business of the university prepares students for their futures, the same service is not available to the cleaners – another distinction that disadvantages the 'have nots' working on campus. While it is encouraging to know that UCT does offer jobs to Supercare cleaners, jobs are also advertised to outside applicants. There is no guarantee that opportunity alone leads to mobility out of cleaning work. The limited time of the interview that I conducted meant that I wasn't able to address this issue in detail.

Survival and resistance to the circumstances that trap workers into cleaning work includes the continued application and jobs on campus, the seeking of jobs elsewhere off campus and the

expression of an acceptance of their situation. While seeking ways to move out of the work is a critical survival strategy, for many, moving out of the job isn't a possibility. This is particularly true for the 12 interviewees who are the sole breadwinners in the family and depend on the job for their own survival as well as the survival of family and friends. Interviewee 18 says,

“My husband is not working at the moment so I am the only breadwinner in the house. I even wanted to leave the work at that time when I was so unhappy with the supervisor and conditions of work, but I can't leave, I have four children that I have to look after”.

7.3 Acceptance and/or 'Deference'

“I think I would tell them to just make the most of every situation. That is what we all do here” (Interviewee 1).

This quote represents a position expressed by an interviewee in response to the question “What advice would you give to someone new entering employment with Supercare here at UCT?” This response forms the basis of the frequently shared experience that there is no use in complaining about working conditions at Supercare; that workers should be grateful to have a job. This attitude is one that I am referring to as 'acceptance/deference'. In a context of tight surveillance through management and other workers and the constant threat of warnings and dismissal, the silence as a display of acceptance is an important means of survival. Five cleaners describe those workers that do speak out against their working conditions as “moaning and groaning”⁸⁹, and even “taking advantage of the supervisors”⁹⁰. This view point seems to compliment the broader mindset of accepting conditions as they are and working with what you have; accepting and adapting to the situation.

The complicated nature of being constructed and positioned in a powerless position often means that acceptance is used to survive the system. For example, despite some expression of discontent with rooms expressed in an earlier theme, and since there is no apparent rule (from

⁸⁹ Interviewee 20

⁹⁰ Interviewee 25

either Supercare of UCT management) that all workers must have access to a room, having a room, regardless of its quality, is viewed by four cleaners as something to be grateful for. One interviewee states that one just has to adapt, stating,

“For me, in this work you just have to adapt to a lot of things. The first room was bigger and more comfortable, but I am quite happy. There are some departments in which people don't have rooms. Like Menzies; they have to walk outside and walk in the rain to be by the working place where they share a change room with others. At least we have a room in the building. I mean they didn't have one at all and we have one. I am a very reasonable person you just have to adapt to things” (Interviewee 25).

The attitude of adaptation to circumstances is a useful survival strategy employed by workers in a context where many directives are given, avenues for useful constructive complaints are blocked or simply not available, and the expression of dissatisfaction with work experiences doesn't guarantee any corrective action. It is reflected in statements like,

“Stay out of trouble, keep yourself busy, and never look up on the next person. And take note of your position, your SOP. Keep your head down, stay out of trouble and just do what you are told” (Interviewee 7).

More research would be needed here and further analysis on how survival is achieved in this context. While this attitude of acceptance may be genuine to some cleaners, there is always the possibility of what Jacklyn Cock (1980) refers to as 'deference'. Sometimes complaining leads to worse consequences than remaining quiet is the best course of action. What looks like acceptance is a survival strategy. Underneath the visage of acceptance there is anger and upset. As one cleaner states,

“One thing is that it makes you sad and angry at the same time because you must shut up! You can't say a thing and you have such a lot to say but you can't say it. You can't say a thing. Just accept” (Interviewee 16).

With the institution of the Code of Good Conduct, interviewees experienced a change in their working conditions. Twelve interviewees expressed that they felt disempowered by the fact that Supercare had instituted this choice without consulting them and in four cases employees report feeling 'forced' to agree to the changes in the conditions of employment. In this sense, acceptance of conditions is not an active choice; there is no choice but to accept.

"They say take it or leave it. I am taking the mop out of your hands if you don't agree"
(Interviewee 16).

At least three cleaners disagree with this position however and say that no one was intimidated to sign anything, it was a choice and workers must learn to live with it and stop complaining about their conditions of employment. For example, one interviewee says,

"The people is not satisfied about it, they want the time [for work to end] to be 4 o'clock. But in the first place when they asked you about it why didn't you say anything then? Why didn't you ask then? Why didn't you ask why must we work until half past four? You don't agree with things and then want to cry about it, and that is what happened here. But it was the people who were like yes. We earned at that time I think it was R1200 and they offered more money. But they didn't think that these things would happen. Everyone agreed with it"

The representations about what happened are ambiguous, with some workers saying that there was a choice and others claiming that they were forced to sign in agreement with the changed conditions. For now, there is disagreement amongst workers as to how the change in conditions occurred and mixed feelings about whether this was fair or not. The sense is that in vulnerable positions, survival is dependent of acceptance, whether the true sentiment is that it is fair or not.

7.4 Survival through Rest

A total of 18 interviewees describe the days at work as long and hard and they complain that they have very little time to take breaks. Therefore, for some, when they have a moment to take time off

survival is dependent on getting some sleep. Through interviews and observations I noted that cleaning staff also use lunch breaks to sleep since they have to wake up early to get to work on time, and work a nine hour day with an hours break in total if they are fortunate enough to take the break. Sleeping takes place either in shaded and often hidden spots outside, out of the view of students and other UCT staff, or inside the rooms that Supercare employees are given. On several occasions I witnessed workers sleeping in the WF meetings, in their change rooms on chairs, benches and mattresses. I also saw cleaners sleeping under trees and in hidden spaces under stairwells. On two occasions I went to interviewees for scheduled interviews and found them sleeping. Under these conditions, sleep was far more important than an interview with me. Any opportunity to get some sleep to keep alive under these conditions is taken by workers. Implications of this for further research include the safety of sleeping in public places, particularly for women.

7.5 Alternative Employment and Income Sources

Another form of resistance and survival is working to earn extra money to supplement the meager wages that workers get from Supercare. One interview says,

“Sometimes I ask the students for a char job because I am working here Monday to Friday. On Saturdays and Sundays I am not working. I just stay at home...because I need a Saturday and a Sunday, because my money is not enough, because I have a loan but I can't afford to pay my loan and my account. I have an account at FurnCity” (Interviewee 10)

Five interviewees state that they are actively looking for alternative employment and all five stated that lunch breaks are a useful time for looking for alternative employment. Two of these interviewees state that they have asked students and staff for char jobs on the weekend and I myself was asked by four cleaners (two of whom are not members of this sample but with whom I became friendly during the research) whether I knew of anyone who wanted a char to work for them on the weekends. As has already been stated, after years of working at the university through Supercare cleaners become familiar and even friendly with both students and staff at UCT. I was

also asked for money and favours (e.g. a lift here or there), and four of the cleaners from the sample also offer to wash cars on campus during their lunch break for an extra R30.

Relationships with UCT staff members, particularly the administrative staff, can also help to mobilize people out of the job altogether. For example, four cleaners have reported that the relationships they develop with administrators are instrumental in assisting cleaners in both seeking and applying for jobs on the university campus. This has already been discussed as part of the complex set of relationships that emerge. While relationships are useful in seeking employment, they are often not enough by themselves to secure the actual attainment of jobs at the university.

Five interviewees describe active involvement in other jobs. Two work in char jobs over the weekends, one works as a technician, one bakes and sells cakes and the fifth interviewee sells medicines from her home as a means of generating extra income specifically to send her daughter to school,

"I've got the um the Swiss products, selling tablets, selling tablets for people that are sick. I can try to make a small business in my house to collect the small money to help me. I can do it, you see, I can do it because I can try. I want to try to pay that money. You know how much I must pay for that child? Nine thousand Rand!"

For those who have ways of finding or creating employment outside of UCT, UCT becomes a place where useful resources are acquired and business can take place. Interviewee 7 is trained as a technician and he fixes electrical equipment in his spare time as another form of income generation. While working at UCT he has managed to get old electrical material from relationships he has established at the University. In this way, these relationships contribute to his survival as well. He says,

"These are things that UCT dumped (pointing to a box of electrical equipment). I fix them up and what I don't need I give to somebody else. 'If you find something useful, take it, the rest throw it away or give to someone else'. That is what they told me so that is what I did. People come to me with a broken karaoke and I can fix it and there, I got R65."

Interviewee 25 bakes cakes as both a hobby and as a means of generating extra income to help pay off her mortgage. She says,

“I do extra work like I do my baking and stuff, so whatever money I get I put it in the house. Now I am baking less because of the pregnancy and I can't stand long hours now. I do that from home, it's like my hobby as well, and if the department wants [me to bake], I'll do it”.

She therefore also makes cakes for the department when they hold workshops and teas. In this way, the informal and formal economies are operating in tandem and the home as a 'reproductive' zone is used as a space for business activities that generate income. The inter-dependence of the informal and formal economy is an area of research that is very important to understanding South Africa's economy and the way it is being theorized by the government (Orr, 2003). The studies of survival of the poorest people in a society are important to challenging economic models that are based on the existence of two distinct and independent economies.

7.6 Organising

“I go to Z and I say Z, can you please organize us a union because the bosses they like to treat us badly because they know no one can stand for us” (Interviewee 12).

An observation made through my participation in the WF and WSC meetings was that employees of different contract companies tend to belong to different trade unions, and this has divided the lower levels of the workforce on the campus. As was stated in the background section, before outsourcing, the majority of pay-class 1-4 workers were members of Nehawu. As a result, the cancellation of the UCT Nehawu recognition agreement and ongoing outsourcing Nehawu membership has been reduced less than 300 workers⁹¹. Rather than support service workers being united under one union, these jobs as well as the people that used to work for them have been absorbed into different companies in different sectors, organized by different unions.

⁹¹ Interview with ex trade union shop steward

According to interviews with the two ex-shop stewards of Nehawu, there have been attempts at unionizing workers. The majority of workers at UCT have been given forms from Nehawu to join the union, but they have not been incorporated into the union and are not given protection by the union. Attempts to unionise have also been unsuccessful because many workers don't believe in unions and/or say they can't afford to pay union subscription fees. The union has also been through its own wave of transformation and tends to represent white collar workers more than blue collar workers⁹².

This lack of consistent and unified representation of workers through a union is one of the challenges facing outsourced workers at the University of Cape Town. While the recent Code of Conduct does make a policy provision for organizing, the nature of the work has many obstacles to efficient organizing and the implementation of freedom of association clauses does not seem to have had any visible effect.

One of the central ways that the Code attempts to support workers is by including workers as parties to a reporting mechanism through which both the companies and workers report to UCT on the implementation of the Code⁹³. In terms of the reporting mechanism, the workers that I heard speak at the WF meetings were asserting that they had not been given the opportunity to make a collective and agreed upon contribution to the reports by their managers. Instead, they were just asked to sign the reports that were written by management alone and these would be given to the University. In resistance to this method of 'reporting back', some groups of workers refused to sign the reports with the knowledge and conviction that they have a right to more than just a signature; they are meant to be able to write a contribution in the report for UCT about whether their companies are adhering to the Code.

Since early 2006, Supercare has set up what is referred to as an Employee Representative Committee (ERC) as a vehicle through which to bridge the communication gap between workers, management and UCT. Within this sample, 7 interviewees report that they have been told by

⁹² Interview with Council member

⁹³ See clause 2.1.4 in the Code of Conduct Appendix D

management to elect a representative from their team of workers to take collective and individual employee complaints to Supercare management. The little information I managed to gather on this area reflected that the other 19 interviewees didn't know about or were not engaging in the ERC. Those that had heard about it and used it did not have positive experiences. One woman from Supercare raised the issue of representation, saying that,

“The supervisor doesn't want us to have a representative. They don't want us to be strong” (Interviewee 2)

I asked her what she meant by this, and she said that the workers are entitled to a representative that will take their grievances to management, but that up until now no process of selecting a representative had been permitted by the Supervisor. For those who reported having an elected representative the effectiveness of the system was described as questionable. In line with the company culture of intense surveillance and intimidation, 7 workers describe their experience of only being able to say some things at these meetings and not other things. One interviewee account of the meetings is described as follows;

“If they [management] say put something on the table, and now you raise your hand to talk and you say ‘this and this and this I don't like’, they will say to you ‘Fancy, I will see you in the office.’ And you hear in the sound of the voice that you are in trouble. So the other ones who want to say something is quiet, they say if that is what happens to Fancy then I will just keep quite. They don't ask us questions. They just tell us and we must say yes. I can't say this shoe is too small. I just have to take it. If I am ‘wise’ or ‘too clever’ you can march out and leave the job. So, ask less questions, feel the pain, stand the pain” (Interviewee 16)

When cleaners have reported grievances to their representatives, another complaint is that the representatives don't follow through with their job and fail to bring feedback to workers.

“Yes you are right to say that we have reps. The reps must go to management with our problems. But when these reps take the problems to the managers they don't care you

see. That is why now I go to the WF to try and see what is happening because the managers they don't care about us" (Interviewee 19).

This view that the change workers want doesn't happen through the ERCs was expressed by all cleaners who reported using this system. Two interviewees expressed eventual overt resistance to the system through non-participation in it because they perceived it as unfair and unjust, arguing that the head girls and the management structure itself don't really have the workers as their priority. Another woman says about the ERC representative that her team of workers elected,

"He doesn't come and talk to us. It is like he doesn't have meetings and we don't have meetings with him. Once I went to him with a problem and I asked him to go with me to the Supervisor and he agreed, but at the end of the day he just turned his back and walked away so I don't know about that representative" (Interviewee 18).

An independent alternative to organizing then has been through participation in the WF meetings. At present, the WSC is able to secure space on campus for WF meetings and the WF is an essential space for worker organisation independent of the company management. As a collective, the WF offers the time, space and resources for the occurrence of a democratic process through which workers are able to express their concerns and strategise ways to communicate directly with UCT management around their working conditions. It is recognized within this space that given the vulnerable position of being 'skewered' between UCT and the company, workers themselves need to speak directly to UCT management if they want to see improvements in their working conditions. This is hard to achieve without an organized and unified voice. However, it is not impossible and certain companies (such as Group 4 Security) have made tremendous progress in their development of worker solidarity and presence on the campus⁹⁴.

During interviews, three cleaners expressed more interest in the WF as a means of securing better working conditions. However, when asked if they attend these meetings, a clear challenge with this form of organizing became clear. The one hour WF meetings are held during the lunch hour (13:00-14:00) on upper campus. However, Supercare cleaners only have a half hour lunch break

⁹⁴ My notes from observations in WF meetings and communication with G4S members of the WF

that officially begins at 13:00 and ends at 13:30. For those cleaners who do not work on upper campus, the lunch break is too short to travel to the meeting, attend and return to their work on time. Four interviewees gave this as a reason for not attending the WF meetings. My experience of the meetings was that Supercare workers in particular hardly attended. One interviewee says,

“We seldom go. We can't go at that time, its short lunch time. You are in trouble if it's half past one its half past one. We have to be back here and if you are still there on upper campus it's a problem. So no we decide not to go”.

While the WSC is dedicated, and the WF is growing, neither of the two groups is a union. While the approach taken by the WSC and WF is to encourage workers and build their strength to represent themselves at workplace level, the 'how' still remains uncertain and extremely challenging given the effectiveness of Supercare strategies to prevent worker organisation. In August 2007 two external consultants were employed by the University to investigate implementation of the Code given these complaints by workers. This indicates that at the very least, resistance from workers has led to the recognition by UCT that workers needs are not being met. The fact that UCT has brought in an externally hired consultant indicates this and it is also yet another cost that has emerged from outsourcing 'non-core' zones of work.

7.7 Strike Action

Another outcome of outsourcing at the University of Cape Town has been an increased occurrence of strike action. Since I began this research in March 2006, there have been at least four strikes that I have been aware of on UCT campus. Strikes have occurred amongst cleaning, security, catering and transport workers. Only two respondents spoke about strike action in relation to the recent (2006) strike that they experienced on campus. Both of these interviewees did not participate in the strike. However, the effect on cleaning workers in general was acute. Reports of cleaner's sleeping on campus to avoid violent strikers on their way home from work and intimidation tactics from employers were ever present at this time⁹⁵. Clearly, their absence from home had implications for their family members, particularly children.

⁹⁵ From researcher notes taken at a WSC meeting 2006

The recent strike action is evidence for the dissatisfaction of cleaning workers in the contract cleaning industry, and outsourced workers more generally. In an interview with a member of Council, this strike action is attributed to the fact that workers are outsourced,

“So what I was saying, it's costing them [UCT] more now than it did then. Because basically when Supercare workers went on strike now it was for solidarity, it wasn't for their own wages. Because whatever increase they were going to get wasn't going to be as high as they are getting now. So they were doing it in solidarity with the union as a whole. If they were in-sourced they wouldn't be part of that grouping and they wouldn't strike”.

The absence of a strong, unified union movement on campus to protect and represent the rights and needs of all workers has been central to the powerlessness and precariousness of outsourced workers on campus. This absence has been a direct result of the move to outsourced work on campus.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

The existing literature on university transformation is vast, and covers a wide range of discussions and debates. Of particular interest to this thesis is where the interest of university transformation and the 'marketisation' (Orr, 1997; Bertlesen, 1998; Grossman, 2006) or 'corporatisation' (Zezeza, 2002) of South African universities in the post-apartheid era conflict. 'Marketisation' has affected the structuring of work, affecting academics, administrative, managerial and support service staff in different ways. Although this research focus was on aspects of the experiences of cleaners working in non-core zones of work, an introduction to the debate about how work in universities is being restructured was necessary to locate this research problem in an appropriate context.

The Director of Properties and Services agrees that the university's decision to outsource was based on the fact that certain support services were defined as 'non-core'. It was the intention that through outsourcing, service provision would be improved at a lower cost than if the support services were to be provided in-house. Outsourcing was therefore selected as a strategy to cut costs given financial setbacks, address the lack of management capacity and to create more efficient, effective, and productive service delivery. Sufficient information was available and collected to indicate that the reasons for outsourcing certain zones of work between 1994 and 2007 resemble those identified as motivated by the 'market' model; non-core work is outsourced because it cuts costs and it increases efficiency and effectiveness (Van der Walt et al, 2002; Kenny and Clarke, 2000). The ideology that informed the restructuring project at the university matches that which underlies definitions of marketisation in prevailing literature. Marketisation can be defined as a response to external and internal pressures that aims to increase efficiency, competitiveness and service delivery.

When comparing the services outsourced at UCT with existing research the exact services that have been outsourced at the university over the past decade - cleaning, catering, maintenance and security in specific - reflect similar outsourcing trends in South Africa generally, and higher

education institutions specifically (see Van der Walt et al, 2002). The analysis of data outlined in Chapter 4 above indicate that the outsourcing of cleaning work at UCT is experienced by workers in a multitude of ways that position and reposition workers in vulnerable positions in relation to the institution.

Firstly, in terms of concrete working conditions such as wages, hours and benefits, FSC employees complain that wages are generally too low, that benefits are too few and that working hours are too long. Working conditions are also characterised by an increase in the workload expected on cleaners. This increase is partly a result of company management employing too few permanent staff to do the required amount of work and refusing to use casual work replacements when permanent staff are absent. A significant proportion of the sample express that this is done intentionally on the part of management to reduce costs. These findings are consistent with the notion that outsourced work is premised on the use of numerical flexibility; using fewer workers to carry out more work or the same amount of work (Bernstein, 1986; Eppel, 2004; Bezuidenhout and Fakier, 2006).

Analysis reveals that the intense workload is also as a result of having to negotiate working for two employers. Workers are located into a 'skewed position' between the employer Supercare and UCT as the workplace. This can best be explained by the existing theory of 'externalization' and 'triangulation' of employment relationships (Theron, 2005; Von Holdt & Webster, 2005; Bezuidenhout and Fakier, 2006). This position is characterised by ambivalence, ambiguity and pressure to manage multiple and contradictory demands from two employers. Therefore, while workers claim that working at the university is in many ways a positive experience in comparison with other possibilities, the full extent of the opportunities presented at the workplace is swallowed by the void of insecurity created by the dynamics of the three way relationship. This distinction between Supercare as the employer and UCT as the workplace at which cleaners have a strong identification and relationship with UCT as an institution is similar to findings by Bezuidenhout and Fakier (2006: 473) who state that,

"These identifications with WITS staff are important for the ability of UCT and Supercare to construct an externalized relationship between the cleaners, Supercare and Wits".

This results in extra work and overtime for no pay, skills that don't get recognized, and the inability to share legitimate complaints with anyone in a powerful position who can listen and possibly improve their circumstances. In the case of UCT contract cleaning workers, the meaning 'trapped worker' (Cock, 1980) is visible through this analysis. In a wider context of unemployment and reduced availability of secure employment, the workers in this research sample are trapped in insecure work that allows both their management and the university, as the 'client' or 'agent' to exploit workers while giving them very little back to assist them in survival both at the university and in their homes and communities. The lack of benefits was felt most in terms of the removal of medical aid, housing subsidies, provident and pension funds and access to education through outsourcing. All these conditions indicate a reduction in the quality of the jobs as a result of the outsourcing process, a reduction which signifies an informalisation of the jobs as they are transferred from the 'core' to 'non-core' zone of work. This finding is in line with the existing research on the effects of university outsourcing on workers and theory that non-core work comes with informalisation of working conditions (Theron, 2005).

These effects include invisibilising the work and its value by disguising the diversity and complexity of the work, masking the legal person of the employee in an externalized relationship, and literally hiding the multiple activities that cleaning workers perform at the university by clothing workers in a unified and homogenous uniform. This 'disappearing' of key labour enables the further gendered and racialised exploitation of workers. The mechanisms of control that invisibilise and exploit workers found here are remarkably similar to the findings offered in Maria's Burden. In this article Bezuidenhout and Fakier (2006: 472) identify four methods of control that Supercare management at Wits employs over their workforce. These are described as,

"Firstly, intensified supervision; secondly, through management exhorting the workers to watch each other; thirdly by encouraging Wits employees to serve as 'adjunct managers'; and finally there is 'control through abuse' on the part of Supercare management".

The very same methods of surveillance were identified by cleaners as central to their experience of work through Supercare at UCT. "Control through abuse" is the final form of surveillance described

by Bezuidenhout and Fakier as “the arbitrary exercise of power” which includes the verbal and physical abuse of workers which “appears a necessary constituent of control” (473: 2006). All forms were identified in this research, indicating a similar use of authoritarian management consistent with practices under the ‘apartheid workplace’ (Von Holdt, 2005: 48). The lived experience of the sample of workers from this study reflects that workers experience ongoing racism at work, particularly from their management. Race is also perceived as being significant in determining access to opportunities within Supercare, such as promotions and supervisors positions. This confirms the findings by Bezuidenhout and Fakier (2006: 472) that,

“The racial segmentation of the internal labour market has been carried over from the apartheid workplace, represented by the fact that Supercare employs ‘coloured’ women in supervisory positions, many of whom have little empathy for African cleaners...”

Existing research puts emphasis how ‘marketisation’, primarily through cost cutting, is undermining the need for the university to redress past racial inequalities, uphold the constitution, and meet the mandate in its mission statement to respect the dignity of all members of the university community. In this way authors writing on university marketisation strategies, particularly through the lens of poorer black students who are being excluded through elitism in higher education, have concluded that it threaten to re-racialise rather than de-racialise the university (Kenny and Clarke, 2000; Nash, 2006; Barnes, 2006b). The research findings from this study highlight another perspective (that of the lived experience of working in ‘non-core’ zones) of the ways in which cost cutting goes against the needs of the African majority (Barnes, 2006b). In particular, the exclusion of these workers from ‘core’ jobs has manifested through the loss of access to higher level education for their children as a benefit. Since education is a financial cost and a potential means out of poverty and unskilled work, the loss of this benefit constitutes a significant cost. This finding resonates with Grossman’s observation that “At UCT, the costs of marketisation and commodification in the daily lives of ordinary workers has been justified and in fact demanded as necessary to achieve progressive social goals” (Grossman, 2006: 103). This presents one area of struggle in the everyday lives of non-workers through which the conflict between the imperatives of economic cost cutting and social redress is extremely visible. If such findings are the same in other universities, then thousands of workers are being excluded from enjoying the potential benefits of working at

institutes of higher education. Such benefits are now only accessible to those in 'core' jobs, which research suggests, are also in high demand as even academics and administrators compete for these (Jansen, 2002; Zeleza, 2002).

The first set of themes present an explanation of how powerlessness is constructed (via low wages, unemployment, no benefits, surveillance, ambiguity, and multiple positionalities) through the relationship which culminates in experiences of degradation of work and worker. The research findings suggest that the non-value of cleaning work, and the people who perform it, has become 'naturalized' to the point that university workers who are seen wearing Supercare cleaning uniforms are automatically assumed to be willing to drink client 'leftover handouts' and sleep in rooms without windows with nine other workers. It is through this process that cleaning work, something that is valued and even enjoyed by some of the cleaners, is reduced into a demeaning job that receives little appreciation, reward, or respect. Yet workers express appreciation for their jobs still, since it is the only option that they have and the money is better than no money at all. Attitudes such as these are important for survival. At times, keeping ones head up and getting on with work is all that workers can do in the face of limited work opportunities elsewhere.

Survival and resistance against these conditions has involved a number of tactics. One of these strategies involves engagement in formal structures of resistance. The union at UCT has been weakened which matches the trends found in other studies (See Johnson, 2001; Grossman, 2006; Van der Walt, 2002). This weakening has contributed further to the division of workers on campus along core and non-core lines, entrenching class divides on campus and creating two separate but inter-dependent workforces. The Code of Conduct, although designed by the university to guard against unfair treatment of workers by companies, has had a degree of backlash from the workers in the formal realm of the Workers Support Committee and Workers Forum. It has also been used by the company in question to further exploit the vulnerability of workers. Supercare, for example, has increased hours and reduced the lunch break, which has had negative effects for workers. The most significant information about the code from these interviews however is not in relations to the code as a formal policy document, but through the everyday lived experience of working in these highly precarious jobs. For these workers, the 'Code' exists to the extent that wages are experienced as two separate payments, one from UCT in the form of an allowance and one from

Supercare. These two separate payments are seen as the reason for irregular and inconsistent payments. The relationship between hours of work and wages is also perceived as unfair and confusing. The interviews indicate misrepresentation of the actual content of the code and it is this indication of the degree of isolation and removal from decision making that is of significant interest. What workers perceive as two separate payments is in fact one wage that is paid to them by their company, but the company uses the concept of an 'extra wage' paid by UCT to avoid having to pay the industry level to workers. As long as UCT is paying a fixed amount that brings what Supercare pays to the SLL, Supercare doesn't increase its share of the SLL wage when industry wage levels get increased. Yet another example of how Supercare is using the externalised relationship to keep employment costs at a minimum.

The code represents an example of campus-level variation in how outsourced work is being treated. The presence of the WSC and WF are also specific forms of organizing that have emerged from the events at UCT and that are impacting directly on worker experience. These variations are important for understanding the relationship between globalisation, higher education and knowledge production, as well as all other aspects of the context of higher education. Variation is important for destabilizing constructions of neo liberal globalisation as inevitable and natural. The ability of policy such as the code of conduct to affect change in this context is certainly a potential area for further research. Given the decimation of the union Nehawu on the campus, and the important role of the Workers Forum and Workers Support Committee in providing an avenue through which workers can benefit from the policy, there is also the possibility for further research on 'gender and new forms of organizing' in higher education given the divide between core and non-core workers.

The workers' homes and communities are also a vital part of survival, with nine of employees finding employment through a friend or relative. Yet these relationships are not seen by these workers as being respected or appreciated by either the university or Supercare management. When children are sick or spouses are ill, or when workers are delayed because of poor public transport, management shows no human compassion for the needs of workers of the circumstances under which they live, using warnings and threats of dismissal to pressurize workers further. This management approach can be defined as very masculine and authoritarian. It doesn't take the reproductive roles of women in particular and workers in general into

consideration, treating workers as individual labourers. This represents attempts at splitting the work and the home environment and ignoring instances where the two zones clearly do meet. In their lived experience older Supercare employees at UCT experience themselves as members of the university community, their 'membership' represented by strong family connections with the institution, many years of actual service at the university, a familiarity with the environment and the establishment of long term relationships with UCT staff. This membership however is ambiguous and insecure since it is not recognized by the institution. The way that workers are treated does display continuities with the migrant labour system that operated under apartheid (Bezuidenhout and Fakier, 2006).

Outsourcing reduces the responsibility of the employer for the payment of reproductive costs to a minimum and it has been argued that it is causing a 'crisis in social reproduction' (Sampson, 2003; Bezuidenhout & Fakier, 2006). According to Sampson (2003) the capacity of the working classes to reproduce the workforce has also been reduced by cut backs in government spending on public service provision. Women in particular suffer from this, particularly when they are the only breadwinners (Sampson, 2003; Makgetla, 2004; Sorensen, 2004). Existing gendered divisions of labour that hide the presence and value of and reproductive labour as 'work' put a greater burden of women who conduct both paid and unpaid work. In this research, this applies since the majority of people that work as cleaners are women, and a significant number of these women are either single breadwinners or have husbands who are struggling to find secure employment. The women cleaners in this sample do express great difficulty in supporting themselves and their families, which is evident in their seeking alternative employment as one of many survival strategies. The fact that they are also responsible for household domestic work is sited as a reason for their heavy daily workload. While other writers, notably Bezuidenhout and Fakier (2006) write in some detail about the relationship between reduced government spending on social services and the lives of contract cleaners as 'non-core workers', and the consequent crisis in social reproduction, here I just point out that the lower wages and lack of benefits is having a negative impact on areas of life that extend beyond the workplace; areas that are also gendered.

A gendered analysis reflects that the effects of marketisation and globalisation of higher education institutions are mediated by gender and racial differences as well (Subotsky, 2001; Bennett, 2002;

Shackleton, 2007). Local and International studies suggest that despite the rhetoric of national government and universities that they are committed to transformation along gender and racial lines, universities are not neutral spaces (Mama, 2003). Women in academia contend with institutional cultures that support the use of unpaid reproductive labour and display a disregard for the ways in which reproductive 'knowledge' that stems from engaging in reproductive roles can contribute to knowledge production in the institution (Tamale, 2000; Mabokela, 2001; Pereira, 2002; Bennett, 2002; Mabokela, 2003; Barnes, 2006b; Shackleton, 2007). Shackleton's (2007) study of UCT indicated that although the numerical representation of women in the institution has improved, the university's gendered institutional culture had not been transformed. The research findings in this thesis highlight that the restructuring of the university has had additional consequences for the gendered divisions of labour. These findings highlight that in addition to the broader crisis in social reproduction that affects women in particular, the use of outsourced work reproduces and re-inscribes women workers particularly, as well as more and more men, into the zone of undervalued, under-remunerated work, that resemble that of the housewife (Oakley, 1976). It is this invisibilisation of women's work that feminist scholars and activists identify as the root of female subordination (Oakley, 1976; Meis, 1988; Budlender, 2004). It is this, I argue, that allows for a 'crisis' in the first place.

The findings indicate that outsourced cleaning work as it is experienced by cleaners at UCT depends on the continued 'feminization' of work and of the people that do the work. While the analysis of data presented in this thesis are generally consistent with the findings in other studies, this gendered lens is somewhat missing from previous analysis. The analysis offered by Bezuidenhout and Fakier (2006) and Sørensen (2004), for example, acknowledges that it is women, because of their greater responsibilities in unpaid reproductive labour, who carry the brunt of this burden. The analysis presented here adds that removing the work from the formal pay roll and employ of the university introduces complexities of management, surveillance, and control that have gender dynamics of work central to them. Indeed, the very term 'non-core' feminises the work by pushing it to the margins of the economy into insecure conditions of the work; atomized, non-unionised and highly exploitable. This automatically reinforces gendered divisions in labour within the university, with a majority of women in the lower levels of work and a higher concentration of men at the top, as well as women positioned in insecure work and men in formal

and secure positions. This is consistent with Zeleza's (2002) position that marketisation is creating gendered divisions in higher education, although his emphasis is amongst administrative and academic staff.

In addition to this, much of the 'agent work' conducted by cleaners is 'skilled' work, work that is administrative, and requires other possibly more valued⁹⁶ competencies such as the ability to file, use a photocopier machine and work with departmental course material and exam scripts. Some of these tasks could be argued to be closely related to the core business of teaching. However, when this work, when carried out by cleaners as 'favours', or as 'extra work' for the department it is also being 'feminized' in the sense that it is being carried out for free or 'informally' by 'non-core' workers. The work is 'informal' for three identifiable reasons. Firstly, there is also ambiguity amongst workers as to what is legitimate work for a 'cleaner' and what is 'extra' work that they feel they are not willing or meant to do. Secondly, the skills derived from engagement in 'extra' work are 'hidden' to the extent that advancement into other office jobs needing these skills depends a lot on the 'good will' of UCT staff that assist cleaners in seeking alternative employment. The 'extra' work that cleaners engage in does not entitle workers to a formal qualification or recognition from the company that they are employed with that they have developed these skills. The de-skilling of work under the title 'non-core' hides the actual skill and diversity of activities carried out by Supercare cleaning workers. Finally, some cleaning workers get paid by departments to do the extra work while others complain that they don't get paid for it at all. This then becomes an area of frustration and contention between cleaning workers, adding to their sense of powerlessness and insecurity at work. While this might appear to save the university and the contract company money, it has long lasting costs for the workers.

The gendered analysis I offer here is to suggest that whether paid or unpaid, the politics of doing what is called 'extra' work, facilitated through externalization, can be compared to the politics of doing unpaid reproductive work or housework (Oakley, 1976); where sentiments such as 'it brings pleasure', 'it makes me feel like I belong', and 'they feel they can't do without me', are in opposition to direct feelings of being overworked, undervalued and even exploited. The type of work that cleaners engage in (both cleaning and administration) is already broadly gendered as women's

⁹⁶ Valued in what is termed the 'productive' sector of work

work, since the majority of people who engage in administrative support work at the University are women⁹⁷. The further informalisation of this 'women's work' through externalisation increases its vulnerability. It reduces the formal avenues for mobility out of the work, and increase the level of difficulty of survival for the employed. Further, if this type of work arrangement continues, then perhaps there are possibilities that all of the administrative work will be outsourced eventually on the basis that it is 'generic' and 'anyone can do it'. Given existing gendered divisions of labour in the university, this would have further affects on the role of women in academia. Further research in this area that links theories of the politics of unpaid reproductive 'housework' to the informalisation of non-core work in universities is recommended. If this finding is extended to the 21 higher education institutions in South Africa that have outsourced cleaning services (Van der Walt et al, 2002), this has potential consequences for the gendering of work in the higher education system as a whole and not just the University of Cape Town.

The lived experience of workers is a lens through which an alternative view of the 'transformation' at the University has been made available. To these workers, the University is a workplace in which being situated in a zone of 'non-core' work is experienced as a constant encounter of their marginality on campus. That mess will be cleaned up by someone else is taken for granted. Yet the people that do the cleaning work, many of whom view it as skilled, enjoyable, and valuable, are treated with disrespect not only by their bosses but also by the 'end-users' or 'clients' or 'agent'. Marketisation has indeed introduced new divisions of work and citizenship into the university that threaten the achievement of the goals of 'development, equality, and dignity' that is the driving force of the university transformation agenda. The research findings describe how the new, presumably neutral definitions of work as 'non-core' and 'core' are embedded with racial, class and gendered dynamics that affect the experiences of the people who work in these non-core jobs. In this way, the binary separation of work into conditions of 'core' and 'non-core' work threatens to entrench pre-existing gendered and racial difference rather than transform them. It is this disrespect and invisibilising of the diversity and complexity of cleaning work that is masked under the veil of 'non-core support service' that constructs the 'contracted cleaner' as a low skilled and disrespected worker deserving of poor wages, few benefits and poor conditions of employment. While the dominant market discourse constructs outsourcing as 'inevitable', the lived experiences

⁹⁷ In September 2005, 62% of PASS staff were female

of contract cleaners reveal another standpoint that outsourcing is a deliberate strategy that saves costs as workers' expense. The 'externalised relationship' allows for the *deliberate* invisibilising of the complexity and diversity of the actual work involved, as well as the centrality of the array of activities that cleaning workers engage in to the running of the university, in order to make use of cheap and deeply feminised labour. In this way, this division can be viewed as 'feminisation' similar to the gendered divides between culture/nature, mind/body, formal/informal, productive/reproductive and public/private.

Feminist epistemology and methodology allows for this system of power relations to be seen as such and challenge naturalizing arguments that a) make women's care work a natural function of what it is to be female, and b) argue against the inevitability of outsourcing as part of a dominant neo-liberal agenda operating on campus. Here we see that gendered work ideology is perpetuated and transferred onto male bodies as well when they inhabit zones of work that are traditionally seen as women's work. In this analysis, it is not the body that matters, but the gendering of the actual work that is expected and the effect *this* has on bodies, whether male or female. This suggested therefore that the 'feminisation' of labour through outsourcing is central to the 'core business' of this university as it is defined under dominant market discourse. As Bennett (2002) writes, "If sexual abuse is prevalent within institutional cultures the interests of such abuse demand exploration". Here, if the feminization of labour is prevalent within institutional cultures and central to the way that the university gets its 'core business' done, then this is worth studying further. The University of Cape Town is an example of a liberal, English speaking HAI that has an institutional commitment to transformation and presents itself as a diverse and progressive institution (Shackleton, 2007). The findings from this research suggest that despite this commitment and all of the support of national legislation and policy to transform the higher education landscape, through employment equity and affirmative action policies, the demands on this institution to cut costs in a broader context of neo-liberal fiscal austerity and labour flexibility threaten this. Given preexisting levels of poverty, inequality and unemployment in the country that are shaped by race and gender, further challenges exist in terms of transforming racial, class and gendered relations and creating higher education institutions that engender the national ideal of respect and equal access for all South African people. Given the extent of outsourcing of support services for cost cutting reasons, as well as the fact that most South African universities have outsourced cleaning

services to Supercare (Johnson, 2001), these theoretical finding could have similar implications for gendered and racial transformation agendas in other institutions.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW SCHEDULES

Interview Schedule and written responses from UCT Director of Properties and Services

In the past 12 years (since 1995) has the University of Cape Town outsourced certain area(s) of work to external contractors?

Yes most of the support services have been outsourced. These include catering, cleaning (both in academic as well as residence areas), security (partial), grounds, sports grounds and gardens and photocopying.

On what basis were these areas of work selected for outsourcing?

Non core functions (i.e. support services in pay class 1-4).

In this process, were any people retrenched? If so, how many people?

Staff were given the option to either be placed with contractors or take a package. Most if not all were retrenched, and opted for retrenchment packages. Of the 600 approximately 70 individuals elected to go over to contractors. Very few remain with them now.

Have any jobs been lost/created in this process?

Services have expanded to follow the enrolment figures and we now have approximately 900 workers employed.

At present, how many outsourced companies/contractors have contracts with UCT?

There are still 7 companies providing these services, but we have many more companies and contractors doing jobs for us.

What are the names of these companies and the services that they provide?

Cleaning Supercare 307, Security G4s 197, Grounds& Gardens The Green Perspective 40, Sports fields Turfmech 10, Photocopying Nashua 24, Catering Royal Sechaba 201, Residences cleaning Metro 95

According to your understanding, what are the desired outcomes/goals of outsourcing these areas of work for the University?

Yes, there have been improvements in the levels of service being provided.

According to your understanding, are these goals/outcomes being realised?

Yes in certain areas – others require more work

Semi-Structured Interview Schedule with Fidelity Supercare Cleaning Workers

Broad areas of questioning:

How long have you been working for Supercare?

How did you find the job with Supercare?

Where there any job requirements?

What level of education do you have?

When did you start working at the University of Cape Town?

What building do you work in?

Have you always worked in this building? (If no, tell me more about the other buildings and the circumstances around building change)

What does your work entail?

What do you enjoy most about your work?

What do you enjoy most about working at UCT?

What do you dislike about your work?

What do you dislike about working at UCT?

Have you heard about the Code of Conduct? (If yes, what have you heard?)

Have you heard of the Workers Forum (If yes, do you attend meetings)

Are you a member of a trade union? (If yes, which union? If no, why not?)

If someone new started working here in your building as part of your team tomorrow, what advice would you give to that person about working here?

Other areas of interviewing included questions about:

Overtime pay and deductions

Benefits, wages and hours of work

Alternative forms of employment/income generating activity

APPENDIX B

Table 4: Employment with FSC and Experience Working at the University of Cape Town

	Worked for UCT	Yrs at UCT	Yrs for FSC	Total Yrs UCT	Been transferred	No of times	Previous work	Found job through
1	No	0	3	3	Yes	2	Factory	Sister worked as cleaner at UCT through Supercare
2	Yes	3 wks	7	7 & 3wks	No	0	Domestic worker/Unemployed	N/A
3	Yes	1 month	7	7 and 1 mth	Yes	2	Domestic worker	N/A
4	No	0	5	5	Yes	5	Factory	N/A
5	No	0	7	7	Yes	2	N/A	Newspaper
6	No	0	7	7	Yes	5	Unemployed	Friend works at Supercare
7	No	0			Yes	2	N/A	Mother worked at UCT as cleaner
8	No	0	9 mths	9mths	Yes	1	Casual waitress	Mother worked at UCT
9	No	0	9 mths	9 mths	No	0	Various casual jobs	Brother and father worked for UCT as cleaners
10	Yes	2	8	10	Yes	n/a	Sales Clark	Worked at UCT
11	Yes	10	3	13	Yes	2	UCT departmental assistant	Worked at UCT
12	No	0	3	2	Yes	1	Unemployed	Wife works at UCT as cleaner
13	No	0	7	7	Yes	3	N/A	N/A
14	No	0	2	2	No	0	Unemployed	N/A
15	No	0	7	7	Yes	3	Factory work	Newspaper
16	No	0	2	2	Yes	2	Factory work	From brother in law who worked at UCT
17	No	0	6	5	Yes	2	Unemployed	N/A
18	No	0	3	3	Yes	4	Various casual jobs	Advertisement
19	No	0	4	4	Yes	2	Unemployed	N/A
20	No	0	7	7	Yes	2	Factory	Through a friend
21	No	0	7	7	Yes	3	Domestic worker	N/A
22	No	0	3	3	Yes	2	N/A	Through a friend
23	No	0	7	7	Yes	2	Factory	Through a sister
24	Yes	10	7	7	No	0	Factory	Worked at UCT
25	Yes	11	7	7	No	0	Factory	Worked at UCT
26	No	0	3	3	Yes	1	Cleaning company	N/A
Total/Avrge	6	1.3	4.4	5	21	1.8		

Transferred straight from employment with UCT to employment with Supercare in 1999

APPENDIX C

UCT WORKERS DEMAND (March 2004)

A Charter of Demands for fair labour practice at UCT: Metro, Supercare, Eco and KKS workers demand, without any loss of pay, benefits or jobs:

A Living Wage

As a first step, we are supporting the demand of Metro for R3,500pm plus a guaranteed bonus of not less than R3,500 pa.

A Secure Job

Permanent jobs - no casuals.

Decent, safe and healthy working conditions. This includes all the necessary protective clothing, training and safety facilities.

Democratic collective organisation so that we speak and act together.

This includes the right to demonstrate, march, picket, strike without threat or fear of disciplinary measures or dismissal. No - one would be penalised if they refused to cross a picket line, or refused to do the work of a striking worker. Only unionized workers on campus.

A safe place where we can leave children who need care during working hours.

Paid time off from work to learn.

Paid time off for union work and general meetings.

Paid time off to look after sick children and people.

A decent pension when you are finished working.
The employer must contribute to the pension.

UCT should immediately pay an allowance to compensate for the disgusting wages of the contractors it has brought onto campus.

UCT should sign a code which says:

UCT formally accepts the workers set of demands.

UCT will never sign a contract with any company unless the workers have at least the same wages and conditions.

UCT will make sure that any contract includes at least the workers set of demands.

None of these conditions and demands will mean a loss of jobs.

Everyone who is working at UCT and for UCT should be directly employed by UCT, not outside companies and sub-contractors.

APPENDIX D

THE CODE OF CONDUCT TO WHICH SERVICE PROVIDERS TO THE UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN ARE REQUIRED TO SUBSCRIBE

1. The University of Cape Town and its service providers listed herein note and support

1.1 the founding provisions of the Constitution of South Africa, that describe the Republic as a state founded, inter alia, on human dignity, the achievement of equality and the advancement of human rights and freedoms;

1.2 the provisions in the Bill of Rights that addresses labour relations, including the right to fair labour practices, to join trade unions and to bargain collectively;

1.3 legislation such as the Labour Relations Act, Basic Conditions of Employment Act and Employment Equity Act, which set out the legal framework for industrial relations; and

1.4 the University's Mission Statement, including its commitment to promote equal opportunity and the full development of human potential, to transcend the legacy of apartheid and to overcome all forms of gender and other oppressive discrimination.

2. We hereby subscribe to decent standards of work and full adherence to the laws of the Republic of South Africa, including legislation that protects the rights of workers. We accordingly set out some salient areas in this code.

1. FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION AND COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

1.1 The right of workers to join or form trade unions and to bargain collectively is recognised.

1.2 A constructive and open attitude towards the activities of trade unions and their organisational activities is adopted.

1.3 Worker representatives are not discriminated against and are provided with access to the workplace to carry out their representative functions.

1.4 Regular monitoring takes place, culminating in an annual report prepared by the service provider on adherence to the code of conduct. Workers are invited annually to comment on adherence to the code of conduct and on the employer report. Both these sets of reports are circulated to the University Human Resources Committee for comment to Council annually. Random inspections may also take place as appropriate.

2. WORKING CONDITIONS

2.1 A safe and hygienic working environment is provided, bearing in mind prevailing knowledge of the industry and of any specific hazards. Adequate steps are taken to prevent accidents and injury to health arising out of, associated with, or occurring in the course of work, by eliminating as far as is reasonably practicable, the causes of hazards inherent in the working environment. Occupational health and safety practices are conducted in accordance with a best practice checklist provided by UCT.

2.2 Regular and recorded health and safety training is provided, and such training is repeated for new or re-assigned workers.

2.3 Access to clean ablution and changing facilities and to potable water, and, if required sanitary facilities for food storage, are provided.

2.4 Accommodation, where provided, is clean, safe, and meets basic needs.

2.5 Responsibility for health and safety is allocated to a senior management representative nominated by the specific service provider.

3. MINIMUM WAGES

3.1 Minimum wages are paid in accordance with the Western Cape Supplemented Living Level for African households with an average of 4-5 persons.

4. OTHER CONDITIONS

4.1 Working hours will be a maximum of 45 hours per week, after which overtime will be voluntary and will be paid at overtime rates. A minimum, equivalent to 4 hours remuneration, will be paid in any one day.

4.2 A night work allowance of 10% of the hourly rate will be paid for hours worked between 18h00 and 06h00.

4.3 At least minimum legal maternity leave requirements are adhered to and the amount paid by the Unemployment Insurance Fund to an individual on maternity leave is supplemented, so that the individual receives a full basic wage while on maternity leave. Paid paternity leave of at least 7 calendar days is granted for each child born.

The provisions of this code constitute minimum and not maximum standards. Service providers are encouraged to exceed these minimum standards. It is assumed that Service Providers comply with national and other applicable law and, where the provisions of law and this code address the same subject, apply that provision which affords the greater protection.

Service providers are defined as those employers who have a service contract directly with UCT funded through the Council Controlled Budget and who have permanent full time staff in their employ, paid directly by the service provider.

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APPENDIX E

INTERNAL DOCUMENTS AND CORRESPONDENCE USED

Article entitled 'Labour Court grants interdict on strike' (view at www.adminnews.uct.ac.za/docs/)

Article in the Varsity newspaper, 25th July 2005, Varsity volume 24 No. 15

Code of Conduct to which Service Providers to the University of Cape Town are required to subscribe

<http://www.uct.ac.za/downloads/uct.ac.za/about/policies/Codeofconduct.pdf> and
<http://www.uct.ac.za/services/properties/Code/>

Document entitled "Guiding Document prepared for the Alliance Meeting with the UCT Senior Leadership Group (SLG), Friday 22nd April 2005

Document entitled "NEHAWU's Submission on AIMS Proposal to Outsource CPS" 17th August 2000

Document entitled "NEHAWU's Response to the UCT Rationale for Outsourcing"

Document entitled "Social Plan Intervention" June 9th 1999

Document entitled "The 'Submission to UCT Council Report"

Letter to UCT Council Members from the Staff Association, 28th June 1999

Letter to UCT Council Members from NEHAWU 27th September 1999

Letter to UCT Human Resources Manager from the Chairperson of NEHAWU entitled "Dispute" 13th July 1998

Letter to UCT staff from the Vice-Chancellor entitled 'Launch of AIMS project', November 8th 1999

Letter to UCT Employee Relations Manager from NEHAWU entitled "Consultation Process on Outsourcing" August 1999

Minutes of a Consultative Meeting between the University Management and the National Education Health and Allied Workers Union on 2 December 1998

Minutes of a Consultative Meeting between the University Management and the National Education Health and Allied Workers Union on 10 March 1999

Minutes of a Consultative Meeting between NEHAWU and Management on CPS Staff Related Issues in Connection with the Proposed Phased Outsourcing of CPS Monday 13 November 2000

University of Cape Town Council meeting minutes for Wednesday October 6 2004, June 1 2005,
and Wednesday 7 September 2005

University of Cape Town Institutional Climate Survey 2007
<http://www.hall.uct.ac.za/downloads/hall.uct.ac.za/>

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