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*AN INSTITUTIONAL ETHNOGRAPHY OF RACE & GENDER EQUITY
MATTERS IN THREE SOUTH AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES*

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Declaration

In accordance to the University of Edinburgh regulations, I, Liapeng Matsau, hereby declare that: a) I have composed this thesis, b) this thesis is my own work, and c) that this work not been submitted for any other degree of professional qualification.

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Abstract

Almost two decades after the end of apartheid, the higher education system in South Africa remains marked by inequity at both staff and student levels. Current research in this area focuses on measuring inequity but does little to explain why and how it persists. This research explores gender and race equity in South African universities using three critical case studies of the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal, the University of Pretoria, and the University of Cape Town. Using Dorothy Smith's Institutional Ethnography, broadly conceived, this research examines the daily practices, processes and discourses that give rise to inequitable institutions.

The case study of the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal revealed disjunctures between the push in commercialising universities, illustrated in the new managerialist approach and focus on research, on one hand, and the State's goal to transform and redress, on the other. This tension was articulated in the incongruence between boss texts, such as the Employment Equity Act, and more local institutional texts that emphasised the employment of "productive" staff members. These competing national and institutional demands and pressures blunted the impact of equity policies and strategies.

In the case study of the University of Pretoria, gender and racial inequity is maintained and reproduced through various practices and processes, some formal and others informal, both at institutional and individual levels. Students reproduced the racialism and racism that forms part of racial interaction in broader South African society. Despite having equity policies in place, there were significant enclaves of inequity, shown through the lack of female representation in some departments and in student politics, and importantly in the de facto segregation that continues in the student body.

In the case study of the University of Cape Town, institutional structures and practices that both maintain and reproduce inequality were identified. In this instance, the formal arrangements and structures of the university were found to lead to the exclusion of and discrimination against certain groups of people. Examples of such institutional structures and processes include, but are not limited to: the concentration of power at middle management; the white-male domination in senior management; and the absence of an intersectional approach in equity policies and measures. Thus despite important progressive policies and ideals, the structural nature of the university served as one of the key obstacles to racial and gender equity.

Together, the case studies carried out point to the objectified forms of consciousness and organisation that rely on and help create textual realities. The management of equity in South African institutions is characterised by disjunctures and competing interests and not necessarily by poor implementation, which has been suggested as the explanation by other researchers. The discourses of race, and gender that dominate South African society play an important role in informing how equity matters are managed and experienced at the local level. The local practices and realities of individual Universities should be understood as being framed and influenced by the ruling relations of higher education and the State.

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Chapter 1

The South African Higher Education Landscape: Past and Present

Introduction

The 1948 election of the National Party into government signalled a major shift in South Africa's history. It marked the institutionalisation of racial apartheid, the legacy of which still reverberates today in all aspects of South Africa's social and political life. To ensure the success of apartheid, the National Party "relied on legislation to institutionalise a racial hierarchy of social, economic, and political opportunities" (Mabokela & King, 2001:xiii). The institution of education during this time became a prime area of focus for the government, as a key site through which its ideology and agenda could be fostered. All levels of education were affected, including primary, secondary and tertiary institutions. I am interested in the higher education level and my research examines issues concerning inequity and equality in South African higher education in the post-apartheid context.

In this chapter, I provide a brief account of the South African higher education system and the socio-economic and political conditions that have shaped it in the last sixty odd years. I begin with an abridged account of higher education during apartheid, which focuses on some of the key education policies introduced during that time, then move to discuss the key reformations and transformations employed by the democratically elected government from 1994 on.

As previously mentioned, the apartheid government used education, among other things, as a tool to institutionalise systematic structural racial oppression. In an attempt to avoid historical and institutional amnesia, Cloete et al (2004) emphasise

that the higher education system during apartheid was designed to reproduce the class, race and gender privilege of some groups while subordinating others in all spheres of society. Through research and teaching, white male privilege was reinforced while the subordination of Black people and women of all 'races' was simultaneously entrenched. From 1948 on, "research and teaching were extensively shaped by the socio-economic and political priorities of the apartheid separate development program" (Cloete et al, 2004:3). 'Separate development program' here refers to the establishment of separate states (the 'bantustans') and institutions along racial lines, and this included the development of a separate but far from equal education system for white and Black populations.

For the purposes of my research I will be using the term Black to encapsulate the experiences of African, Coloured and Indian South Africans. The term white will refer to people of European decent. I use these terms the same way in which they are used in South African political discourse. While these categories can be problematic, they will be used in my research for logistical purposes, not least because the statistics and research I will be citing uses these same categories. Almost twenty years after the end of apartheid the racial schema in political and popular discourse remains largely unchanged. The apartheid racial schema is problematic because it is grounded in a discourse essentialises "race" and views racial differences as intrinsically hierarchical. By using these same categories in a post-apartheid context, the same problematic discourse may be inadvertently drawn upon and has the potential to reproduce inequity. In addition the use of the term "Black" while strategic in advancing redress, needless masks the differences in the of African, Coloured and Indian people, both during and after apartheid. I discuss the challenges of continuing to use this racial schema further in Chapter seven where I discuss whether the masters tools can be used to dismantle the masters house.

Separate and Unequal

In an address to new students in 1953, Dr. T. B. Davies described what he called the "four essential freedoms" of a university, namely that universities had the freedom to

decide whom to teach; how to teach; what to teach; and who shall teach (O'Dowd, 1954). Some writers in the field of education were aware that there was a dispute between universities and the State in South Africa over whom to teach, even in 1954. For instance O'Dowd (1954), citing the Education Minister at the time, J. G. Viljoen, viewed the enforcing of apartheid legislation that sought the removal of the power of universities to teach whom they wanted as a violation of the established independence of South African universities. In addition, O'Dowd argued that restricting the universities' freedom regarding who to teach indirectly affected what was taught as well.

The challenge was that if one accepted that universities had the right to determine their internal policies of open-access, it followed that the same should apply for universities opting for segregationist policies. In 1953, the University of Cape Town (UCT) and the University of Witwatersrand (Wits) had 238 and 220 non-European students respectively, and before 1948, just five scholarships were awarded annually for the training of non-European doctors and the Wits medical school. Non-white students were accepted at only low rates into universities, and it was not until the late 1950s that racial segregation became legally enforced in South African higher education institutions. University of Cape Town and the University of the Witwatersrand, along with the University of Natal and Rhodes University, disassociated themselves from the racial interests of the State at that time, opting to view themselves as "members of an international community of scholars" (Fiske & Ladd, 2004:204).

One of the key policies pertaining to education was the Extension of Higher Education Act of 1959, which shaped tertiary education. This policy changed the landscape of South African higher education, for it resulted in the creation of twenty-two South African universities which were divided along racial, ethnic and linguistic lines, in keeping with the separatist ideology of the State. The policy resulted in the legislation and institutionalisation of a fragmented education system that was separate but absolutely not equal. It cemented the racial segregation of tertiary institutions for white, Coloured, Indian and African students. It must however be

noted that several of the historically white universities were founded before the election of the National government and they would have had different admissions policies. With the advent of the apartheid government and the ensuing geographical, socio-economic and political shifts, South African universities found themselves under increasing pressure to follow the State's separatist agenda.

Ten universities were selected at government level to be exclusively for white students but divided along cultural and linguistic lines, with six using Afrikaans as a medium of instruction and four using English as a medium. The six Afrikaans language universities - Orange Free State, Port Elizabeth, Potchefstroom, Pretoria, Rand Afrikaans and Stellenbosch - became the "nucleus of Afrikaner nationalism and cultural consciousness" (Mabokela & King, 2001:xiv), as evident in their stringent policies against the admission of Black students. The four English-language universities - Cape Town, Natal, Rhodes and Witwatersrand (Wits) - admitted a small number of African, Coloured and Indian students before apartheid and continued to do so after 1959 by taking advantage of small special dispensations granted by the apartheid government.

The Black universities fell into two categories, those in the Republic of South Africa, and those in the rural areas/former homelands. With the exception of Fort Hare, which received university status in 1959, all historically Black universities were founded in or after 1960. It is important to mention that the Black universities were also further divided along racial and ethnic lines. Separate institutions were created for African, Coloured and Indian students. The Coloured and Indian universities were in the urban areas but separate from the white and African institutions. These institutions were designed as teaching institutions to groom government officials in the Bantustans, ostensibly serving a niche in the apartheid agenda. In fact these institutions were managed by "Afrikaners loyal to the nationalist government, and decisions on matters ranging from curriculum to clerical appointments had to be approved either by the racially appropriate department of education or by the relevant homeland authority" (Fiske & Ladd, 2004:205). Thus the autonomy of these Black universities was very limited.

The differences between historically Black and historically white institutions extended beyond the racial profiles of staff and students. White universities tended to have a superior and extensive curriculum, well-qualified staff, and generally better resources. In addition, State funding was allocated along racial lines, with white universities receiving a greater proportion of this. This difference in funding helped to maintain not only the disparities between Black and white students, but also between the educational experiences of African, Coloured, Indian and white students. It follows, then, that one of the first areas of intervention aimed at socio-economic redress which the newly elected 1994 democratic government sought to enact was educational reform, through a series of forward-looking legislations. It is with this history in mind that I examine equity in higher education today.

There is plentiful evidence of how higher education institutions in South Africa have in the past operated to reproduce racial inequality and, although not explicitly spelt out in higher education policy such as the Extension of Higher Education Act (1959), the apartheid system also created and reinforced a gender hierarchy in which women were subordinate to men. Mama (2003) among others, questions the notion that universities present gender-neutral organizational climates, a view held by some in higher education research. She argues that “there is evidence to suggest that they may... operate in ways that reproduce gender inequality and injustice, instead of challenging it” (Mama, 2003:115). Thus, both race and gender will be central to my discussion of equity in South African higher education. Cloete et al (2004) identify and discuss the critical issues and key challenges facing the South African higher education system and its move to transform. These will be summarised in the following paragraphs so as to overview the context in which I explore equity in my research.

Cloete et al (2004) identify three periods of policy activity in the reformation of the South African higher education system. The first, 1990-1994, marks periods which entailed the definition of values, visions, principles and goals. During this time, ideas were “relatively unconstrained by issues of financial and human resources and policy planning and implementation to effect transformation of the inherited system (Cloete

et al, 2004:18). The second period was 1995-1998, and during it policy formulation and development began in earnest. The concern became “elaborating in greater detail an overall policy framework for higher education transformation, and more extensive and sharper definition of goals, strategies, structures and instruments for the pursuit of these goals” (Cloete et al, 2004:18). In addition, considerations concerning the availability of human and financial resources as well as potential tensions between the goals began to come to the fore. The last period began in 1999 and continues today. In this period Universities have been left to steer and determine the institutional transformation, with government taking a more hands off approach.

On the eve of democracy, the new government faced the challenge of creating a single consolidated national higher education system out of thirty-six universities and technikons, all divided along racial lines. One of the key issues was how to reconcile what had previously been two separate and unequal higher education systems. Fiske and Ladd summarise the debate thus:

“Should the government make the significant investments that would be required to turn Fort Hare and other admittedly mediocre African Universities and technikons into viable academic institutions? Or should such institutions be seen as vestiges of the hated apartheid system and be closed down or merged? The all-important priority has been how to best serve African students. Are such students better off in historically Black universities and technikons that, for all their academic weaknesses, know something about how to deal with academically underprepared students? Or are they better off trying to make their way to academically superior, but often intimidating, environments of historically white institutions?” (Fiske & Ladd, 2004:202).

Cloete et al (2004) argue that it is a mistake to view historically white institutions as an ‘organic’ product of an undemocratic system, and historically Black institutions as an artificial product of apartheid. Rather, they argue that historically white and Black institutions are both “products of an apartheid planning and were functionally differentiated to serve the development and reproduction of the apartheid order” (Cloete et al, 2004:27). In fact “it was the fundamental differences in allocated roles that, whatever the differences among the historically white institutions and however diverse the origins of historically Black institutions, distinguished these two sets of institutions and constituted the key differentiation and the principal basis of

inequality between them” (Cloete et al, 2004:26). Thus historically Black and white institutions are similarly scarred by the legacy of apartheid and must shake off the shackles of the past in order to respond to new societal goals.

The second shift that punctuates South Africa’s social and political landscape is the democratic election of the African National Congress (ANC) into government in 1994. The party committed itself to creating a non-racist and non-sexist South Africa in all spheres of society, including the education sector. Although there were some notable reforms to the higher education system beginning in the 1980s, indicated in the shifting demographics of both technikons and universities, the major changes really began in the 1990s, during the period of transition between the apartheid government and the ANC.

Changing Higher Education Landscape

The South African higher education system has experienced critical changes in the years since the end of apartheid. At least some of these modifications have occurred in response to shifting trends and priorities in the higher education system globally. Other transformations have been more home-grown and geared to respond to the country’s political, economic and social priorities. These changes can be crudely summarised as addressing the following key areas: achieving social, political and economic redress; improving quality and global competitiveness; and addressing the relationship between South African higher education and the market. The higher education system in South Africa as elsewhere in the world cannot be understood as an isolated entity. The transformation of the South African higher education system in the post-apartheid context was shaped by a combination of both national and international factors. This transformation occurred with the backdrop of a shifting social, economic and political landscape both in and outside of the country. This is echoed by Cloete et al, who argue that in South African higher education policy formation and implementation are:

“necessarily framed by the overall social goals of the inherent apartheid social structure with its deep social inequalities, and of institutionalising a

new order... The transformation initiatives are also conditioned by the changing local, socio-economic policies and conditions and global conditions and developments, and the paradoxes, ambiguities, contradictions, possibilities and constraints of these conditions” (Cloete et al, 2004:1)

Debates regarding higher education in South Africa are largely framed in a broader social and economic development agenda, with the vision of creating a non-racialised and non-sexist system, echoing the 1996 Constitution. On the one hand, new policies and reformation plans focus on the role of education as a site where inequalities are reproduced and redressed; and on the other hand, education (specifically higher education) is seen as feeding directly into the labour sector and thus needs to be in tune with the country’s economic agenda. Both impact on the types of equity policies formulated and implemented. What occurs in higher education institutions, then, cannot be viewed in isolation, but rather as part of a larger complex network of relations that includes government and private interests.

One of the major changes undertaken in the effort to transform South African higher education has been the consolidation of multiple systems into a single national system. The 1996 Constitution defines higher education provision as “falling under the jurisdiction of the national Ministry of Education” (Cloete et al, 2004:5). However, the State is supported by several national, regional and institutional organisations that help to develop policy around higher education by way of research and recommendations and their activities characterised by “extensive policy debates, and occasionally strong contestations of policy issues” (Cloete et al, 2004:6).

The National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE), one of the major players in the South African higher education system, was established in 1995 to investigate matters related to higher education and to make policy recommendations, in order “to suggest ways to rid higher education of the aberrations of apartheid and to restructure the system around the needs and values of a new democracy” (Fiske & Ladd, 2004:208). In 1996, NCHE published a report: “A Framework for Transformation” which then fed into the Ministry of Education policy and legislative development. In 1997, the Ministry started an initiative to develop a Green Paper on Higher Education, and what emerged from this included the White Paper 3 on Higher

Education, which in turn fed into the Higher Education Act (DoE, 1997b), which provided the new legal framework that shaped the Ministry's regulations (Cloete et al, 2004). The White Paper (DoE, 1997a) identifies several challenges to South African higher education and provides new principles and values, with the aim of tackling these problems. In particular, the White Paper Higher Education (DoE, 1997a) identified eight principles and values that should be promoted by higher education:

- 1) Equity and redress
- 2) Quality
- 3) Development
- 4) Democratisation
- 5) Academic freedom
- 6) Institutional autonomy
- 7) Effectiveness and efficiency
- 8) Public accountability

One of the challenges to South African higher education as laid out in the White Paper is the

“inequitable distribution of access and opportunity for students and staff along lines of race, gender, class and geography. There are gross discrepancies in the participation rates of students from different population groups, indefensible imbalances in the ratios of Black and female staff compared to whites and males, and equally untenable disparities between historically Black and historically white institutions in terms of facilities and capacities” (DoE, 1997a:1.4)

In the same document, “achieving equity in the South African higher education system” is identified as one of the key goals, as is the promotion of “equity of access fair chances for success to all who are seeking to realise their potential through higher education, while eradicating all forms of unfair discrimination and advancing redress for past inequalities”, and the main outcomes are summarised as “increased equity in participation rates” and “improved staff equity” (DoE, 1997a:1.14).

Equity in this context was envisaged in two main ways, equity of access and equity of opportunity, with these pertaining to both staff and students. Although the White

Paper clearly addresses equity in terms of both equity of access and of opportunity or success, it is the latter that I am particularly concerned with. In the latter category, I want to expand the definition beyond the measurement of pass, attrition and graduation rates, to include personal success within the institution and feelings of belonging. In other words, I want to explore the overall university experience. An institution cannot claim to have achieved equity in its demographics and output statistics if some students and staff remain with the feeling of marginalisation and victimization through their entire university careers. In fact, the perception of a negative university environment is likely to adversely affect the academic success of a student. Similarly at staff level, I am interested in the overall institutional experience.

The mechanism of redress in the South African higher education system was seen in terms of two main steps. The first step was to create the conditions under which redress was even possible, by the creation of a single national higher education system under the auspices of national government. In this new environment, the second step was created: the principle of non-racialism and racial equity was adopted. This vision would impact various areas, including: the nature and structure of institutions of higher education, focusing on their missions and their viability in a new democratic state with designs to be internationally competitive. Part of this change included the merger of some universities with technikons and the incorporation of colleges into universities or technikons. In 2001, the National Plan for Higher Education was established with the intention of implementing the goals of the 1997 Higher Education Act. The national higher education plan was based on the policy framework outlined in the White Paper on Higher Education (DoE, 1997a), with the aim of establishing “indicative targets for the size and shape of the system, overall growth and participation rates, and institutional and programme mixes, which advance the vision, principles and policy goals for the system” (DoE, 1997a:2.10). One of its main goals is to promote individual and institutional redress and equity goals.

Although equity and redress are the focus of my research, it is important to keep in mind these other key values and principles, because often these had to be pursued simultaneously and as a result provided some challenges. This tension was carried through into the achievement of goals and their related strategies. The goals that were at odds were equity/ redress and effectiveness/ efficiency. This tension was reflected in the emphasis of different documents. The Education White Paper stressed equity and redress as major priorities for the transformation of higher education in the country. In 2000, however, the Council on Higher Education (CHE, 2010) Report emphasised effectiveness and efficiency as a key priority (Cloete et al, 2004:63). This shift in focus is generally seen as reflecting the shift in macroeconomic policy from the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) and the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) programme.

The Report of the Ministerial Committee on Transformation and Social Cohesion and the Elimination of Discrimination in Public Higher Education Institutions (DoE, 2008) (referred to as the Soudien Report from hereon) resulted from a government-sanctioned non-academic investigation into the constituents of discrimination in South African higher education. The impetus for the inquiry was largely provided by responses to a University of Free State controversy involving white students mocking and harassing Black service staff that put racism in South African higher education institutions under a global spotlight. I find the Soudien Report particularly interesting because it was this same Free State incident that got me started on the research journey that finally became my PhD thesis. The Report covered a range of topics, including staff and student experiences of the university environment, and student accommodation and funding. I use the findings of the Report to illustrate how some of the government's equity policies have been taken up at the organisational level and to what effect.

The Soudien investigation used documents, interviews with students and staff, administrators and union members. The Report offers an important contribution to understanding equity issues and discrimination in South African higher education. Its analysis and recommendations, however, focus primarily on the organizational level,

of which staff and students are constituents. Even though the Report considers and explores policies that extend beyond the institutional level, it fails to fully incorporate the extra-local, that is, the level beyond individuals but which coordinates their activities. The importance of the Soudien Report (DoE, 2008) for my study lies in the context and grounding it lays out regarding the current state of discrimination in South African higher education. Though not an academic report, its substantive contribution to my area of study cannot be underestimated, and for this reason I discuss some of its key findings. The Committee was instructed that it should focus on four key areas:

- 1) To explore the nature and extent of racism in residence life.
- 2) University intervention in aims of combating discrimination.
- 3) Intervention required to combat discrimination
- 4) And to identify implications for other sectors of the education system.

The Soudien Report consequently aimed to track the process of transformation in South African higher education, with a focus on discrimination with regard to the goals and principles laid out in key governmental policy documents. The White Paper argues that transformation “requires that all existing practices, institutions and values are viewed anew and rethought in terms of their fitness for the new era (DoE, 1997a:1.1). In the same document, transformation is broadly conceived as being composed by three critical elements: “policy and regulatory compliance; epistemological change, at the centre of which is the curriculum; and institutional culture and the need for social inclusion in particular” (DoE, 2008:36).

My research therefore does not aim to explore or measure whether equity has been achieved in South African higher education, although this will form part of the discussion; instead I aim to investigate and analyse the processes and mechanisms involved in striving for such equity in higher education institutions. In doing so, I focus on “how” equity happens or “how” it fails to happen. Part of this may involve gaining an understanding of recruitment and other organisational processes, for instance. The Soudien Report points to possible inconsistencies and a lack of monitoring and accountability when it comes to hiring practices, which leads to

employment equity policies not being followed by some faculties and departments within the universities.

It is important to understand and discuss racism and sexism together because the equity policies and measures discussed in this chapter are formulated in part with the aim of combating race and gender discrimination within the context of higher education. The challenge of racism and sexism in South African higher education is raised in several policy and supporting documents. For instance, one of the visions articulated in the White Paper posits that “an enabling environment must be created throughout the system to uproot deep-seated racist and sexist ideologies and practices that inflame relationships, inflict emotional scars and create barriers to successful participation in learning and campus life” (DoE, 1997a:2.32).

I have chosen to focus on both race and gender because of the role they have played and continue to play in shaping the form and structure of South African society and its institutions, including education. The Soudien Report argues that “race has come to be the major fault line in South Africa’s social, economic and political relations in its 350-year history of colonialism, segregation and apartheid. And despite the adoption of a new Constitution, which is explicitly based on non-racialism as a foundational value, the racial divides of the past continue to haunt the country” (DoE, 2008:25). Although the quote above refers to race alone, I argue that the same claims can be made about the role of sex/gender in the South African context. While my research does not explore racism and sexism in education per se, I conceive of racism and sexism as intertwined hindrances to the achievement of equity in higher education. For the purpose of this study, I briefly outline four distinct forms of racism with statements about these equally applicable to sexism:

Systematic racism and sexism are “supported by deep-rooted institutional processes, practices and structures, which perpetuate unearned privilege and disadvantage. This kind of racism [and sexism] is embedded in the rules, laws and regulations of society, such as in Apartheid South Africa”.

Institutional racism and sexism are “similar to systemic racism [and sexism] but has as its unit of analysis an organisation or social structure. In this instance one can identify either policies and practices, or both, which have the effect of discriminating against people because of race [and gender]”

Interpersonal racism and sexism “refers to racism [and sexism] that may exist in relationships between individuals. These may or may not be influenced by systemic and institutional forms of racism [and sexism]”

And personal racism and sexism “refers to racist [and sexist] prejudices, values, beliefs and assumptions and attitudes that people may have within them. These may or may not be expressed to others, but operate within the individual” (DoE, 2008:26 and my additions).

While it is true that my research seeks to explore equity and not racism in higher education institutions, it is nevertheless important to understand the ideological bases and varying expressions of the mechanisms of racism, for ultimately it is these that impact on equity in South African higher education.

There has been limited progress with regard to the achievement of equity in universities at staff level. For example, between 2003 and 2007 the headcount of Black academic staff increased from 36% to 39%. And although female staff constituted 43%, they were concentrated in lower levels such as junior lectures and lecturers, with few being full professors (DoE, 2008: 53).

Statistics show that Black academics and staff face several challenges in universities and many end up leaving academia. Different tertiary institutions have given a number of reasons for this. In exit interviews, 10-15% of staff at the University of Pretoria said they had left because of cultural reasons, a synonym that covers issues named in other universities (DoE, 2008). At another (unnamed) university, for instance, staff cited the chief reasons for leaving as being “feelings of not belonging, not being invisible, facing complaints about lecturing ability and generally about the

institutional culture” (DoE, 2008:53). In addition, some African academics also reported feeling marginalised and unsupported at their universities. At Afrikaans-medium universities, Black staff cited language discrimination as one of the leading factors they felt excluded and marginalised them. Some African lecturers have also had trouble gaining acceptance and respect from white students.

The Soudien Report (DoE, 2008) identifies institutional culture and the pervasive racism that characterises it as perhaps the major hindrance to achieving equity at staff level: “it seems clear that employment equity strategies are not likely to succeed unless and until the deep-seated resistance to it, which is embedded in the institutional culture, is challenged and the institutional culture is transformed” (DoE, 2008:57). Institutional culture comprises the institutional processes, practices and mechanisms that I am interested in exploring with regards to the organisation of equity in higher education and so this serves as a useful concept for me and is discussed further in later chapters.

Female academics and staff also face particular institutional challenges. For instance, the impact that childrearing has on their careers and consequently on their promotion prospects is largely ignored. Child care-facilities are often not provided or have been cancelled in some institutions that did have them. And these experiences can be compounded by or intersect with those discussed above for Black female academics and staff.

It must be noted that, while the experiences I have cited above are of people who have encountered racism and sexism in their particular institutions, there are many whose experiences are contrary to this. There are some who say that diversity and equity are a reality in the very same institutions. These voices and experiences are also valid and valuable in understanding the organisation of equity measures in South African higher education, and together people’s accounts and experiences constitute different standpoints within the same institution. I will explore the ideas of contrasting experiences and standpoints in the chapter that follows this.

Unlike staff profiles, South African higher education student profiles have progressively shifted to better reflect the realities of the country. Increased enrolment rates amongst Black students, while encouraging, also mask continued inequalities. For instance, in 2006 the participation rate of Africans was 12%, 13% for Coloureds, 42% for Indians and 59% for whites. These statistics show that “white and Indian students continue to benefit disproportionately relative to their African and Coloured counterparts” (DoE, 2008:63). The South African baseline demographics in 2010, were: 79.4 % African, 8.8% Coloured, 2.6% Indian/Asian and 9.2% White. When taking the national demographic figures into account the nature of inequity in the South African higher education system is made all the more apparent.

Although gender equity improved from the mid 1990s, with the proportion of women in higher education increasing from 43% in 1993 to 53% in 2000, the figures occlude the inequalities that persists between men and women in higher education at student level. For instance, the gender distribution across disciplines is far from equitable. Many of the women enrolled tend to be concentrated in education and humanities programmes and are conspicuously absent from science, engineering, technology and business management programmes (Cloete et al, 2004; Badat 2004). In addition, an important area of concern is that the gender gap remains much wider at staff level than it is at student level. Some research investigating the situation of women in higher education suggests that “there is a picture of gross underrepresentation of women in the employment profile of public universities” (Mama, 2003:115), a disparity that is most stark at senior academic and administrative levels. Although speaking of the African continent as a whole in her work, Mama’s findings are certainly applicable to the South African context.

The increase in the enrolment rates of African students from 40% in 1993 to 60% of all university and technikon students in 2000 disguises a similar trend. This is that many African students are enrolled in distance learning programs and account for a low proportion of those taking science, engineering, technology and business management programmes (Cloete, et al, 2004; Badat 2004). This means that even though there are many African students enrolled, they often have a qualitatively

different experience of higher education and, also importantly, their presence fails to impact the demographics of the industries mentioned above. These programmes then continue to be dominated by white males in the universities and consequently shape the demographics of the labour market.

In addition to challenges faced in achieving individual redress, the enrolments of historically Black institutions dropped in the early and mid 1990s, “in part because of many of the most talented African students were availing themselves of their new opportunities to attend historically white institutions from which they were previously barred” (Fiske & Ladd, 2004:202). Institutions serving Black students faced problems of financial mismanagement, limited resources, poor teaching and low achievement. This was one of the unintended consequences of non-racial enrolment policies, which adversely affected the goal of achieving institutional redress.

In 1995, NCHE predicted an increase of 25% in the overall enrolment rate of universities and technikons between 1995 and 2001 and anticipated a similarly steep increase in subsequent years (Fiske & Ladd, 2004:210). This did not actually happen, and the net increase in the enrolment rate during this period was a mere 2% (Fiske & Ladd, 2004). Three main reasons have been put forward to explain the low levels of enrolment increase. Firstly, the number of university and technikon eligible students declined during this period. It was estimated that in 2000 out of a total of about 230,000 matriculates, only 40,000 had the matriculation endorsement that qualified them for university. Secondly, there was a notable fall in white student enrolment, which declined by “14% in universities and by a substantial 52% in technikons” (Fiske & Ladd, 2004:211). Reasons offered to account for this decline include: emigration; opting for private rather than public education; and entering the workplace rather than entering higher education. Another reason suggested concerns over financial aid constraints. The change in the racial composition of the student body was affected by redistribution of public funding. Equity and more particularly institutional redress referred to larger systemic changes and past injustices, those between historically Black and historically white institutions. Initiatives here

included the establishment of a National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFSA) to allow poorer students the opportunity to study further. This meant that the public financial aid system in place during apartheid had to be rethought and redistributed to support academically disadvantaged students.

An increase in the proportion of public funding was recommended to be used to support disadvantaged students. According to the White Paper, equity of access had to go hand in hand with equity of outcomes. In other words, increased access would mean little if drop-out and attrition rates remained high. The Ministry of Higher Education planned to ensure that the strategies employed to increase access were matched with quantifiable measures towards ensure that drop-out rates were reduced. During apartheid, Black students had access to financial aid from the State as well as various international sources. The latter dried up when apartheid ended. The NSFAS, a funding body that pre-dates the ANC government, applied the same funding formula to all thirty-six universities and technikons. No distinction was made between institutions that were in a better financial positions, nor was any consideration given to the varying histories of the institutions. Fiske and Ladd argue that “at best financial aid covered 60-70 percent of the total costs of education” (2004:212). Historically white institutions, which tended to be better resourced, were in a position to cover the outstanding costs for its disadvantaged students, while historically Black institutions, many of which were experiencing financial difficulties, struggled to cover the additional costs of its disadvantaged students who made up the majority of their student body. As a result many Black students, who were unable to secure the additional funds required, were forced to drop out. This is most evident in the period 1997-1998, when the inadequate funding of the NSFAS reached a critical point and stringent measures were taken by government and universities to collect outstanding fee payments. This resulted in a drop in enrolment rates amongst financially disadvantaged students, primarily at the historically Black universities because that was where the majority of outstanding fee income was owed.

Yet another inequality that persists in South African higher education concerns skewed success rates along racial lines. While the success rates at undergraduate and postgraduate levels have steadily increased across all groups between 1996 and 2007, African students have remained with the lowest rates amongst their counterparts, with the most marked difference being between them and white students, with success rates of 68% and 81% respectively in 2007 (DoE, 2008). The Soudien Report further adds that “a cohort analysis of first-time entering undergraduates in 2000, which indicates that the average graduation rate for white students is double that of African students” (DoE, 2008:64). So, while some may claim that equity of access has been achieved or that significant strides have been made in that direction, the same cannot be said for equity of opportunity for success.

Several reasons are offered for the lower success rates amongst Black students. The two most compelling are as follows. Firstly, Black students arrive at university under-prepared due to the poor quality of their schooling. Connected to this is that many Black students speak English and Afrikaans, the main languages of instruction, as only their second, third and maybe even fourth language, which greatly compromises their chances for success at universities and technikons. It must be noted that most institutions have programmes to address the problem of under-preparedness, and these include bridging courses in the first year of enrolment and in some cases extended programme tracts as well. These programmes have met with some criticism, including from those who they are meant to serve. While some students see the merits of these programmes, others think that Black students are placed in the programmes regardless of matriculation results, that they are relegated to these programmes because of their race. The second reason offered to explain low graduation rates amongst Black students is that a majority of Black students come from a poor background and so often have trouble financing their studies.

The Report found that racism and racial discrimination, more than gender discrimination, punctuated the experiences of Black students in South African higher education. Issues ranged from feelings of victimisation, racist classroom environments, unfair discrimination in grading, differential treatment by lecturers

and the differential application of academic rules and regulations. This spilled over into their experiences of University residence and their social lives as well. The Soudien Report (DoE, 2008) and other studies such as Moguerane's (2007) research in residence halls in Pretoria address the de facto racial segregation that continues in many of the country's university and technikon residences. Students often cite a hostile institutional environment and institutional culture as adversely affecting their learning experiences in South African institutions (Moguerane, 2007).

The discussion above highlights some of the challenges to achieving equity in South African higher education both at the organisational level and at the individual level. While some of the statistics cited in this chapter are illuminating and elucidate the landscape of South African higher education, there remains a need to look beyond the numbers to examine people's experiences. Not only is qualitative research needed but also research that asks the right questions about equity, and in my research this will mean asking questions that begin at the local and individual level and move out from there. As part of this research I shall explore some emergent issues, which will shed light on the important day-to-day activities and practices of the institutions which the government is looking to in order to foster equity.

While transformations and associated policies have been sanctioned and spearheaded at State level, such as in the 1997 White Paper and the 2001 National Plan for Higher Education, it has been left to individual universities to take up the mandate and implement the changes at the institutional/ organisational level. Although the corpus of literature available on what is occurring at State level is by no means exhaustive, even less research exists which focuses on how universities in South Africa are transforming and in what ways. The post-apartheid trajectory of historically white and historically Black higher education institutions has been quite different. Although some of the aspects of the current higher education system and structure, including the realities of many historically Black institutions, have been discussed in brief, it is historically white institutions that I focus on in particular in this study.

I have chosen to focus my analysis on historically white institutions because of the particular transformation challenges they face, as compared to historically Black

institutions. The changes at historically white institutions include shifts in both the staff and student demographics, though more marked in the latter. This began in the late 1980s but gained momentum after 1994 when the universities were desegregated. In addition, historically white institutions have had a longer period of transformation, particularly at staff level. In this context of transformation, particular in relation to historically white universities, my research seeks to explore the intersection of race and gender within these institutions. My research explores how particular universities have not only managed change, but also how this transformation has been experienced, at the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal, the University of Pretoria and the University of Cape Town (UCT). These institutions were selected as case studies because of their interesting and unique histories.

The institution currently known as UKZN is the result of a merger between the historically white University of Natal and the historically Indian University of Durban Westville. Formally called the Natal College University based in Pietermaritzburg the college received full university status in 1949. Although it was spread over multiple campuses, Pietermaritzburg was the main campus in many regards. UDW was established in the 1960's and was then called University College for Indians on Salisbury Island in Durban Bay was granted university status in 1971. UKZN provides an opportunity to explore how two separate institutional histories had to be reconciled and negotiated proceeding and since the merger in 2004. During apartheid, the next two universities I focus on were designated to serve particular sections of the population in line with the University Extension Act of 1959, UCT for English-speaking whites, and the University of Pretoria for Afrikaans speakers. In addition, UCT and the University of Pretoria differed in their approach regarding whom they admitted and what they taught. UCT, like Wits and other English-medium institutions, was popularly viewed as a liberal institution, while University of Pretoria and other Afrikaans-medium institutions were deemed as being more conservative.

Transformation approaches and development trajectories have differed from institution to institution, and over time even with a single institution. The three case

studies I focus on and explore in depth provide three rather different approaches to addressing the challenge of “Achieving Equity in the South African Higher Education System”, as laid out in the 2001 National Plan for Higher Education. Each institution is examined in the context of its response to the government directives spelt out in the White Paper on Higher Education (DoE, 1997a) as well as the National Plan for Higher Education (DoE, 2001). However, my research focuses, not at national level, but at the local and organisational levels and how these policies are taken up at those levels. The case studies will therefore examine the interface between equity policies as adopted at organisational level and how they are experienced at the local level within the organisation.

Conclusion

It has been stated that in South Africa social inequalities are “deeply embedded and reflected in all spheres of social life” (Cloete et al, 2004:1), and the higher education system is no exception to this. The axes of these inequalities include race, gender, class, ethnicity, disability, religion, sexuality, age and so on. The primary policy and supporting documents that address equity in South African higher education focus primarily on race, and to a lesser extent on gender inequity, while my research explores both race and gender issues. The core question I am concerned with is: through what mechanisms are racial and gender equity hindered or achieved? As discussed earlier in this chapter, much of the research on equity in South African higher education is focused on measuring to what extent equity is present in institutions and across the sector. However, rather than measuring equity or inequity, I seek to discover the processes through which that particular organisation of the fabric of a university comes about, *how* it happens as it does. Part of the investigation I have carried out involves exploring how equity policies work in higher education and analyses how equity policies and related measures are organised in the three case study institutions.

This chapter has provided an overarching discussion of some of the main features of the South African higher education landscape, discussing various of the major policy changes between an apartheid and post-apartheid context and also highlighting the

challenges that are seen to remain. I have drawn fully on the Soudien Report (DoE, 2008), which provides an unprecedented in-depth consideration of the transformation processes of the South African higher education system. In the chapter that follows, I explore some key concepts and methodological considerations framing my research and discuss my approach to investigating and analysing equity in organisations and higher education. This approach is distinguished by the ontological basis from which it proceeds, that is, by reference to the way it understands how the social world comes into being. ‘Institutional Ethnography’ (Smith, 1990a, 1999, 2002, 2005, 2006a, 2006b), the sociological and feminist methodology I deploy, views the social as coming into being through people’s concertedness, through their daily doings and practices. Institutional Ethnography explores how the social world is constituted in the local setting of people’s everyday worlds. What is called the achievement of equity occurs or fails through the coordinated activities of people both within and outside the three institutions I then investigate, presenting the analysis of my research data in later chapters. In the light of this interactional understanding of the social world, Institutional Ethnography begins its exploration from the standpoint of people or social actors, and so it starts at the local level. Ultimately, Institutional Ethnography makes visible the complex actions involved in how everyday actions are coordinated, in particular in Smith’s original formulations of it through institutional texts such as equity policies, analysing how such texts give rise to particular social realities and social organisation. Institutional Ethnography provides me with appropriate means to explore the connections between the everyday and everynight experiences of people, the organisational priorities articulated in the institutional texts of universities, and the ensuing relations of ruling. It is now discussed in greater detail in the chapter that follows.

In the following paragraph I provide a short illustrative summary of the thesis. Chapter one provides a background and context to South African higher education and the challenges it faces. Chapter two provides an extensive discussion and analysis of concepts that are central to this study; these include intersectionality, organizational theory and Institutional Ethnography. Chapter three explores the methodological approach undertaken in the study, focusing on how I operationalise

Institutional Ethnography. Chapter four provides an in-depth coverage of the institutional histories of each case study as well as their current state in relation to equity matters. Chapters five to seven present the key findings of the respective case studies while keeping in mind key similarities and differences between them. The conclusion, Chapter eight ties in the discussions outlined in the three preceding substantive chapters and offers some theoretical developments that can be used in future research.

Chapter 2

Discovering the Social

The research discussed in this thesis both draws from and fits into the sociology of education (specifically on higher education), organisational sociology and gender sociology. Higher education research in South Africa is disparate (Bunting, 2006b, 2006c; Cloete et al, 2004; Fiske & Ladd, 2004; Jansen, 2001; Hall & Symes, 2005; DoE, 2008). Many perspectives, including critical race theory, critical pedagogy, organisation and management theory, have been used to examine the causes and character of inequality in higher education. Current research in this field has tended to fall into the following key areas: internationalisation of the higher education sector and South Africa's place (Cloete, 2006; Cross, 2004, Cross & Rouhani, 2004; Cross et al, 2009; Rouhani, 2007); quality assurance of institutions (de Jager & Nassimbeni, 2005); finding the delicate balance between access and efficiency (Nkomo et al, 2007, Boughey 2003); achieving diversity across culture, race, gender, class and religion (Goduka 1996; Cross, 2004); curriculum transformations (Msila, 2007; Cloete et al 1997); and the role of institutional culture in the transformation project (du Toit, 1996; Norris, 2001; Mabokela, 2003; Thaver, 2009).

From the field of organisational sociology, I draw primarily on debates on the ontology of organisations, examining what areas should be studied and how. Identifying and articulating organisational boundaries has been important to sociologists, with a focus on questions including but not limited to: What is an organisation? Where does it begin and end? How can it be studied? (Weber, 1968; Czarniawska, 1997; Smith, 2001). Once the parameters of an organisation have been defined, there is the matter of how to study them. In organisational research, the levels and units of analysis range from the structural to the individual. The structural aspects focus on: management styles and structures (Taplin & Winterton, 2007), organisational culture (Ouchi and Wilkins, 1985; Smircich, 1983, Hatch 1993), and

organisational change (Webb, 2004). The micro or individual levels of analysis focus on topics such as: leadership (Nichols, 1988), networks (Alcadipani & Hassard, 2010) and organisational behaviour (Brooks, 2009; Rollinson, 2008). The relationship between the structural and the individual aspects of organisations have been usefully debated, with some arguing for the maintenance of a separation between the two (Reed, 1997), while others envisage them as symbiotic and inseparable (Czarniawska, 1997, 2004).

In the field of gender sociology, I am particularly interested in women in the labour market, around issues of equity. I draw from literature that explores: how gender is articulated in and through organisations (Acker, 1998), if and how work and the worker are gendered (Acker, 2006; Kelly et al, 2010), and the experiences of women managers (Deem, 2003; Binns, 2008). I am also interested in methodological debates, but taking an interest in epistemological and ontological issues rather than methods per se (Stanley & Wise, 1983, 1993, 2006). This means considering what constitutes knowledge and *who* can be a knower. Additionally, I have contemplated what the social world comprises of and how it can/should be explored. Lastly I draw on literature that examines race and gender inequality and how they exist together (Crenshaw, 1989 & 1991; Collins, 1990).

South African higher education policies have been dominated by changing and sometimes competing discourses in a number of areas. Kraak (2004) argues that there has never been a strong consensus in South Africa's policy framework. Similarly Barnes (2001) reveals the changing discourses and meanings of redress in South African higher education between 1994 and 2001, arguing that "by 2001 the stage was set for a number of centrally imposed proposals to address the problems of institutional inequality; these relied more on notions of developing institutional fitness for mandated missions within given financial constraints than on reparation for past discrimination or injustice" (Barnes, 2001: 149). Today, South African higher education policy is largely focused on institutional efficiency. Boughey (2003) comments that since 1994 there has been a shift in focus from the need to achieve equality in higher education, to the need to achieve greater efficiency in the

functioning of tertiary systems as a whole. This shift has had an impact on the curricula and other areas. Boughey examines “the way financial and other constraints impact on the higher education system” (Boughey, 2003:65) and in so doing begins to explore important links between higher education and other institutions. In research on the challenges of achieving the balance between priorities of equal access and efficiency in South African higher education, Nkomo et al. (2007) propose a revision of the policy-implementation nexus, arguing that the idealism articulated in policy is faced with various mediating factors, both national and international.

The current literature on equality in South African higher education indicates the tensions between issues of access and efficiency (Nkomo et al. 2007; Cloete et al. 2004). This tension is evident at both policy and implementation levels. In addition, the scope of the studies on inequality within South African higher education is also quite limited, with few studies having examined the role of organisational culture in the achievement of gender and racial equality in South African higher education (but see Mabokela, 2003; Thaver 2009). While addressing culture seems to be a State imperative, this is not reflected in the research done on achieving equality, and there is little research done on culture at organisational level in South African higher education (but see Mabokela, 2003; Norris, 2001; Thaver, 2009). The writing currently coming out of South Africa on the topic of organisational culture is decidedly theoretically based (du Toit, 1996). Little empirical work exists on organisational culture, and less still that links the achievement of racial and gender equality to organisational culture (but see Mabokela, 2003). Consequently exploring precisely how organizational culture in higher education deals with the achievement of racial and gender equity may answer some questions about what problems persist and why this is so.

From this brief sketch of the literatures I draw from, some key research questions follow and in particular, how does organisational culture aid or hamper the achievement of gender and racial equality in South African higher education? The aim of my research is to explore the relations of ruling that impact on the

achievement of racial and gender equity in South African higher education, in order to address this key question. In exploring it, as noted at the end of Chapter 1, I use Dorothy Smith's idea of 'Institutional Ethnography' as a research framework and methodology, in order to examine the role of organizational culture in the achievement of racial and gender equality in South African higher education. I draw extensively on Smith's research approach because it provides an alternative to mainstream sociology by beginning its inquiry at the experiential level, and in doing so it "attends to people's actual activities in relation to how they are coordinated with others within the historically committed process. The institutional, in this sense, is discovered in motion; its distinctive modes of generalizing coordination are themselves seen as being brought into being in people's local doings in particular sites and particular times" (Smith, 2005:68). The following discussion presents my approach to conducting social research within a broad feminist and Institutional Ethnography framework.

Over the last few decades, there have been important debates in feminist methodology, focusing broadly in the areas of "agency, cognitive authority, objectivity, methods of validation, fairness, standpoint, and context of discovery", to name a few (Fonow & Cook, 2005:2212). In their earlier work, Fonow and Cook (1991) identified five guiding principles of feminist methodology: (1) the need for a gendered lens, (2) consciousness-raising, (3) challenging the norm of objectivity, (4) concerns with the ethical implications of research, and (5) empowering women and transforming social institutions. In the following discussion, I review some of the key debates in feminist methodology specifically as these pertain to my research. They include the debates around the connections between knowledge and power, and between knowledge, experience and reality, and regarding standpoints and intersectional theory, all of which are important for to my research.

Sociology, like other disciplines, has established conventions regarding valid knowledge and processes of knowledge production. One of the main tasks of feminist researchers has been to challenge and interrogate these conventions. Feminist methodology cannot however be neatly reduced to a single approach.

Rather, it resides at different points on an epistemological and methodological continuum, and while commonly thought of in terms of two opposing poles, a realist approach to truth claims on one hand and a constructivist approach to relativism in social life on the other, few people today are situated on either extreme in spite of suggestions to this effect (such as by Walby, 2007). Since the 1970s, feminist sociologists have challenged the philosophical underpinnings of scientific inquiry, especially positivism, that is, the attempt to study the social world using the methods that were prevalent in the natural sciences (Stanley & Wise, 1983, 1993). In feminist research, this has meant that the notion of inherent objectivity in knowledge and knowledge production has been challenged, and the validity of ‘forbidden’ knowledge such as from the emotions supported (Stanley & Wise, 1983, 1993). It is from the resulting complex understanding of the relationship between being and knowing that the conception of feminist ontology rests (Stanley & Wise, 1983, 1993:222). Although debates over feminist epistemology and ontology are no longer central today methodology remains important, while it should also be noted that there is no consensus in feminist approaches concerning research methods specifically, meaning that choices across the entire range of methods are available to feminist scholars. However generally the notion of a full-on version of objectivity in research is rejected, proposing instead that what is called “objectivity” is actually a component of male subjectivity, and is much more complex than the textbook version (Rich, 1979).

There has been much feminist writing on the idea of a “standpoint” (Collins, 1997, 2004; Harding, 1997, 2004; Hartsock, 1997, 2004; Hekman, 1997a, 1997b; Stoetzler & Yuval-Davis, 2002). I am interested in standpoint theory because it offers an alternative to established views of what constitutes valid knowledge and knowledge production. Debates about epistemology and knowledge have been continued in standpoint theories, particularly where the relations between knowledge, experience and reality have been examined (Hekman, 1999; Harding, 2004). There is in fact no one uniform standpoint theory and such theorists are quite disparate in their approaches and research fields, as I go on to explore, and I shall discuss the roots of

standpoint theory and then consider how the issue of knowledge in feminist research is dealt with across the different positions within it.

Standpoint theory comes out of the second wave of feminism and there are “several strands in feminist theory and practice which show clearly the gradual positioning of feminist knowledge... under the umbrella term ‘feminist standpoint theory’” (Cranny-Francis et al, 2003:69). It has been characterised as “a way of exploring (as opposed to assuming) how women experience life differently from men... because they live in specific social relationships to the exercise of male power” (Ramazanoglu, 2002:61). Hennessy adds that “standpoint refers to a position in society which is shaped by and in turn helps shape ways of knowing, structures of power, and resource distribution” (Hennessy, 1993:67).

Although there is no common or totalizing conception of standpoint theory, the position can be broadly summarized as possessing the following key characteristics, drawing on a variety of standpoint theorists: “1) A feminist standpoint explores relations between knowledge and power. 2) A feminist standpoint deconstructs the ‘knowing feminist’. 3) A feminist standpoint is (albeit problematically) grounded in women’s experience, including emotions and embodiment. 4) A feminist standpoint has to take account of diversity in women’s experiences and the interconnecting power relations between... women. 5) Knowledge from a feminist standpoint is always partial knowledge” (Ramazanoglu, 2002:65-66). Standpoint theory tackles some of the main debates in feminist methodology and is an attempt to escape the limitations of looking for direct connections between experience and reality. And while there is no complete consensus between standpoint theorists, they do share a concern about “systematic biases built into the way mainstream knowledge is constructed” (Sprague, 2005:41). However, not all standpoint theorists focus on the notion of truth and reality in the way in which those influenced by Marxist theory do, such as Hartsock (1983) and Hennessy (1993), and standpoint work more generally focuses instead on relations between power and knowledge.

Marxist influences can however certainly be discerned in the work of Hartsock (1983, 1997, 1998) and Hennessy (1993). Hartsock draws on Marxism and attempts to “translate the concept of the standpoint of the proletariat into feminist terms” (Hartsock, 1997:368), arguing that women have a “vantage point” due to their subjugated position, thus lending feminism what is called “epistemological privilege”. That is, Hartsock (1998) claims that a specific consciousness, feminism, is required to adequately access the true nature of the social world and the conditions of gender subordination and that feminist knowledge is consequently thereby privileged over other knowledges. The assumption is that without feminist concepts or political consciousness it is not possible to see the real gender relations operating as they really do, and this is the epistemological privilege referred to. Hartsock (1997) goes on to argue that the real material relations of gender subordination are disguised by patriarchal ideology, but can be illuminated by “accurately” (i.e. from a feminist standpoint) conceptualizing patriarchy and how it operates. By formulating this around taking the position of a shared group consciousness and experience, Hartsock cannot be criticised for essentialism because for her “standpoint is not an attribute of the female body or nature or even of living as a woman” (Ramazanoglu, 2002:69). Hartsock asserts that anyone can be a feminist, provided they are politically committed to transforming unjust gender relations. Generally “standpoint epistemologies argue that groups of individuals share distant experiences, that the ‘truth’ of that experience can be uncovered and that experiences (are) the starting point for any knowledge production...” (Letherby & Bywaters, 2007:43). However, Letherby and Bywaters (2007) reject the epistemological privileging of researchers and the knowledge claims often associated with feminist standpoint, as well the notion of it uncovering ‘real truth’. Rather, they support a “position that recognizes the importance of difference and yet acknowledges the significance of each of the multiple identities that individuals occupy. From this perspective it is possible to argue for *standpoints* rather than a standpoint position” (Letherby & Bywaters, 2007:44).

Letherby and Bywater (2007) offer two useful criticisms of standpoint approaches. The first concerns this privileging of some experiences over others, in effect granting

epistemological privilege based on the degree of oppression that someone experiences. The assumption that oppression grants access to wider knowledge is untenable, and also encourages thinking in terms of hierarchies of oppression thereby pitting oppressed groups and subjects against one another. The second criticism is that standpoint approaches have been too focused on similarities and elided the differences between groups. This comment originates with Stanley and Wise (1983) who then and later argue that Black feminist epistemology as articulated by Patricia Hill Collin is premised on ‘good’ Black women and has difficulty in encompassing, ‘bad’ Black women (Stanley & Wise, 2006:443). ‘Good’ and ‘bad’ here refers to the affinity and connections that some feminist researchers want to establish on moral and political grounds with ‘the researched’. For some, feminist research is ideally a collaborative effort between the researcher and ‘the researched’, while in practice in any research, encountering ‘bad’ people necessitates “making feminist knowledge-claims over, and sometimes against, the people concerned” (Stanley & Wise, 2006:442). This is something that standpoint approaches cannot easily cope with.

As previously noted, standpoint theory describes a set of approaches brought together under one umbrella term. Dorothy Smith’s work is often located under the standpoint aegis and she is often labelled as a “standpoint theorist”. However, Smith in fact does not see herself as such. She argues for the social location of the subject of knowledge and also in terms of advocating a methodology that “starts from the local actualities of lives... to explicate the social relations organizing everyday worlds across multiple sites” (Smith, 2005:205). Smith (1987, 1990a, 1990b) also articulates the difference between her use of the idea of a standpoint and that by Hartsock et al in the following way: “it [Smith’s version] does not identify a position or category of position, gender, class, or race within society, but it does establish as a subject position for institutional ethnography as a method of inquiry, a site for the knower that is open to anyone” (Smith, 2005:10). For Smith, the standpoint of women “situates the inquirer in the site of her bodily existence and in the local actualities of her working world”; and she goes on to say that “we (women) are the authoritative speakers of our experience” (Smith, 1990:28). Thus epistemic privilege is assigned on the basis of one’s experience of being located in a particular kind of

way, rather than from a feminist consciousness as such, as Hartsock (1997) among others has argued.

Smith (1990a, 1990b) has developed a radical variant of sociology predicated initially on women's experiences, which challenges the male standpoint that has characterised the position of dominant /mainstream sociological knowledge. Sociological discourse is constituted by "discursive practices [that] created for knowers a universalized subject transcending the local actualities of people's lives (Smith, 2005:22). Her approach provides a break with hegemonic constructions of knowledge and knowing and is a subversion of the white male standpoint. Hennessy proposes that standpoint refers to "a position in society which is shaped by and in turn helps shape ways of knowing, structures of power, and resource distribution (Hennessy, 1993:67). In contrast, women's standpoint for Smith is a *method of inquiry* that begins with, but is not limited to, women's experiences, and she argues that standpoint is a "systematic formulation of a method of developing investigations of the social that are anchored in, although not confined by, people's everyday working knowledge of the doing of their lives" (Smith,1997:396). Smith's work challenges the "constitutional separation of mind and body built into Western philosophy since Descartes and incorporated into Sociology" (Smith, 2005:23) and as part of this she proposes that "experience is a method of speaking that is not pre-appropriated by discourses of relations of ruling" (Smith, 1997:394).

Scientific knowledge and discourse is integrated with ruling relations, which for Smith are those relations that are "textually mediated, that connect us across space and time and organize our everyday lives-the corporations, government bureaucracies, academic and professional discourses, mass media, and the complex of relations that interconnect them" (Smith, 2005:10). Smith argues that the ruling relations divorce the subject, the person, from their particularized settings and create "subject positions that elevated consciousness into a universalized mode" (Smith, 2005:13). Objectified forms of knowledge have dominated sociology, and Smith critiques the discipline for having "created... a construct of society that is specifically discontinuous with the world known, lived, experienced, and acted in" (Smith, 1990a:2). Sociological discourse commits the researcher to "constructing

people as objects of her investigations or representations” (Smith, 2005:28), and on this point she goes on to say that sociological discourse “committed the working Sociologist to the position of universal subject idealized in the notion of the Archimedean point, the position outside the world from which it could be grasped objectively, such objectivity being sociology’s holy grail” (Smith, 2005:29). Objectified knowledge displaces what the person knows, believes and experiences. However, for Smith feminism provides a critique of the hegemony of objectified knowledge and Institutional Ethnography provides an alternative to the objectification of the subject that dominates mainstream sociology (Smith, 1990a).

A new form of social inquiry is being advanced here, which proceeds from the standpoint of a locally situated subject. Smith sees this new sociology in the following way: “rather than re-enacting the objectifying break, (it) explores and explicates the actual determinations and organization of the actualities of people’s experienced world-not, of course, as to the particularities of their experience, but their experiencing participates in and is shaped by that organization” (Smith, 1990a:3). Like Smith, some of her students and also the wider group of Institutional Ethnography proponents extend this by focusing not only on the voices and experiences of women, but also those of other oppressed and marginalized groups. For instance, Wilson and Pence (2006) examine the experiences of battered women, and Griffith (2006) those of single parent families.

Standpoint and intersectional (to be discussed later) approaches such as Smith’s challenge dominant constructions of knowledge: “the standpoint of women allows us to explore as insiders the social relations in which we play a part, including the social relations of objectified knowledge” (Smith, 1990b:61). As indicated above, standpoint theories contend that the knower, or knowledge producer, cannot be seen as separate from their historical and local context. This aspect of standpoint approaches is important to my research because, rather than using objectified knowledge, I begin my inquiry from the view that people’s experiences as constituting valid knowledge claims about social life as viewed from their subject

position. This is not a claim to epistemological privilege, but a recognition of the importance of context and positionality.

Emerging from her critique of sociology, and proceeding from how people understand the everyday world, Smith proposes Institutional Ethnography as a suitable means of explicating “the actual social processes and practices organising people’s everyday experience from a standpoint in the everyday world” (Smith, 1987:151). Institutional Ethnography is a method of inquiry “intended to disclose how activities are organised and how they are articulated to the social relations of the larger social and economic process” (Smith, 1987:152), and its project is to “discover how institutional relations are put together” (Smith, 2005:71). Smith uses the term “institutional” here to refer to a complex of relations that constitute the ruling apparatus arranged around distinctive functions such as education or law and ethnography; it does not refer to specific methods but rather to the commitment to investigate “how” institutions are and “how” they actually work (Smith, 1987:160). In later chapters, I employ Institutional Ethnography, broadly conceived, to examine the ways in which equity becomes organised as it is in three South African higher education institutions, so as to explicate the hidden or objectified interests in the organisations concerned and those of the extra-local ruling relations.

The key focus of Institutional Ethnography is on the “relations of ruling through which institutions reproduce inequalities”, and in addition it turns attention away from the individual and onto how institutional practices are socially enacted (Eveline et al, 2009:204). This approach allows me to explore racial and gender equity/inequity in South African institutions of higher education without getting bogged down in individual attitudes and values, and “since the methodology of Institutional Ethnography shifts attention from individual responsibility to how those responsibilities are co-ordinated through institutional practices, remedies lie in reshaping those practices rather than trying to change... attitudes and values” (Eveline, et al, 2009:204). Institutional Ethnography’s proposal is to “work from what people are doing or what they can tell us about what they and others do and to find out how the forms of coordinating their activities “produce” institutional

processes, as they actually work” (Smith, 2005:60). As an Institutional Ethnographer herself, DeVault adds helpfully that “where social life is being put together from actual embodied activity it provides a point of entry to investigation that is superior to the starting points derived from abstract theorizing” (DeVault, 1999:39). However, while people are important in Institutional Ethnography, the individual is never the focus of the research, although “the individual does not disappear, indeed, she or he is an essential presence” (Smith, 2005:59). The research may start by “exploring the experience of those directly involved in the institutional setting, but they are not the object of investigation. It is the aspects of the institutions relevant to the people’s experience, not the people themselves that constitute the object of inquiry” (Smith, 2005:38). Consequently my research focuses on the institutional processes that reproduce gender and racial inequality, rather than on the individuals themselves.

Institutional Ethnography also refers to “the investigation of empirical linkages among local settings of everyday life, organizations, and translocal processes of administration and governance” (DeVault & McCoy, 2006:15). These linkages constitute the relations of ruling which for Smith organise and generate power in contemporary society. These ruling relations are “forms of consciousness and organization that are objectified in the sense that they are constituted externally to particular people and places” (Smith, 2005:13). This idea of externalisation is an important one, as it defines the nature of relationships and separations between people and knowledge, and people and organisations; indeed, it also defines the separation between people and lived experience. The notion of relations of ruling “recognizes a major transformation in the organization of society in which “consciousness”, “mind”, “rationality”, “organization”, and so on become reconstructed in objectified forms external to particular individuals. This is the region into which inquiry ventures as it moves from the experiences of people into relations of ruling” (Smith, 2005:69). Researching ruling relations involves focusing on text-based realities, because it is by textual means that institutions organise and mediate relations within them, and between them and their constituent customers, clients or audiences.

As a method of inquiry, Institutional Ethnography offers two important criticisms of mainstream sociology, concerning the role of theory in research, and regarding the treatment of people in research. Institutional Ethnography combines Marxist materialism and Garfinkel's ethnomethodology to begin inquiry in people's lived experiences, and it also draws from symbolic interactionism. Institutional Ethnography differs however from conventional ethnography and other sociological methods, which for Smith are "profoundly constrained by a-priori conceptual frameworks" (Smith, 2005:xii). Her approach does not have a pre-given theoretical destination, and "indeed it doesn't have a theoretical destination at all" (Smith, 2005:38), but rather it "resists the dominance of theory; it is an alternative sociology, not just a method of inquiry" (Smith, 2005:xii). Institutional Ethnography is not framed by theory, then, and thus has "no prior interpretive commitment" (Smith, 2005:36), and it "avoids extracting the particularities of people's lives and doings to construct abstractions that isolate them conceptually" (Smith, 2005:68).

Much of Smith's critique of sociological frameworks and their conceptual structure is based on the impact of these on people and on the discipline. Smith argues that sociology's conceptual structure "displaces people, displaces their activities, displaces their social relations and organization of their doings" (Smith, 2005:31). Drawing partly on the work of Marx, Smith argues that in mainstream sociology, "the actual becomes selectively represented as it conforms to the conceptual; the conceptual becomes the dominant mode of interpreting the resulting selection" (Smith, 2005:54). Mainstream sociology relies on an ontology that "grounds methods of writing in third versions (sociologists' perspectives) which supersede those of the actual individuals in which they originate" (Smith, 1987:118). Sociology then, produces knowledge that marginalises or overrides experience, generating knowledge that is independent of subjective perspectives and it privileges these third versions of social reality instead. In contrast, Institutional Ethnography espouses a commitment to the actual rather than the conceptual, and it "stands in direct opposition to mainstream sociological discourse's perpetuation of conceptual distance from the local actualities of people's lives" (Smith, 2005:55).

For Smith, Institutional Ethnography offers a radical critique of sociology, it is “not just a way of implementing sociological strategies of inquiry that begin with theory, rather than people’s experience, and examine the world of people under theory’s auspices” (Smith 2005:2). The approach challenges the taken-for-granted sociological assumptions that seek to fit people’s experiences into existing theories and frameworks. It offers instead an approach that begins its inquiry with people’s experiences “by locating a standpoint in an institutional order that provides the guiding perspective from which that order can be explored” (Smith, 2005:32). Smith goes on to say that Institutional Ethnography “begins with some issues, concerns, or problems that are real for people and that are situated in their relationships to an institutional order” (Smith, 2005:32). The institutional order is what Smith refers to elsewhere as ‘ruling relations’ and this will be discussed in detail later.

The discussion of Institutional Ethnography and standpoint leads to the issue of multiple and intersecting standpoints and subjectivities. Intersectional theory describes the configuration of identities, inequalities and systems of oppression. Naples (2008) makes an insightful connection between Smith’s attention to “historical, cultural, textual, discursive, institutional and other structural dimensions that contour the intersection of race, class and gender” as articulated in the concept of ruling relations that is central to Institutional Ethnography (Naples, 2008). Thus the variety of instruments, such as legislature, executive bodies, bureaucracy and texts, that Smith refers to as the ruling relations act to homogenise actualities and their workings can be captured in the everyday lives of people as well as everyday processes and structures. The intersecting oppressions are articulated in the everyday/everynight doings of people in local contexts. In Institutional Ethnography, Naples argues, different dimensions of economic, political and social life impact on everyday lives and that these dimensions are intersecting. She goes on to suggest that Smith’s “Institutional Ethnographic approach is especially powerful for revealing how interactions within and across these different dimensions of social life produce contradictions and tensions that can create the grounds for resistance and politicisation” (Naples, 2008:2). Intersectionality attempts to capture the complexity of both the context that leads to particular social locations and the identities that arise

out of them. Intersectionality theory then, is important to framing the structural and micro-level realities that emerge in specific contexts, which are impinged upon by ruling relations, and so I go on to discuss it further.

Intersectionality

The issue of 'difference' in feminism was a largely internal 1980s debate that took place predominantly although not exclusively in the United States (Brah & Phoenix, 2004). Although there is no single definition of difference as used by feminists, there are two main strands to discussions, one that identifies a difference between men and women, and one that examines differences between women themselves (Hughes, 2002). Difference has been examined by many feminist thinkers including Audre Lorde (1984) and Chandra Mohanty (1988). In "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House", Lorde criticised feminism of the late 1970s for its failure to recognise differences between women, and its continuing marginalisation of lesbian, Black and third world women: "the failure of academic feminists to recognize difference as a crucial strength is a failure to reach beyond the first patriarchal lesson" (Lorde, 1984:112). Mohanty, too criticised western feminists for failing to take seriously issues of difference in their theorising, drawing attention to the contributions of third world women struggles against "racism, sexism, colonialism, imperialism, and monopoly capital" (Mohanty, 1991:4). One of the main criticisms of western feminism was that, while it employs a gendered and class analysis, it fails to adequately encompass race and ethnicity. In addressing this, I draw from ideas of Black feminist thought as articulated by Patricia Hill Collins (1990, 2000) and also the key concept of intersectionality.

The term intersectionality was originally coined by Crenshaw (1989) to address the struggles of Black women, whose experiences and realities were not addressed by feminist or anti-racist discourses (Crenshaw, 1989 & 1991; Davis, 2008; Nash, 2008), and it was developed in response and in opposition to additive models of understanding oppression. In *Mapping the Margins*, Crenshaw (1991) commented on the failure of feminists and anti-racists to recognise the intersection of race and gender that is apparent in the lives of real people, arguing, using research on violence

against women, that women of colour are marginalised within discourses that respond to questions of race *or* gender, instead of race *and* gender. Crenshaw (1989; 1991), Collins and Andersen (1995), and Collins (2000) rejected terms like *double* and *triple jeopardy/oppression*, which understood Black women's oppression in ways that failed to see the intersection or simultaneity of race, class and gender as overlapping, inextricably intertwined, systems of oppression (Andersen & Collins, 1992).

Intersectionality addresses "the issue of difference among women by providing a handy catch-all phrase that aims to make visible the multiple positioning that constitutes everyday life and other power relations that are central to it" (Davis, 2008:70). Davis has described intersectionality as referring to the "interaction between, gender, race and other categories of difference in individual lives, social practices, institutional arrangements, and cultural ideologies and the outcomes of these interactions in terms of power" (Davis, 2008:68). Intersectionality theory emerged, then, as a critical response to the demand for the recognition of difference between women: "interest in intersectionality arose out of a critique of gender-based and race-based research for failing to account for lived experience at neglected points of intersection ones that tended to reflect multiple subordinate locations as opposed to dominant or mixed locations" (McCall, 2005:1780). Although originally used to understand the experiences of black women and other marginalised groups, one of the strengths of an intersectional approach is its conceptualization of the intersection of race, class and gender as uniquely shaping all people's lives.

For Nash (2008), intersectionality serves three theoretical and political purposes for feminist and anti-racist theory: firstly, it interrupts the race/gender binary in identity theory; secondly, it provides the vocabulary to counter critiques of identity politics; and thirdly, it addresses the experiences of groups that were historically marginalized by feminist and anti-racist theories. By conceptualising race, class and gender as interlocking systems of oppression (Collins, 2000), a fresh perspective is given on the construction and configuration of oppression. At the same time, there is some debate as to whether intersectionality is a theory, a concept, or heuristic device, while

others see it as a strategy for doing feminist analysis (Davis, 2008). Additionally, there is discussion as to whether intersectionality should be limited to individual experiences, theorising identity, or whether it is best suited for analysing social structures and cultural discourse (Davis, 2008; Winker & Degele, 2011). Nash, for instance suggests that intersectionality “explains or ... describes the process and mechanisms by which subjects mobilize particular aspects of their identities in particular circumstance” (Nash, 2008:11). In response to the challenge of varying levels of analysis, Hulko (2009) and Carastathis (2008) draw a distinction between intersectionality and interlocking oppressions, arguing that “the term intersectionality is used in conjunction with identities and categories, whereas the term interlocking oppressions applies more to process and systems” (Hulko, 2009:47). I do not think it helpful to make a distinction between intersectionality and interlocking oppressions, because intersectionality as I use it here is conceptually broad enough that is able to capture both micro-processes and structural factors. It seems to me there is no reason why it cannot do both, indeed I would argue that its strength lies in this. In this chapter and those that follow, intersectionality is used also explore individual experiences and social structures as well, an approach that Winker and Degele (2011) call a multi-level analysis.

In *Black Feminist Thought*, Collins (1990) introduces the idea of the ‘Matrix of Domination’ as a concept used to understand power, privilege and oppression at a structural and institutional level. This is useful for my research because it recognises how different axes of power intersect to privilege some people over others in a given situation or historical moment that impacts on their everyday/everynight lived experiences. Context is very important for this concept, unlike the popular triple jeopardy discourse often used to theorise Black women’s experiences, which has little regard for context. This is because an additive/cumulative approach does not allow for the nuances and variant experiences of real women’s lives and also constructs Black women as victims and unable in their own right to exert power over others. One can be oppressed and still collude in or enact the oppression of another (Collins, 1990). Collins’ idea of the matrix provides a more nuanced conceptualisation of oppression and the social relations of domination.

Some commentators have cautioned against the methodological and theoretical primacy of Black women in intersectional theory, arguing that “black women’s experiences are used as a theoretical wedge, designed to demonstrate the shortcomings of conventional feminist and anti-racist work” (Nash, 2008:8). One of the main problems of using Black women as a prototype for intersectionality is that there is a tendency to portray them as wholly oppressed or marginalized, with differences and complexities amongst Black women glossed over. Research recognizes not only the differences between women but also that changes of context change their relation to power. The issue regarding the centrality of Black women in intersectional theory also leads to questions about who is seen as an intersectional subject. Although intersectional theorists have relied in particular on multiply marginalized subject/groups to develop their theory, there is merit in using it as a general theory of identity. This does not, however, mean that marginalized voices are without value, for certainly addressing these experiences has illuminated points of intersection, and arguably marginalized subjects still have an important role to play in the development of intersectional theory.

It has been proposed that intersectional theory offers a good analytical starting point but currently lacks the theoretical and methodological substance to make it a robust theory or approach. Intersectional theorists are challenged to push the theoretical and methodological boundaries to move beyond simply identifying people at particular intersections as under-theorised, and propose that as an approach it needs to develop and strengthen its explanatory power. Importantly, critical contradictions remain in the intersectional literature and “these unresolved conflicts seep into feminist and anti-racist theory, practice, and politics, confusing their conception of identity, oppression, and obscuring the normative goals of their work” (Nash, 2008:3). It is proposed, then, that intersectional theory can be bolstered by “analyzing race and gender as co-constitutive processes and as distinctive and historically specific technologies of categorization” (Nash, 2008:13). This challenge is echoed by others, in the form of a warning in arguing that by “constructing race and gender as analytically separable and relegating Black women to their intersection, it implicitly perpetuates the racialization of gender and the gendering of race” (Carastathis,

2008:27). Thus there is a call for a more nuanced understanding of privilege and oppression, and that in “conceiving of privilege and oppression as complex, multi-valent, and simultaneous, intersectionality could offer a more robust conception of both identity and oppression” (Nash, 2008:12).

In discussing the theorization of intersectionality in social theory, it has been suggested that “social theory faces a challenge in theorizing the intersection of multiple complex inequalities” (Walby, 2007:466). Despite the presence of empirical social science data on intersecting social inequalities, these remain under-theorised, and with little consensus even where such theorization has occurred (Davis, 2008). McWhorter comments that, “the precise nature of such alleged ‘intersections’ is not made clear”, and goes on to question whether “feminist theorists [are] pointing to intersections of social structures, or of historical meanings, or of political power relations? Is intersection discursive or institutional or a matter of concrete localized practices?” (McWhorter, 2004:38). One of the complications of simultaneously theorising multiple complex inequalities is that at the point of intersection it is insufficient to treat such inequalities merely as if they can be added up, because they interrelate and also change each other (Alyward, 2010; Carastathis, 2008; Walby, 2007: 450).

Intersectionality theories and approaches are uniquely able to capture the nuances and complexity of simultaneously occurring systems of oppression. But how this approach becomes executed in research is not always clear, and indeed both its critics and its proponents call the methodological aspects of intersectionality theory into question. However, McCall (2005) provides interesting and helpful methodological pointers in identifying three intersectional approaches to the use of categories in research. And though these are not without problems, as she acknowledges, they are sufficient in “satisfy(ing) the demand for complexity and... face the need to manage complexity...” (McCall, 2005:1773) as it relates to intersectionality in research. The three approaches are defined primarily in terms of their view of social categories, and they are: (1) anti-categorical complexity, (2) intra-categorical complexity and (3) inter-categorical complexity, and he describes

them as being on a continuum, with the use of categories at one end and the negation of categories at the other.

Anti-categorical complexity is characterised by research that rejects the use of categories because the social is deemed to be too complex and thus irreducible to simple, discrete categories, “based on a methodology that deconstructs analytical categories” (McCall 2005:1173). Instead this approach begins from the theoretical assumption that categories, including race and gender, fail to capture the complexity of people’s lived experiences. Methodologically, the anti-categorical views with suspicion “both the process of categorization itself and any research that is based on categorization, because it inevitably leads to demarcation, and demarcation to exclusion, and exclusion to inequality” (McCall, 2005:1177). It is argued that “scholars working out of this tradition call attention to the social processes of categorization, and the workings of exclusion and hierarchy that mark boundary-drawing and maintenance” (Nash, 2008:5). However, in my view it is possible to make salient the social processes of categorisation while using these very categories for analytical purposes.

Intra-categorical complexity has characterised some research in the study of intersectionality. Here social categories have been used in a preliminary way to identify the focus of study, and where research is interested in revealing diversity and differences within a group, then it “uses marginalized subjects experiences as a way to demonstrate the inadequacy of categories” (Nash, 2008:5). The inter-categorical approach to complexity involves the temporary adoption of existing analytical categories for the purpose of capturing inequality among social groups. Here categories are used strategically so as to avoid the reification of any one social category and the reproduction of inequality. In a way, this is what Institutional Ethnography does, because the “constraints of the past-in present are recognized but not reified as structure or order... institutional ethnography attends to people’s actual activities in relation to how they are coordinated with others within the historically committed process” (Smith, 2005:68). An inter-categorical approach and

Institutional Ethnography share a commitment to elevating context and the historical moments that shape the lived material realities of individuals and social groups.

Not all research fits strictly into these categorisations, and certainly some research can be classified as fitting more than one category at the same time. However, McCall's discussion of complexity in intersectional research is helpful for my research, because it encourages clarity in the conceptualisation and configuration of categories and also being aware of what kind of approach the researcher is adopting, which relates to the inter-categorical approach. That is, I use race and gender and so on not to define social groups, but rather to examine the character of changing/evolving relationships between and within groups. The relationships form part of the foci of the analysis, rather than serving as contextual purposes. Intersectional theory appeals to me because it has the potential to address the problem of reified categorical distinctions, a problem which Smith also emphasises in pointing out that "in the everyday/everynight world, divisions between gender, race and class don't exist" (Smith, 1999:42). Rather it is through the mediations of ruling relations that people are divided into these categories. For Smith, organisations construct and institute these categories as part of their relations of ruling, and so looking at the text-based practises they give rise to is crucial. This is what I consider next, in looking at the relevant sociological literature on organisations.

Organisations and Institutional Ethnography

Social scientists carried out organisational research in the 1930s and 1940s in response to what has been described as the technocratic approaches that dominated the field at that time. Through the use of social science methods, including interviews and participant observation, then dominant perceptions of organisation were challenged and instead the informal or hidden patterns and norms within them were focused on (Scott, 2004). Today, organisational sociology and the larger field of organisational studies are difficult to disentangle given their influences on each another. There are many approaches to the study of organisations in organisational sociology and in organisations and management studies, reflecting the diversity of

how organisations are conceptualised. For instance, organisations can be seen as systems, as machines, as culture, as instruments and so on (Czarniawska, 1992). The methods of investigation employed can be equally disparate and include attitude studies, surveys, discourse analysis and ethnographic approaches.

My research proceeds from a cultural approach to organisations. The introduction of the concept of culture in organisation theory was an attempt to move away from a rationalistic perspective that dominated the field (Smircich, 1983). In bringing together culture theory and organisation theory, culture became used both as a variable and a metaphor in the field of organisation studies (Driskill & Brenton, 2011). For researchers such as Czarniawska, who combines an organisational studies background with anthropology and sociology, this marriage provides interesting methodological innovations for the ways in which organisations can be studied, such as narrative analysis, something which is attractive due to its “pragmatism, rather than in any lofty ideological premises” (Czarniawska, 1997:11).

Czarniawska’s work is based on the assumption that large or complex organisations are a central element of contemporary social life, and she argues, as does Smith, using a different conceptual language, that “life for most people today is shaped by one or another form of organisation” (Czarniawska, 1992). It is proposed that there is a conceptual lag in the social sciences in thinking about complex organisations, mainly due to methodological failings which result in an inability to adequately describe and understand them. For instance, neither firm theory nor macro-economics are able to adequately explore and research large organisations, because researching large organisations requires breaking or crossing interdisciplinary boundaries. While the study of organisations may require, for instance, borrowing from anthropology, simple loans will not suffice, and instead a more comprehensive merging of approaches is required. Czarniawska, whose work fuses anthropology and organisational studies, suggests that “an anthropologically inspired organisation theory would be... an interpretation of the organisational processes from the standpoint of the actors involved, collected and retold by a researcher. It would be a polyphony of voices from inside rather than an aerial picture taken from outside”

(Czarniawska, 1992:4). This indicates that borrowing from different disciplines can have important methodological implications for how organisations are studied. In addition, this approach, which is ground in and beginning in people's experiences, resonates with the Institutional Ethnography method of inquiry.

In my research, organisations are not in and of themselves the object of analysis, but they are explored through the people that constitute it. Organisation studies typically researches organisations, individuals or groups, issues and, events and Czarniawska argues that "one of the key challenges is that people's actions, their "organising" has become reified into "organisations", indeed " organising never ceases; to study 'organisations' is to deny this fact" (Czarniawska, 2004:780). This notion of the ongoing echoes Smith's ontology of how the social world exists, that it is always coming into being through the doings of people. However, it is important to note that Czarniawska does not consider networks of actions, Action Nets, as ontological. For her the concept instead allows her to explore the question of what is being done, and how this connects to other things that are being done in the same context. She describes actions nets as being founded on "the idea that in each time and place it is possible to speak of an 'institutional order', a set (not a system) of institutions (not necessarily coherent) prevalent right then and there. Such institutions shape organising inasmuch as they dictate which action, conventionally, should be tied together" (Czarniawska, 2004:780). Czarniawska also suggests that, "the concept of action net has no analytical ambitions; its introduction is an attempt to minimise that which is taken for granted prior to the analysis... an action net approach permits us to notice that these are products rather than the sources of the organising-taking place within, enabled by and in an action net, not vice versa" (Czarniawska, 2004:780). This echoes Smith's desire for a sociology that begins in people's actualities without prior theories or concepts determining the direction of the research or how people's experiences are framed. It is in people's everyday/evernight work that we should be focused.

Organisations can be studied in myriad ways, even within organisational sociology. For me, culture is both a variable of organisations and a metaphor for organisation:

the organisation both has and is a culture. My work draws particularly on Czarniawska's cultural approach to organisations, in which its processes, practices and outcomes need to be understood from the standpoint of the actors concerned.

From about the late 1970s, organisational theory specifically and organisational analysis more broadly were criticised for failing to include a gendered analysis (Wolff, 1977; Brown, 1979; Hearn & Parkin 1983; Wilson 1996). Wilson states that organisational theory has "accepted, and continues to accept, male ideology as status quo" (Wilson, 1996:825). Linstead (2000) argues, however, partially in response to Wilson, that it is only contemporary management and organisational theory that is gender blinkered. He asserts that the forefathers of the field were all too aware of gender, but actively moved to suppress its existence in their research and writing. Thus the issue is not, according to Linstead, the failure to see the gendered aspects in organisational analysis; rather it is the deliberate occlusion of gender.

Echoing the need for a gender analysis in organisational theory, Alvesson and Billing (1992) discuss various ways in which gender as an analytical tool can enter the realm of organisational research in innovative ways, and in doing so they argue against generalized views of the relationship between gender (female) and organizations (male). Some of the approaches they discuss include comparing groups of men and women in organisations and using gender as a metaphor for "illuminating the character of organizations" (Alvesson & Billing, 1992:73). They go on to argue that, "in order to better understand gender bias and conflicts in organizations, a differentiated understanding of gender/ organization relations" (Alvesson & Billing, 1992:73) is needed, and they offer an organisational symbolic approach as a possible solution. Failing to include a gendered lens in organisational research both elides existing inequalities and often reproduces them, they emphasise Acker points out that "much of the social and economic inequality... (in society) is created in organisations, in the daily activities of working and organising the work" (Acker, 2006:441). Her work indeed provides a good link between intersectional theory and organizations, because she utilises the concept of "inequality regimes" as an analytical approach for understanding inequalities in work organisations, with these

“defined loosely as interrelated practices, actions, and meanings that result in and maintain class, gender and racial inequalities within particular organizations” (Acker, 2006:443). Conceptualising organisations as regimes of inequality means that they are understood to have entrenched class, gender and race identities and interests that are not always easily discernable, and “when class interests are integrated with gender and racial identities and interests opposition may be virulent to any moves to alter the combined advantages” (Acker, 2006:460). Acker’s idea of regimes of inequality provides a useful concept, although its built-in assumption is that organisations are inherently unequal or even malevolent. This clashes somewhat with Smith’s (2001) view that organisations and the social relations and practices constituted within and by them need not be malign in the active way implied by Acker, and this is a consideration that guides my own conception of organisation and organisational practices.

For Acker, both formal and informal practices help reproduce inequality, and these practices are “often guided by textual materials supplied by consultants or developed by managers influenced by information and/or demands from outside the organisation” and that to understand how these inequalities are reproduced, “it is necessary to examine the details of these textually informed practices” (Acker, 2006:447). This emphasis on texts, as indicated earlier, is central to Institutional Ethnography as a methodology suitable for examining the daily activities shaping people’s lives in organisations. One of the methods espoused by Institutional Ethnography is documentary and textual analysis, discussed below. Dorothy Smith’s approach offers a coherent way of conceptualizing and researching organisations, and in critiquing the way organisations are understood and researched in sociology, Smith (1990, 2001) places people, or subjects at the center of analysis, with Institutional Ethnography focusing on how local practices and activities produce the extra-local and the objectification of organisations. For Smith, organisations form part of a complex of relations, arguing that:

“texts (or documents) are essential to the objectification of organizations and institutions and to how they exist as such [which] suggests that exploring how texts mediate, regulate and authorize people's activities expands the scope of

ethnographic method beyond the limits of observation; texts are to be seen as they enter into people's local practices of working, drawing, reading, looking and so on. They must be examined as they coordinate people's activities" (Smith, 2001:159).

Texts and documents enter Smith's work as a core element in her investigation of ruling relations. Smith focuses on texts as materially replicable words or images (Smith, 2005), and her *Texts, Facts and Femininity* (Smith, 1990a), describes the link between texts and relations of ruling, in which she defines 'relations of ruling' as the "complex of extra-local relations that provide in contemporary societies a specialization of organization, control, and initiative" (Smith, 1990a:6). Examples of these relations are bureaucracy, professional organization, as well as discourses which are "scientific, technical, and cultural, that intersect, interpenetrate, and coordinate the multiple sites of ruling" (Smith, 1990a:6).

Texts and documents are linked to power in Smith's (1990a) discussion of textually-mediated forms of ruling, which she argues characterise contemporary industrialised societies. She expands on what she identifies as Ethnomethodology's "discovery of text as a significant constituent of social relations" (Smith, 1990a:211) by proposing that the text, particularly in an institutional context, should be "analysed for its characteristically textual form of participation in social relations (Smith, 1990a:4). Texts have a capacity to operate as a constituent of social relations, and Smith uses texts to explore the "intersection of the extended social relations of ruling through an actual experience of reading. Hence analysis focuses on just that intersection, on how the reader operates the text to enter the objectified modes of knowing characteristic of relations of ruling" (Smith, 1990a:5).

The analysis of the role of texts in organisational relations of ruling points up their important role in constituting, as well as linking to, the extra-local. Thus for Smith, "the simple properties of documentary or textually mediated forms of social organization involve their dependence upon, and exploitation of, the textual capacity to crystallize and preserve a definite form of words detached from their local historicity" (Smith, 1990a:210). Through its texts, a formal organisation becomes (seemingly) detached from individuals and locality, and these set in motion activities

which also remove the subjective and lived processes of the construction of the text. Smith goes on to comment that “texts speak in the absence of speakers; meaning is detached from local contexts of interpretation” (Smith, 1990a:210). Breaking knowledge away from the active experiencing of subjects is a way of asserting ruling relations, in which the social organisation of knowledge separates the subject, the knowledge producer, from the knowledge, “objectified forms of knowledge structure the relation between knower and known. The knower's relation to the object known is structured by the social organization accomplishing it as knowledge.” (Smith, 1990b:63). And here Smith comments that “knowledge must somehow transcend the local, historical settings to which the knower is necessarily bound if it is to be ‘pure’” (Smith, 1990b:62).

In conceptualising the role of texts in constituting relations of ruling, Smith is building on a long-standing materialist perspective, tracing this to Marx and Engels in *The German Ideology*, which makes documents and texts “visible as constituents of social relations” (Smith, 1990a:210). Rather than concentrating on the surface of a text, Smith proposes that texts should be seen as “a means of access, a direct line to the relations it organizes” (Smith, 1990a:4). Thus an Institutional Ethnography analysis of anti-racist and gender equality documents in my research looks beyond the surface content, to make visible the social relations of ruling, because objectified forms of knowledge are integral to the organisation of ruling but in a way that ‘vanishes’ their traces (Smith, 1990b).

Smith (2005) offers a clear and convincing conceptual justification for why texts should be examined as part of relations of ruling in her discussion of what she terms the ‘text-reader conversation’. Smith’s idea of text-reader conversations describes a process in which the reader activates texts: “in institutional settings, text-reader conversations are integral to the ways in which institutional discourses regulate people’s local activities” (Smith, 2005:105). This can also be seen as “a process that translates the actual into the institutional” (Smith, 2005:105). While the text-reader conversation is active, on the surface at least the text always remains the same; one party - the text - is unresponsive to the other, and “the constancy of the text is

essential to the role it plays in organisations and institutions” (Smith, 2005:108). Smith also recognises and acknowledges arguments about differences in reading and interpretation between different readers, and at different times. However, her central concern is that, in activating the text, the reader becomes the text’s agent, because the reader takes on responses set up by the text. It is important to note here that in becoming an agent the reader does not necessarily agree with the text, although at the same time “resistance, repudiation, disagreement and rejection work with and from the text’s agenda” (Smith, 2005:111), as does acceptance.

Documentary analysis is a core part of my investigation of equity in South African higher education and its production and reproduction of gender and racial inequality. The idea of organisation culture illuminates several facets of an organisation, including performance (Marcoulides & Heck, 1993), and organisational transformation and change (Kezar & Eckel, 2002; and Hearn, 1996). As social scientists began to study organisations, they explored aspects that were previously unexamined, such as people’s motives, shared norms and conflict and also the culture of the organisation (Scott 2004). In the late 1980s, Meek argued that what he defined as the “preoccupation with organisational culture” (1988:453) was likely to be related to socio-economic factors which, as Western society experienced a downward turn in its economy, revealed structural inequalities intrinsic in these societies and culture, with the result that ‘people problems’ became a salient interest amongst scholars. Regarding organisational research, Meek argued that social theorists emphasised culture in a manner that consciously or unconsciously elided the contradictions inhering in social structure.

Problems can arise when concepts are borrowed from other disciplines, specifically here regarding the way organisational studies has adopted and used the concept of culture (Meek, 1988; Czarniawska, 1992). Borrowing concepts from other disciplines in and of itself is not wrong, and indeed can lead to important innovations. But the same time concepts can become distorted in the transfer from one discipline to another, a problem which often arises when concepts are borrowed from a specific theoretical tradition and ‘translated’ into an antithetical one. A

structural-functionalist perspective on culture, for instance, involves privileging a unitary collective consciousness and insists that “social order is created and maintained through individuals internalizing dominant social norms and values” (Meek, 1988:456); and the consequence of such a narrow view of organisational culture is that it sees this as something that can be owned and manipulated by management (Meek, 1988). It is important to note that structural functionalism is not the only source of such problems, and I provide this example to illustrate a wider problem.

The literature on organisational culture often identifies typologies as a means diagnosing ‘culture’ within an organisation, with work in this area including Tierney (1988), Bergquist (1992), and Marcoulides and Heck (1993). Tierney’s definition is useful, proposing that:

“the culture of an organization is grounded in the shared assumptions of individuals participating in the organization. Often taken for granted by the actors themselves, these assumptions can be identified through stories, special language, norms, institutional ideology, and attitudes that emerge from individual and organizational behaviour” (Tierney, 1988:4)

Tierney’s ‘bottom up’ approach echoes the work of earlier theorists. For instance, writing in the early 1950s, Jaques’ defined the culture of a factory as “its customary and traditional way of thinking and doing things, which is shared to a greater or lesser degree by all its members, and which new members must learn, and at least partially accept, in order to be accepted into service in the firm” (Jaques, 1951:51). Although a rather dated study, Jaques’ definition recognises the consensus in an organisation’s culture, while also leaving room to explore issues of conflict in recognising that member need only “partially” accept the culture.

Universities are a distinct type of organisation. Conceptualising higher education institutions as cultural entities emerged in the 1960s but remained relatively unexplored until the 1980s. Much of the expansion in the then field came from growth in the fields of organisational sociology and business science (Chaffee &

Tierney, 1988; Damrosch, 1995; Välimaa, 1998). Välimaa (1998), for instance, has adopted a cultural approach in higher education studies, discussing disciplinary cultures and institutional cultures, and proposing that they can be distinguished by the unit of analysis:

“Studies of institutional culture are structured by higher education institutions, whereas the studies of disciplinary cultures skip the institutional level and focus on an individual academic to construct the international disciplinary cultures. Thus, institutional cultural studies reflect institutionally-based interests and aim at reconstructing cultures of locally determined academic communities, whereas the search for disciplinary cultures focuses the interest on cultural influences through studies of international epistemic traditions” (Välimaa, 1998:120)

My research explores university culture at the institutional or organisational level, rather than the disciplinary or academic level. Theoretically “the search for institutional cultures is a combination of anthropological understanding and sociological conceptualization” (Välimaa, 1998:130). Both institutional and disciplinary culture approaches are internalist, conceptualising the academic world as an entity separate from the rest of the world, while Välimaa argues that an interactionist cultural perspective is needed, in which identity is used as an intellectual device to examine culture in higher education. This discussion clearly distinguishes between levels of operation when researching culture in higher education, while Tierney’s (1988) work provides a framework to diagnose culture in colleges and universities.

Influenced by anthropologist Clifford Geertz, Tierney (1988) proposes that organisational culture exists through the shared norms and assumptions of the people working in an organisation. He also suggests that the organisational culture of a university should be seen as an interconnected web, which must be understood by looking not only at the structure and network of the web, but also how this in turn is interpreted by the actors or people who compose the web. Tierney provides a framework by suggesting that investigating organizational culture should include the following:

Environment How does an organisation define environment? What is the attitude toward the organisational environment? (Hostility? Friendship?)

Mission How is the organisation defined? How is it articulated? It is used as a basis for decisions? How much agreement is there?

Socialization How do new members become socialised? What do people need to survive/excel in an organisation?

Information What constitutes organisational information? Who has it? How is it disseminated?

Strategy How are decisions in an organisation arrived at? Which strategy is used? Who makes decisions? What is the penalty for bad decisions?

Leadership What does an organization expect from its leaders? Who are the leaders? Are there formal and informal leaders?

Tierney's framework is designed to diagnose issues in individual organisations, with the implicit understanding that different examples of the 'same' institutions (such as universities) will not always share an organisational culture. While Tierney's framework is not without its problems (for instance, his analysis neglects organisational subsets including subculture, anti-culture and disciplinary culture), his approach remains useful for operationalising the concept of organisational culture in a research context. The five key areas identified in Tierney's framework, rather than being used in a prescriptive and therefore limiting manner, are employed in my research in later chapters more as a guide, to help me to address cultural elements where they arise.

The prime task of Institutional Ethnography is to map "hidden links and work practices so that they become visible to locally situated individuals" (Eveline et al, 2009:205). My research investigates the links and work practices that aid or hinder the achievement of racial and gender equity in three of South Africa's higher education institutions using an Institutional Ethnography approach. In Institutional Ethnography, the direction that research follows comes from the original problematic as this is articulated through the experiences of the people occupying the subject positions that the research interacts with. Smith defines a 'problematic' as "territory to be discovered, not a question that is concluded in its answer" (Smith, 2005:41),

and that it is “people’s experience which sets the problematic of the study, the first step in an inquiry that travels sequentially deeper into the institutional relations in which people’s everyday lives are embedded” (Smith, 2005:38). People’s experiences rather than theory organises the direction that research follows in Institutional Ethnography, then (Smith, 2005). However, experiential accounts alone are not enough, and outside forces and structures - the extra-local- must also be addressed.

In Institutional Ethnography, consequently, it is not individuals as such who are the object of the analysis; it is people’s experiences as part of broader social processes which are important. Similarly, institutions are not the object of analysis, but “rather, they come into view only partially as they are explored from the standpoint of people who in one way or another are involved in them” (Smith, 2005:68). Smith argues that “locating a specific institutional standpoint organizes the direction of the sociological gaze and provides a framework of relevance” (Smith, 2005:330). Institutional Ethnography seeks to explore how things happen and how things are done and its practitioners therefore “understand everyday life to be constituted by people whose activities are coordinated in specific ways. For that reason, we must collect data that captures detailed accounts of those activities” (Campbell & Gregor, 2002:69). However, Institutional Ethnography “pushes beyond the local settings of people’s experience” (Smith, 2005:49), and encompasses ruling relations and the practices which constitute these in linking the local and the extral-local.

Institutional Ethnography has two levels of data and data collection for explicating ruling relations. Field notes and similar data serves as an entry-level data into a problematic, where such “entry-level data is about the local setting, the individuals that interact there and their experiences. The research goal is to explicate that account” (Campbell & Gregor, 2002:60). In my research, in addition to field notes, the interviews I have carried out allow me to learn more about the local conditions and experiences of the participants. Campbell and Gregor point out that “researchers must verify that the original story is not idiosyncratic” (Campbell & Gregor, 2002:60), and my interviews comprise multiple organisational voices, including

those of students, staff and university administrators. Some Institutional Ethnographers focus on the “experiences of those active in the institutional process. Others take the next step to locate investigation in the regulatory dimensions of institutions, exploring these also as people’s work in particular local settings and explicating the distinctive institutional forms of coordination” (Smith, 2005:44). Institutional ethnography employs a generous concept of work, which includes “everything that people know how to do and that their daily lives require them to do” (Campbell & Gregor, 2002:72). It also assumes a particular social ontology, where different actors constitute a setting as it appears and is lived, located within “the social relations of the setting, but positioned differently” (Campbell & Gregor, 2002:65). By extrapolating how people’s lives are organized beyond their own “knowledge and control... it (is) possible to understand domination and subordination” (Campbell & Gregor, 2002:61). Consequently the social ontology of Institutional Ethnography offers researchers “the basis for an alternative way of knowing about the world” (Campbell & Gregor, 2002:69).

There is, as noted above, a second level of data collection within Institutional Ethnography. Researchers have to be aware of instances when talk and texts reference the discourse of the organisation. This is referred to as ideological talk, where people talk in terms of policies or rules or of things as they are arranged and managed in the institutional context. This second level of data needs to be engaged with and is the “missing organizational details of how a setting works” (Campbell & Gregor, 2002:60), with such detail consisting of, for example, information which can be gathered from participant observation and documentary analysis and which is concerned to “find out just how people’s doings in the everyday are articulated to and coordinated by extended social relations that are not visible from within any particular local setting and just how people are participating in those relations” (Smith, 2005:36).

A standpoint within Institutional Ethnography is the design of a subject position, and it creates a point of entry into the social. Institutional Ethnography seeks to connect what happens to participants and what triggers a particular action or event. My

research maps the sequence of institutional actions and events that constitute the achievement or negation of gender and racial equity in three South African universities and the analysis of organisational documents and their uses is crucial to comprehending the ways in which institutional culture aids or hinders this. In this, my approach is a standard Institutional Ethnography one, the aim of which is to “reorganize the social relations of knowledge of the social so that people can take that knowledge up as an extension of our ordinary knowledge of the local actualities of our lives” (Smith, 2005:29). The research also draws on interviews and field-notes to locate these organisational documents within the everyday life and practices of an array of organisational persons.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have discussed four key theoretical and methodological considerations that are important to my investigation: feminist methodology and standpoint theory; intersectionality and complexity; Smith’s alternative sociology and Institutional Ethnography; and organisational culture and how it relates to the IE approach. Debates concerning epistemology and truth-claims have been an important part of feminist theorising, with much of the debate centring on whether particular standpoints provide greater access to truth. However, like Letherby and Bywaters (2007), I do not regard standpoint approaches as leading to truth-finding and epistemological privilege, but rather to be an acknowledgement that knowledge claims are contextual and situated. Also my approach to standpoint draws particularly on Smith (1987) and is about beginning in the actualities of people’s lives, and not in “reality” in the way that Heckman (1997) has suggested. Smith’s notion of standpoint “directs us to an embodied subject located in a particular actual local historical setting” (Smith, 1987:108). Notably, her conception of what she terms a women’s standpoint differs from feminist standpoint theories that conceptualise the “knowing feminist”. For Smith (1987), every woman, widened in her later work to include every person (Smith, 2005), is an expert in his or her own life. In the chapters following, the accounts of my respondents will be understood as locally situated and stemming from particular standpoints and locations in the institutions and the respondents are understood to be experts in their own lives.

Thinking about standpoints in the plural (Collins, 1990; Letherby & Bywaters, 2007) rather than the singular leads to questions about how multiple locations, subjectivities and systems of oppression exist in relation to one another. Rather than adopting an additive model, the chapters following are located in ideas about intersectionality and multiple, simultaneous and intersecting identities, subjectivities and oppressions. This understanding of intersectionality also goes beyond social identities, to include institutional analysis and the place of intersectional subject positions in relation to this. I would also suggest that “intersectionality addresses the most central theoretical and normative concern within feminist scholarship: namely, the acknowledgment of differences among women” (Davis, 2008:70).

While the theoretical merits of intersectionality theory are widely acknowledged, its methodological worth has been called into question by some (Nash, 2008). Complexity theory lends both theoretical and methodological strength to intersectionality theory (McCall, 2005; Walby, 2007) and in my view is essential in elucidating how social categories should be used in research. Adopting McCall’s (2005) inter-categorical complexity approach allows for the use of social categories without reifying them and simultaneously elevates history and context. There is a history and context to social inequalities along racial and gender lines which can be seen within the three case studies discussed later chapters and also more broadly in South African society. The social categories of race and gender do not have an essential significance or meaning in and of themselves. But they are nevertheless useful in explicating the social organisation of equity measures in the three institutions I am concerned with, and show how these universities connect with the extra-local ruling relations governing them. In other words, what kinds of institutional processes, societal conditions and textual practices give rise to more or less equitable higher education contexts? My particular interest in higher education organisations lies in how they function as inequity regimes. Institutional Ethnography subverts mainstream sociology and begins its inquiry at the local actualities of people’s lives, exploring experience as a method of exploring the social. As a method of inquiry, Institutions Ethnography focuses on how things come

be as they are and as such provides a useful framework for exploring the ruling relations of equity management in South African universities.

There are two key features in particular of Smith's (1987, 1989, 1990a, 1990b, 1997, 2005, 2006) work that mark what follows: using experience as data, and understanding social relations as textually mediated. An important part of Institutional Ethnography is how the problematic it is concerned with is explored. As a method of inquiry, it begins in the everyday/everynight experiences of people, and not from theory. The accounts of respondents and organisational texts will be central to my exploration into how equity is organised as it is in higher education institutions. By making people and texts visible as constituents of social relations, the broader ruling relations are elucidated, as the chapters following will demonstrate.

Chapter 3

Methodological Approach: Exploring the Social Organisation of Equity in South African Higher Education

In the previous chapter I introduced Institutional Ethnography (IE), a radical sociology and its method of inquiry developed by Dorothy Smith (1987) that frames my research, with some related concepts that are also important to this. In this chapter, I look in more detail at IE and how it has been used, discuss why and how my application of it differs from other uses of the approach. Also I discuss how I have operationalised IE, through carrying out three case studies to explore equity issues in South African higher education. Following this I will discuss each case study, focusing why it was selected and on what its undertaking provides in the way of a knowledge base.

My research maps the organisational and work practices that aid or hinder the achievement of racial and gender equality measures in institutions of South African higher education. It explores how, at local levels, higher education institutions deal with the challenges of achieving racial and gender equity. The research is framed by IE broadly conceived, as an approach which explores how things happen in particular social settings and the interactions composing everyday life, beginning with people's experiences rather than with theory. It focuses on people outwith formal membership of organizations and also those who are front-line workers. These people's views and experiences, in response to the organisations they are dealing with, provide glimpses into how lives are organised by factors beyond their direct knowledge and control.

IE is an alternative to mainstream sociology and can be “described as a method of inquiry because its findings are not already prejudged by a conceptual framework that regulates how data will be interpreted; rather exploration and discovery are central to its project” (Smith, 2005:50). It is an approach which positions itself against objectified forms of social science knowledge and sees the social world as accomplished through the activities (talk and action) of ordinary people and these epistemological and ontological features distinguish IE. Epistemology concerns how it is we come to know the world; it is about theories of knowledge. IE takes up a reflexive epistemological position, one which argues that knowledge is “mutually produced through interaction between researchers and the people they learn from” (Frampton et al, 2006:30). It positions itself against a positivist or realist epistemology that asserts that the social world can be known by the objectivity and value-free methods espoused in the natural sciences. IE like other constructionist approaches reject the possibility of value freedom and questions notions of objectivity. Ontology refers to the assumptions regarding how the social world comes into being and is more important for IE than epistemology. For IE, the social world is produced and brought into being “through the social practices of people” (Frampton et al, 2006:34). Drawing on Marx and Engels, for Smith (1987) the social is real and accomplished through the concerted character of people’s activities. The social, then, is not reified within IE but understood to be constantly happening through the practices and activities of people living their lives. But while the social world is not seen as separate from people’s doings, for IE it is certainly not reducible to the individual.

This specific epistemological and ontological grounding, has implications for IE understandings about what can be researched, how it is done, and the resultant knowledge claims. Two of the main ways in which IE’s particular epistemology and ontology and resultant approach to research distinguishes itself from other theories and methodological approaches concern, firstly, where it begins its inquiry, and secondly, who it conceives of as a knower.

As discussed in the previous chapter, IE begins its inquiry in the actualities of people's everyday/everynight living with the aim of "pulling the organisation of the trans- or extra-local ruling relations-bureaucracy, the varieties of text-mediated discourse, the state, the professions...into the actual sites of people's living" (Smith, 2002:19). The concept of ruling relations within IE refers to the "specialised scientific, technical, and cultural discourses which operate through a wide variety of textual formats as constituents of the process of ruling" (P. R. Grahame, 1998:349). In my own research, this involves exploring how the extra-local and the broader institutional (higher education system) and organisational (individual universities) structures, practices and discourses influence the management and experiences of equity in South African higher education as constituted at local levels. People's experiences are an access point enabling the local and the extra-local to be linked and the ruling relations explored.

One of the distinguishing features of IE is that it frames people's everyday experiences. The experiential data gathered from conventional ethnographies, and that gathered from IE, are used to different ends. In classical ethnography, the focal point is on illuminating the relations within a social organisation, while IE uses experience to locate and to trace social relations outwith an organisation and its borders but structured by it, and it does so in order to interrogate "forms of social organisation which shape local settings but originate of them" (P. R. Grahame, 1998:352). For institutional ethnographers, "the concrete experience of individuals can thus be viewed as a terrain structured by these generalising relations but not wholly swallowed up them" (P. R. Grahame, 1998:353), and so people's accounts can be seen as indicating points of disjuncture between relations of ruling and lived experiences.

In IE, people's experience and disjunctures in these, however, does not refer to an "authentic individual act of consciousness that gives access to a world directly known" (Smith, 2002:42), nor does it refer to notions of truth (Frampton et al, 2006). Instead, it is understood as a dialogue between the speaker and a wider discourse wherein this discourse "does not determine; (but) is dialogically engaged with what

the speaker or writer is trying to find a way of telling” (Smith, 2002:43). Social relations are present in people’s talk. Indeed, Campbell (1998) argues that “it is impossible to speak sensibly without speaking the social relations” (Campbell, 1998:61). People methodically tell their experiences in talk and texts organise how people talk as well as how they act. IE views institutional and professional discourses as shaping and structuring while also excluding the concrete standpoint of everyday/everynight actualities, and consequently people’s accounts of equity will contain institutional discourse, with their experiences in institutional terms revealing a particular type of social relation, that the institution, its texts, and how these are enacted will shape the activities of front-line workers and people formally outwith the institution but interactions on its borders and impacted by it. The aim in studying this is to identify the institutional in the experiential and to illuminate the social relations constituting this.

The concern here is less about the accuracy or “truth” of people’s accounts, and more about focusing on the moment when people’s experiences meet and interact with processes and forces outside their local actualities. IE’s interest is in people, in “learning from them first and then beginning to locate in their accounts the juncture between the everyday worlds as they told them and how they are hooked into relations that connect them beyond scope of experience” (Smith, 2002:21). In addition the Institutional Ethnographer is “not looking for agreement among different informants but for the intersections and complementarities of their different accounts in the relations that coordinate their work” (Smith, 2005:63), and in fact “different viewpoints are not displaced by the ethnographer’s interpretations...” (Smith, 2005:63) because it is taken for granted that social relations and organisation will generate difference. Experience is not used in IE to identify truth, nor to create a single narrative, and this has far reaching implications for how research materials are used and analysed, including in my own research, as I will explain in later chapters. The concern of IE, as with my own research, is to identify the individual-institutional interface, that is, the areas or instances in which people’s lived actualities meet and interact with “the institutional” and disjunctures occur.

Both the researcher's experience and those of other people can be used as entry points within IE research. IE researchers Smith & Griffith, (1990), P. R. Grahame, (1998) and Taber (2010), for instance, begin their inquiries with their own experience and proceed from this to extrapolate the relations of ruling that organise and coordinate their experiences and those of others. In IE, the "investigation itself builds from one stage of research to the next on the basis of interviews" (Smith, 2002:24). Thus, for instance, in their research on single parents and the school system, Griffith and Smith (1990) began from their own experiences as single mothers and from there they interviewed other parents with school-age children. My research similarly grows out of my experiences as a university student in South Africa, grappling with and trying to make sense of equity issues, aware of the progressive policies laid out at state level but also sensing a disjuncture between these policies and the everyday experiences of students and staff, and the research I subsequently engaged upon explores and makes concrete and analysable the research problematic tentatively formulated in this experience. Together my experiences as with those of other people constitute the first level (entry) of an IE research project.

Once the problematic -the research question and how to explore it- for an IE project has been identified, the next step is to "open up the institutional order to which their (interviewees/participants) work contributes and with which it is coordinated" (Smith, 2002:25). In this second level (the translocal level), IE moves from the exploration of the everyday particularities to exploring the "generalising and generalised relations in which each individual's everyday world is embedded" (Smith, 2002:25). It is often at this second level that institutional texts come into play. The extra-local in my research is examined through an analysis of how institutional forces/factors and texts come to organise and influence equity measures in particular South African universities. This will involve a focus on the social relations that organise the daily activities of the people in these organisations, with the underpinning research question being "how does the institution of higher education, its structure and nature, organise the equity measures in particular South African universities"?

In IE, each group of participants is selected because they are located at strategically important parts of the organisations in question, in my case universities. IE pushes beyond the local setting of people's experiences to include the ruling relations which constitute these by focusing on points of organisational connection, linking organisational documents, strategic policy decision-making, and the experiences of managers, administrators, teaching staff and students. And for Smith (2005) the focus for this are the texts that produce and organise relations of ruling. Text-based discourse and forms of knowledge are central to ruling practice (Smith, 2006a) and in IE texts are "taken up as they enter into action. Their conceptual dimensions are held up not as meaning, but as 'organisers' packaged for transmission to multiple sites" (Smith, 2002:34).

Texts are important in IE to the extent that they mediate, organise and coordinate people's lives and thereby the practices of ruling relations. Texts in and of themselves are not important for IE, it is instead the intersection between texts and the reader that interests IE, because "the texts that coordinate local settings and particular times, articulating them into extended social relations beyond, must be recognised as 'occurrences' at the moment of reading that enter into the reader's next doings or 'responses'. Or their work in talk or in writing/reading as organisers of local settings, referenced, aimed at, governing, the on-going development and concerting of activities" (Smith, 2002:35). The textual is important, then, because it allows for the location of the "essential modes in which translocal and allochronic relations are coordinated and through which the institutional property of being generalised across local sites is achieved" (Smith, 2002:38).

People work with texts and the fact that their work, their social conduct, is organised by texts is a salient feature of institutional organisation, because "readers in different sites and at different times can engage with and be regulated by the 'same' text" (Smith, 2002:3) which hooks their doings and activities into trans-local relations of ruling. The interlocking textually-coordinated sequences of action that engage various people and positions in social life is the focus of attention of analysis rather than the individual.

Within organisational texts, the person becomes invisible, becomes reduced to a category-membership, such as female, Black, disabled. This is true of policy documents, and in chapters following I explore whether and to what extent this applies to all organisational texts relating to equity measures. Campbell's work on how new management strategy is taken up and organised in Dog-wood Villa, a long-term care hospital facility, has as one of its main assumptions that the experiential gives way to the text-based and discursive, and the "power of subordinating local experiential knowing to the discursive is the basis of textually-mediated management of ...ruling" (Campbell, 1998:59). I shall also explore whether there are similar processes in each of the three universities that form my case studies.

Organisational texts produced in institutions organise and coordinate people's work-related practices across space and time. For IE, the analysis of such texts is aimed at uncovering the social relations "of which we are practitioners" (Smith, 1990b:152). Texts are consequently not read for their content alone, but also for their effects, their mediation and organisational capacities, as part of their role in organising social relations and how they enter into and organise people's daily activities and experiences. So how do 'a text' and the words on the page of an institutional document mediate between the local and the extra-local?

The idea of the text-reader-conversation is crucial here. This stands for the process whereby the actual is translated into the institutional: "the text-reader-conversation expands the idea of a text occurring so that the readers and the readers' active engagement with the text's inertia can be made visible" (Smith, 2005:104). That is, contra Prior (2003), for Smith texts are not agentic in their own right but are 'activated' by people; and viewing texts in this way opens up a different way of understanding the social relations involved. Often in literature that takes policy or other documents into account in institutional or organisational contexts, the relationship is seen as linear, with documents viewed as prescriptive and controlling. This not only strips the reader of their agency, but also fails to take into consideration issues of time and space as they pertain to the texts and their reading. For IE, the reader both activates and responds to the text when engaging with it, "its activation

by a reader inserts the text's message into the local setting and the sequence of action into which it is read" (Smith, 2005:105). The concept of text-reader-conversation grounds and anchors texts in the local actualities in which people are involved. This means that an organisational text when being read is activated by the reader and brought into the local, into the time and space-bound doings of ordinary people, while linking these to the extra-local and the institutional.

IE lends itself to the exploration of complex interactions between people and organisational practices, policies, and discourses; and in so doing, it enables micro and macro relations to be brought together within a single study. It puts analytic emphasis on the merging of the social world and the individual, usually from the standpoint of the marginalised, the ruled (Campbell, 1998), and explores the trans-local ruling relations in the everyday/everynight sites of people's living in relation to "the way that the social organisation is put together such that people experience it as they do" (Campbell, 1998:60). For IE, it is "the interplay of social relations, of people's ordinary activities being concerted and coordinated purposefully, that constitutes 'social organization'" (Campbell & Gregor, 2002:27). IE takes for granted that the social world is organised and therefore its concern is not to look for social organisation, but to use the concept to view and understand the world and its myriad configurations and resultant relations of ruling, while also recognising that the social world is not static. Thus what IE is investigating is a snap-shot of processes and practices always in motion.

IE is concerned with mapping or uncovering complex interactions in the institutional arena that impact people's daily lives. IE researchers such as Campbell (1992), Diamond (1992), Mykhalovskiy & McCoy (2002), Mykhalovskiy et al (2004), Jung (2003), and Smith (2005), have investigated health care and health management in various contexts, focusing on policy, institutional and organisational practices and processes. They do so from the standpoint of the people in the health care system, rather than that of the system of the rulers, and the focus is on how people come up against and experience institutional processes and factors that may or may not be visible to them. IE projects have also been carried out on gender-based violence and

the justice system (Pence 2002; Adams, 2009), gender and culture in the national defence force (Taber, 2010), immigration policy and related gender issues (Ng, 1995, 1996), and activism and social movements (Frampton et al, 2006). The institution of education has also received a fair amount of IE attention, including from Griffith & Smith (1987) on single parents and education system; Rocco & West, (1998), who explored privilege in adult education; McCoy, (1998) in research on discourse and texts in higher education, and Daniel (2005) on the textual construction of special needs in the Ontario schooling system.

IE research projects such as these explore the institutional from the perception of people in local sites, investigating institutions including health care, political movements, education, the military, the legal system. Its research has focused on different aspects of the institutions and how these enter and shape people's experiences. Some of this work has examined specific institutional processes, while some has focused explicitly on texts and how they organise and mediate social relations. I now go on to discuss in more depth a number of studies with particular relevance for my own research.

Informed by IE's interest in the social organisation of knowledge, Campbell (1998) explores new management technologies in a particular hospital. Focusing on the implementation of a new management strategy, Campbell (1998) interviewed and observed nurses as they went about their everyday work practices, and she also mapped the social relations that shape and coordinated their experiences. Her study rests on two working assumptions. The first is that organisational knowledge is textually-mediated in contemporary organisation, with people's work organised and coordinated through text-based practices. The second is that local experiential knowing in the hospital is subordinated by and to textually-mediated relations of ruling, with the written word organising what gets known. Campbell's analysis concludes that a new management initiative that was instituted altered relationships at the local level. Through observation, interviews and documentary analysis, Campbell (1998) explicated the social relations organising the activities of the health workers (nurses) in the hospital and from knowledge is produced. I am interested in

this because it is a study that examines the experiences of front-line workers in a specific organisation and maps the ruling relations that come to shape these. In other words, it combines the two elements, the individual and the institutional, that are important in my research and in addition is a good example of how IE can focus on front-line workers to explore the social organisation of a specific context.

K. M. Grahame's (1998) study on organisational processes around organisational goals uses observation, interviewing, textual analysis and her own experience to explore the attempts of a mainstream women's organization (WPAN) to organize and include women of colour. K. M. Grahame uses Smith's (1987) IE approach to social organization to elucidate the "complex of relations within which the work of (the) organization is embedded" (K. M. Grahame, 1998:377). She views the concepts of "organizing" and "inclusion" as used in the organization with reference to the absence of women of colour and so as ideological constructs used to account for the daily practices of members of the organization. Grahame shifts her analysis of inclusion/exclusion from the individual level, in which the focus might be on the racist attitudes of white members, and she also shifts attention from a solely organizational level, where the focus might be on organizational structure or bureaucracy, to uncover how the social relations of the organization organize and coordinate everyday activities. Through mapping the social relations, Grahame discovered a fundamental incongruence between the "institutional characterisation of what it means to be organised and the actual activities in which women of colour were engaged" (K. M. Grahame, 1998:377). The issue was essentially one of discourse and definition. I am interested in this because it highlights the importance of institutional discourse in shaping the social organisation and social relations of a specific context, which is important in my research on equity in South African universities.

Daniel (2005) and Nichols and Griffith (2009) examine using an IE framework the impact of policy in the Canadian education system. Daniel's (2005) research begins in her own experiences as a school-based administrator. Using interviews and documentary analysis, she examined a particular funding policy for special needs

education. In so doing, she came across institutional troubles that made the implementation of the policy not only problematic for administrators but also for students with special needs, who under the new policy were increasingly at risk of being excluded. Daniel views policy documents as both text and discourse, an analysis not dissimilar to that of Nichols and Griffith (2009), who view policy documents as active texts. Nichols and Griffith's research examines the intersection between people's talk and texts, through a series of interviews and textual analysis exploring the "moments when people's talk meets provincial policy text" (Nichols and Griffith, 2009:241). Both of these IE studies show how policy documents coordinate the work activities of people in and around organizations. The policy and other documents that these researchers explore have the ability to coordinate people's activity across time and space, and so have an objectifying impact on front-line workers and also those people like patients and school students on the borders of organisations. I am interested in this because their work specifically deals with education policy, and although my work examines policies in higher education in South Africa, where such policy is seen as a key driver of change, their research provides something of a road-map for how policies can be investigated within an IE framework.

The studies discussed above show how IE has been used by a range of researchers. They focus neither exclusively on individual experiences, nor wholly on an institution or organisation. The emphasis is rather on mapping the social relations that organise people's daily/nightly activities in ways that may not be immediately apparent to them, and through this local or micro and the macro of an organisation, its texts and the extra-local meet. The analytical goal of IE is to "develop a detailed, descriptive analysis of some portion of the institutional relations that have been identified as consequential, in order to show how these institutional processes are organised and how they shape the ground of people's everyday experiences" (McCoy, 2006:123). Smith also recognises the broad application and disparate uses of IE and comments that "practitioners engaged in different areas are confronted with different research exigencies; different research strategies are evolved as researchers work through the engagement of their own research inclinations and people differ

greatly in terms of what interests them...” (Smith, 2006:2). The defining feature of IE and what links the studies discussed here is that the researcher has to be ever-cognisant that the social “can only be discovered among actual people and the ongoing activity” (Smith, 2006:2). Few institutional ethnographies look alike. What will be common, however, is the recognition that the social is consistently in motion and researchers are part of that process: we cannot stand outside it or remove ourselves from it. My own research shares this understanding.

I use IE to explore the relations of ruling that organise equity in South African higher education. My research examines how inequality is organised in this context and includes examining the institutional processes that coordinate the work practices of people at various higher education sites. On one hand, there is the “distinctive configuration of everyday problems and working solutions” that various people put together, and on the other hand there are the institutionalised practices of the universities “organised by legislation, administrative regulations and practices” (Smith, 2005:168). I am particularly interested in the configuration (type of social organisation) of people’s everyday activities and actualities in relation to how they connect into the trans-local, and the role of institutional texts in this; and these concerns are an important aspect of IE research generally. The main questions that follow are, how are these social relations organised? More specifically, how is equity organised in South African higher education? I address these questions in an IE framework by means of case studies which explore the specifics of how equity organisation is coordinated. In the following section I introduce case studies and my use of them in an Institutional Ethnography framework.

I operationalise IE through the use of those case studies of the social organisation of the relations of equity in South African higher education, exploring both the basic tenants of case study research and those of IE have guided and shaped my approach. George and Bennett define case study methods as including “both within-case analysis of single cases and comparisons of a small number of cases” (George & Bennett, 2004:18). My discussion of case studies focuses on the extent to which this methodology fits into the broader methodology of inquiry informing my research, an

IE project. There are several debates regarding the merits and demerits of case study research, ranging from its application and its place in both qualitative and quantitative research, to the bigger issues which surround its status as a scientific method (Flyvbjerg, 2006). The misgivings and misunderstanding of the issues around case study theory, reliability and validity, while important, will not be discussed in any length here, largely because they are issues that concern a scientific paradigm which I do not draw from in my research, with case study being more a method or research strategy for me than an approach, perspective or framework.

Case studies are used as a research strategy “when *how* or *why* questions are posed, when there is little control over events and when the focus is on contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context” (Yin, 1994:1). Yin argues that case study method is used when researchers “deliberately want to cover contextual conditions—believing that they might be highly pertinent to your phenomenon of study” (Yin, 1994:13). They can be helpfully used to provide exploration, description, to test theory or to generate theory (Eisenhardt, 1989; Edwards, 1998; Voss et al, 2002). According to Edwards (1998), when cases are used to do “descriptive work” there is less of a burden of theory, as compared to using them to produce theoretical-heuristic and theory-testing work. The primary goal of case based research has been seen by some as to develop or to extend theory (Ragin, 1987; Eisenhardt, 1989; Yin, 1994; Stake, 1995; Edwards, 1998; George & Bennett, 2004). Contra this, the main aim of IE, which frames my research, is to discover and to explain social organisation and “its program is one of inquiry and discovery” (Smith, 2005:36) and the avoidance of being theory-driven. However, studies can also be explorative, explanatory or descriptive in nature (Yin, 1994) and they often combine several methods, interviews, observation, archives or questionnaires (Eisenhardt, 1989) in focusing on a particular case, which is more consistent with the practices and aims of IE.

In this sense, then, case study research design is helpful for achieving “more complex and fuller explanations (or description) of phenomenon” (de Vaus, 2001: 221) and can be used in a way which is compatible with the aims of IE research.

Case studies that test theory and those aimed at developing theory are differentiated by the extent to which theory is involved at the onset of the research. In theory testing research, the researcher(s) begin(s) with a theory which is subsequently applied to a specific context. Theory building research, however, begins with a research question and a proposition, but ends up with more specific theory or a set of propositions once real cases have been examined and analysed. The role of theory, then, is an important one in the discussion of case studies. While other writers stress the importance of theory prior to data collection of in study research, Edwards (1998) instead places emphasis on the role of theory only when case-based research is designed to do ‘theoretical-heuristic’ work and ‘theory-building’ work. He identifies what he calls the “descriptive” work of case-based research, which describes research in which the phenomenon investigated is new or under-researched. Although my broad research topic of inequality in higher education is by no means novel, my IE and intersectional approach to the field and the context is not widely used in this area of research.

My research then fits the category of “exploratory-descriptive” work, in which “a relatively unknown phenomenon is examined and investigated on its own terms in ... (an) open minded manner” (Edwards, 1998:45). This is what Eckstein (1975) referred to as configurative-idiographic, commenting that it is “idiographic because the goal is not to generalize to other cases or to develop theory...and configurative in that the researcher strives to achieve an organized and coherent presentation of the phenomenon” (Edwards, 1998:45). The main project of IE is to discover and describe the coordination of activities and processes of people’s everyday lives and how these are hooked into broader social relations and relations of ruling, and the connection with Edwards’ comments is clear: my research, and IE more widely, does not generalise away from the case but rather teases out their extra-local dimensions; and it also strives to present across the chapters following, a coherent argument about the phenomenon investigated, that is, the social organisation of equity matters in South African higher education.

Smith states categorically that IE is *not* about theory testing (Smith, 2002). Campbell (1998) adds that IE is not about testing hypotheses either. This places IE in an interesting place in relation to theory, particularly when employing a research strategy such as case studies, which in the literature are seen as closely connected with theorising. IE eschews research that is driven by or grounded in theory, however, as a method of inquiry it is by no means atheoretical, neither in its character nor in its goals. IE is located in a theoretical framework that is called the social organisation of knowledge, and which starts from the premise that “knowledge cannot exist independently of knowers” (Daniel, 2005:767). Even descriptive case studies have a theoretical element. Theory helps the researcher to select and to organise what it is being described, but this need not be prescriptive, and “concepts such as social relations and social organization have no corresponding reality as such. What is to be discovered is essentially in motion; concepts such as these freeze for inspection and analysis, dimensions of the complexly coordinated and historically embedded doings of people but must not be treated as if they refer to objects out there” (Smith, 2006b:2). The role of theory in IE, then, is to shine a light on and to help capture a moment in what is essentially an ongoing social process.

Edwards (1998) argues that even case-based research that does descriptive work cannot be completely separated from theory-development. While it is true that almost all social scientific research is conducted with the aim of building theory (in the hard or soft sense of the word), it would be more accurate to say that the aim of my own research is more to do with the production of knowledge than theory per se. Yin (1994) stresses the importance of the design of case study research and asserts that the role of theory development “prior to the conduct of any data collection, is one point of difference between case studies and related methods” (Yin, 1994:24). However he notes that he is not referring to ‘grand theory’ but rather that the goal is to “have a sufficient blueprint” for a study, which “requires theoretical propositions” (Yin, 1994:28). This echoes the distinction made by Flyvbjerg (2006) and others about so-called ‘hard theory’, which comprises explanation and prediction, and so-called ‘soft theory’, which involves testing propositions or hypotheses.

However, even this slightly watered-down approach to theory goes against the grain of my main method of inquiry, IE. Yin (1994) does recognize, however, that not all research topics will have an expansive theory base from which conceptual frameworks and hypotheses can be drawn, and in this case research will assume an exploratory characteristic. Usefully, he suggests that such a study must “be preceded by statements about (a) what is to be explored, (b) the purpose of the exploration and (c) the criteria by which the exploration will be judged successful” (Yin, 1994:29). Adopting Yin’s (1994) three point blueprint in my research, I am using the idea or theory of social organisation, which organises the way that I approach my investigation of the social world, together with ideas about relations of ruling which organise social action, and also discovery concerns regarding the everyday world articulated by Smith and others working in an IE framework.

Not all writers on case studies are preoccupied with the importance of theory, however. Eisenhardt (1989) argues that, when theory building is a research aim, the study needs to begin as far away from theory as possible. Though she acknowledges that this can be challenging, she points out that “preordained theoretical perspectives or propositions may bias and limit the findings” (Eisenhardt, 1989:536). Although my own research begins without a set theory in mind, this is due more to the method of inquiry that frames my study, IE, rather than to avoid potential bias. As a research strategy IE sets itself apart from mainstream sociology by resisting a priori conceptual frameworks which Smith (2005) argues constrain the discipline. According to IE, the concertedness of people’s doings and activities are negated in research that is lead by theory. Rather than being constrained and led by theory from the outset, by beginning its inquiry at the local actualities of the everyday world, IE is able, with “each step of investigation to learn more from those involved of how their everyday work...(and) brings into being the institutional processes that are the focus of the investigation...Each next step builds from what has been discovered and invades more extended dimensions of the institutional regime” (Smith, 2005:35).

My research begins with people’s experiences and accepts that when “actors and actions are theorized, both are abstracted from the ongoing historical process of the

moment and what people are doing and bringing into being, and both are resituated in a discourse fully under sociological control” (Smith, 2005:53). Strong concepts and theories in sociology and other disciplines reify the social and miss the ongoing concertedness of the social world. For IE, the social is always happening, always unfolding and in motion, and never fixed or static (Smith, 2005:66). This is contrary to mainstream Sociology’s preoccupation with order, patterns and with concepts that “reify the social as distinct states or determinants” (Smith, 2005:64). Understanding how inequality happens, how it is organized, in South African higher education institutions requires research in the field which is not governed by theory, sociological or otherwise. Thus the choices I have made regarding research strategy.

Stake (1995) argues that the primary criterion for case selection should be to maximize what can be learnt. Although my sample of universities was purposively selected, this it was not governed by theory, but was an ‘information oriented’ case selection in which ‘maximum variation’ was the object. The purpose of this type of selection is to “obtain information about the significance of various circumstances for case processes and outcomes” (Flyvbjerg, 2006:230) and it is suited for studying a broad range of subjects (Marshall, 1996). In purposive sampling, cases are selected because of some particular characteristic. In contrast, Patton (1990, 2002) describes Maximum Variation sampling as the purposeful “picking (of) a wide range of variation on dimensions of interest... documents unique or diverse variations that have emerged in adapting to different conditions. It identifies important common patterns that cut across variations” (Patton, 1990:172).

Stake (1995) proposes the use of a practical and ad hoc approach, in which “we need to pick cases which are easy to get to and hospitable to our inquiry, perhaps for which a prospective informant can be identified and with actors willing to comment...” (Stake, 1995: 4). While my own case selection was not quite that haphazard, it was not informed by theory or by previous literature, but rather on the maximum variation principle that there may be important differences in the way a number of universities address and experience equity issues. I will briefly introduce the cases selected below before discussing them in greater detail later in the chapter.

I have selected three South African universities through which to explore the social organisation of gender equity and the ruling relations governing this. The University of Kwa-Zulu Natal provides a retrospective case study, which allows the collection of data on past events, in this instance the merger over time of a number of higher education institutions (Voss et al, 2002). The University of Pretoria and the University of Cape Town are two historically white universities and have been selected because during Apartheid the former was considered conservative or even retrograde, while the latter was seen as liberal. Recognising these historical and managerial differences and how they play out in the everyday context maximize what might be learnt about management equality issues in South African higher education. My research was accordingly conducted in these three sites as three linked case studies.

Each of the three universities whose equity organisation I have researched has a different institutional history and place in higher education in South Africa, and they have taken different approaches to addressing the demand for institutional transformation, with their organisational change led from and focused on different levels. The cases of the University of Cape Town (UCT) and University of Pretoria enable me to make cross-sectional comparisons of institutions that have historically been located in 'separate but different' in higher education during the apartheid period (approximately 1948-1994). Although both of these universities were predominantly for white students, the University of Pretoria was an exclusively white and Afrikaans-medium institution, while UCT was primarily white with English-language teaching but also consistently enrolled a small number of Coloured, Indian and African students. During apartheid, the University of Natal was a multi-campus institution, with sites in Pietermaritzburg and Durban which primarily served white students, while the University of Durban-Westville was established in the 1960s for Indian students. Both Pietermaritzburg and Durban universities, though to varying degrees, were active in the struggle against apartheid. These universities were merged in 2004 as part of a broader state-led initiative towards educational reform, with Durban-Westville having earlier been merged with Durban. The institution now known as the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal consequently enables me to

retrospectively explore an institution that has already undergone major changes because of mergers, a specific 'event' and a set of processes around which to examine the organisation of equity policies and practices and the aftermath of merger on these.

For IE, sampling is not about representability or generalisability to the population that a case represents, but involves "sampling an institutional process rather than a population" (Smith, 2002:26), and so is made on the basis of the perspective from which the researcher wants to explore an institution. My research seeks to explore the interface between inequity as it is experienced and interacted with at the local level, and how it is formulated and managed at the higher levels of the universities, and indeed beyond this at State level. My own research standpoint however is at the local level, so that the articulation of upper management and various other positions does not form a different standpoint but rather "provide a different perspective of major themes that have emerged from interviews with those who make up what we might call the standpoint sample" (Smith, 2002:26).

My unit of analysis involves the organizational and institutional relations that operate to organise people's lives and experiences. As de Vaus comments, when using multiple case studies the researcher should "endeavour to treat each case as a single case so that we are able to establish a full account of that case before engaging in cross-case comparisons. The unity of the single case should be respected" (de Vaus, 2001). The three universities which are my cases are viewed as whole units, while my analysis also goes beyond the parameters of these. While my main unit of analysis is at the organisational level, my inquiry begins with the local and experiential level. However, IE is not concerned with "discovery and presentation of the subjective understanding (of informants)" per se (Campbell & Gregor, 2002:52). The experiential level is only important to the extent to which it can help to explicate the relations of ruling that organize and coordinate people's actualities: how is the extra-local constituted and ruling relations enacted?

All three case studies were undertaken in two stages, firstly, for entry level data collection and secondly, for second level data collection. The first level included interviews and observation, and as DeVault and McCoy emphasise, when interviews are used in IE research, this is not to “reveal subjective states, but to locate and trace the points of connection among individuals working in different parts of institutional complexes of activity” (DeVault & McCoy, 2006:18). The second level included documentary analysis and interviews with people directly involved with policy formulation and administration. The research also had a sequential design, with the case studies following one another, rather than being conducted simultaneously: Kwa-Zulu, then Pretoria, then UCT. The advantage of the sequential approach for me was that one case can and in my research certainly did throw up ideas that can be used in subsequent cases (de Vaus, 2001:227).

In IE research, interviewing is understood as existing on a continuum (Smith, 2006a), ranging from very formal to very informal. At one end, there are formal interviews where appointments have been made, and at the other end of the spectrum a researcher can find themselves “talking to” someone during field observation, as such a person goes about their daily activities. Informal talks or interviews can be later combined with formal ones as the research unfolds, where the researcher can inquire concerning questions and topic that arose during the informal talks. This broad conception of interviewing characterises my research, in which I took advantage of such impromptu situations and opportunities that arose both in and outside my field research, as well as carrying out formal “scripted” interviews.

The three case studies include interviews with what Smith (2006) refers to as frontline workers, such as teachers, trainers, and other office personnel, people who she argues are pivotal because they make the linkages between “clients and ruling discourses” (DeVault & McCoy, 2006:27). There are some challenges with working with frontline workers, however. Often these people will be trained and accustomed to operating within and speaking in terms of the ruling discourse. The onus in such circumstances is on the researcher to move discussion beyond the institutional language to explicate what actually happens in a particular setting.

Both internal (Ndebele, 2007) and external audits (CHE, 2008a) have suggested that South African higher education institutions have responded differently to the transformation imperatives articulated in the *National Higher Education Plan* (DoE, 2001), and the *White Paper on Higher Education* (DoE, 1997a). My research explores such responses ‘on the ground’ in a number of universities, so as to take into account the impact of different histories, and different organisational structures, as well as the specifics of interaction between different sets of people. My case studies have been carried out in a particular order, for research design and analytical reasons. The most contained and the first I conducted is the Kwa-Zulu Natal case study, focused on an organisational ‘event’ - the 2004 merger - and the processes by which this was responded to at institutional, cross-institutional, departmental, staff and student levels, and also by partners in schools because my focus is the education department. The Pretoria case study is more open-ended, involves a greater extent of participant observation, and it focuses on departmental and student levels of how ‘policy in practice’ on equality matters are enacted and experienced using the Sociology department as a locus. The UCT case study is also open-ended and explores the interface between high level equality structures in the university and the role of faculty-level management, including around practices in response to equality policies in a teaching and also a non-teaching ‘service’ department (as I discuss later, for confidentiality reasons, I am unable to name these). While I use the term open-ended to describe my interview approach, this is perhaps better described as unstructured interviewing. It has involved a combination of impromptu, informal interviews and planned interviews based on observations and earlier interviews. While other institutional ethnographers call their interview technique open-ended, this can give the impression of a boundary-less inquiry and process. The reality of my own research has been rather different and it has taken place within specific time limits as well as particular institutions.

University of Kwa-Zulu Natal

The University of Kwa-Zulu Natal case study concerns the 2004 merger and how equality issues were dealt with during and following that context. My focus lies not in the merger per se, but rather on how gender and racial equity matters were

managed in the context of the merger and after. Using an IE approach, I explore how racial equity was achieved or negated through every-day organisational practices and processes, focusing on the relatively local level, rather than the State level of a government department or the higher management levels of the university involved, although these are taken account of. And so rather than focusing on the higher level of policy formation, this case study examines locally emergent issues in an externally imposed merger, exploring how the process of change was managed and focusing on equity issues in this context.

The core question for this case study concerns how organisational change, sanctioned at the State level, and then implemented and managed at organisational level, was experienced and actually put into practice at the local levels of the university. It investigates the effects and experiences of a government orchestrated top/down equality measure, the reverberations of which are still felt today. The research proceeds from the base and perspective of the Education Department at the Pietermaritzburg campus. The Education Department is particularly interesting because the current acting Deputy Dean of the School of Education and Development was actively involved in managing the merger at departmental level. In addition to the Education Department, the roles of the ANC, Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and the teachers union in the management of organisation change are also explored. The Department is involved in teacher-training, with this training bringing together schools and trades unions, and so this case study enables the role and responses of these partner bodies both to the merger and to equity issues more widely to be considered. The consequences of the merger are still playing out a decade on, concerning the competing interests of the government, school system and unions, another point of interest for my research.

The research for this case study engaged with people at different levels of the organisation in order to obtain ‘with hindsight’ accounts from different viewpoints regarding the merger as it related to the achievement of gender and racial equity. Data collection on the Pietermaritzburg and Edgewood campuses involved interviews, but also documentary analysis of important texts, something kept firmly

in view because the ruling relations I am inquiring about were set up by documents/texts occurring at different levels of the organisation but put into practice and experienced by front-line workers in many locations of the university. The key components of this case study are:

1. An interview with the current acting Deputy Dean of the School of Education and Development, who played a pivotal role in the merging of the two Education Departments at Pietermaritzburg and Durban.
2. Interviews with nine department members, two of whom were Heads of School from each campus who were on staff at the time of the merger, to explore their reflections on the merger and subsequently.
3. The documents analysed included:
 - I. Higher Education Act (1998)
 - II. Employment Equity Act (1998)
 - III. White Paper on Transformation of Higher Education (1997)
 - IV. UKZN EE Policy (2004, revised 2009)
 - V. Faculty of Education Equity Plan (2006-2010 & 2010-2012)
 - VI. Recruitment and Selection Policy (2009)
 - VII. Recruitment and Selection Guidelines (2009)
 - VIII. UKZN Merger Document (2007)

University of Cape Town

The second case study, the University of Cape Town (UCT), is somewhat unique in that it has had transformation led from the top, with a recent history of appointing Vice-Chancellors with a mission to drive organisational change. UCT historically espoused open-access to all South Africans. However, like other liberal universities, it was subject to the pressures of Apartheid government policies, notably the 1959 Extension University Act which segregated the country's universities along racial and ethnic lines. Returning to its liberal roots in the last decade and half, the UCT

campus today is much transformed, although notably more so at student than at staff level.

The changes promoted by successive UCT Vice-Chancellors have been filtered through various key policies and documents. This case study investigates how these documents have been mediated and re-articulated through the university's policy-making and implementation channels, and explores issues that are emergent in the most recent Vice-Chancellorship, which have surfaced at the local level and interface with policy-making levels of the university. The research examines how racial and gender equity is managed in two different kinds of departments, with a focus on how documents are produced, circulated and responded to in those contexts. To accomplish this, one academic department, and one non-academic department, are the focal points around which I explore the management and use of various equity documents. This includes focusing on how 'big' equity documents, those generated at the higher levels of the university, have been translated and implemented through the academic structure, and "each textual step is the basis on which the next step is taken" (Smith, 2002:35). In addition, documents at different levels of the organisation are examined regarding how these are mediated, understood and used by people within the two departments. As with the other case studies, the documents and texts analysed include glossy policy documents and working papers at faculty or departmental level. The components of the case study are as follows:

1. Interviews with a senior HR manager, as they will have intimate knowledge of not only the equity measures and policies at local departmental level and at the higher university level, but also the practical structures impeding or aiding such policies.
2. I interviewed the dean of the academic-department, a manager of a non-academic department and a senior member of academic staff who sat on the selection committee of another non-academic department, around how equity measures are understood and articulated at that level, not least because of its impact on the departmental level.

3. Interviews with three members of the Institutional Forum. This has responsibilities including advising the Council regarding the formulation of race and gender equity policies and concerning the management of cultural diversity on the university campus. The focus is on exploring how the equity policies generated at this level of the university are expected to be understood and implemented, and the documents produced concerning these.

3. The UCT documents encountered and analysed are:

- I. Higher Education Act (1998)
- II. Employment Equity Act (1998)
- III. White Paper on Transformation of Higher Education (1997)
- IV. UCT Employment Equity Policy (2006)
- V. UCT Employment Equity Plan (2004-2007)
- VI. Departmental level Equity Plan
- VII. Students Admissions Policy (2008, 2011, 2012)
- VIII. Student Equity Policy (2004)

University of Pretoria

Lastly, the University of Pretoria is one of six historically white Afrikaans-medium universities in South Africa. During Apartheid, all the Afrikaans-medium universities at that time saw themselves as “creatures of the state” and “took their chief function to be that of acting in the service of government” (Bunting, 2006a:40). This connection to the State and its agenda was evident throughout the entirety of these institutions (at least formally), from the executives and councils that gave strong support to the government, to the adoption of race-based education policies on higher education (Bunting, 2006a, 2006b, 2006c). The historically white-Afrikaans speaking institutions took what is often referred to as a “closed” and conservative approach to diversity and integration. However, amongst these the University of Pretoria, along with Potchefstroom, was viewed as “verkrampste”, that is, the most confined and conservative (Mabokela and King, 2001). It is this history of

conservatism together with the university's connection to the apartheid government along with the considerable transformations it has undergone recently that make the University of Pretoria an interesting case study.

Over the last two decades, the University of Pretoria has undertaken far-reaching changes, including a 1994 change of language policy which saw the institution return to its original 1920s and 30s bilingual status. Over this time, the university has also taken steps to become more multicultural and multiracial, in 2008 with this leading to a Council of Higher Education (CHE) audit report which commended the university on its dramatic and progressive shift in student demographics. The CHE report (2008a), however, also noted that the demographics at staff level had not changed significantly.

Within the University of Pretoria, the Sociology Department is of particular interest to me largely due to its historical direct involvement with the apartheid state. While it is true that Apartheid's thinkers and activists emerged from many academic backgrounds, the role that Pretoria sociologists historically played in the formulation of South Africa's racial apartheid is undeniable. One of the progenitors of apartheid, Hendrik Verwoed, was a sociologist by training, although not actively practicing as such after his political career took off (Lever 1981). Other prominent sociologists who fervently supported the apartheid state, Cronje and Rhodie, were both University of Pretoria professors and key figures in developing intellectual justifications and policies for apartheid. Support from sociologists at the University of Pretoria ranged from providing an ideological basis for apartheid to policies helping to guide decision-making by Ministers and government departments (Crothers, 1998). The history of Pretoria sociology is thrown into stark relief by the fact that in a post Second-World War context the discipline of sociology in most of the world was associated with left radicalism. In addition to these historical factors, the Sociology Department at Pretoria is an attractive case study because it has enthusiastically embraced change at a local level, and also because its members involve people who teach and research issues of race, gender and equality, and its students are thus already engaged with issues of equality and social change.

Based in the Sociology Department, this case study explores the daily organisation of gender and racial equity at the local level, with particular attention to the student experience. It draws on formal documents generated at organisational level, such as the university's mission statement and documents concerning other aspects of student experience, to inquire whether the vision of the documents corresponds to the student experience and to what extent, around ongoing and emergent issues regarding equity. While the direction and approach to equity in higher education institutions to a significant extent comes from the higher levels of a university's management, the Pretoria case study investigates what occurs at the local level, exploring these emergent issues as raised in the Sociology Department and by the student body. Its components are as follows:

1. Interviews with sociology students at both undergraduate and post-graduate levels concerning their experiences of change within the university at the level they experience it.
2. Interviews were also carried out informally with two members of academic staff who had both been at English-Medium universities prior to their appointments at the University of Pretoria, to obtain a sense of what issues around equity management they had observed as relative new-comers.
3. In addition, I analysed the following documents:
 - I. Higher Education Act (1998)
 - II. Employment Equity Act (1998)
 - III. White Paper on Transformation of Higher Education (1997)
 - IV. Sexual Harassment Policy (2008)
 - V. Policy on unfair discrimination on the basis of race (2008)
 - VI. Language Policy (2010)
 - VII. CHE University of Pretoria Audit (2008)

Conclusion

My research explores the interface between equity as it is experienced at the local level of students and staff, and how it is formulated at the higher levels of the universities I am researching. The institution of education and the organisations that constitute it are consequently explored from the standpoint of the local level. While upper management forms part of my analysis, I represent its standpoint in such a way that I “provide a different perspective on major themes that have emerged from interviews with those who make up what we might call the standpoint sample” (Smith, 2002:26), the front-line workers and the students. Institutional Ethnography frames the three case studies I have carried and is concerned with how things happen and how they are done in each context. They are presented and discussed in the chapters following, including broad similarities as well as divergences. The cases have been selected so as to illuminate different aspects of equity in a range of South African universities. Together, they provide purchase on understanding gender and racial equity policies in relation to the relations of ruling in South African higher education, through an account of the role that texts and documents have played in the local organisation of racial and gender equity as experienced and articulated by differently located people and structures at different levels within the three universities concerned.

Together the three case studies elucidate different aspects of race and gender equity within a higher education organisational context. The University of Pretoria case study explores the disjuncture between how equity is known experientially and how it is known from a ruling relations perspective. From this standpoint, I examine how equity policies are experienced locally at the student level and how such policies enter and shape their lives and work practices. The analysis here is situated at the place where texts and individuals meet, at the interface between ruling relations and people’s everyday actualities where equity work can be brought into view. The Pretoria case study examines the lines of fault, the places and spaces where “experiential knowledge bumps against the textual realities meant to manage it” (Nichols & Griffith, 2009:244). The standpoint from which I examine equity matters in the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal and the University of Cape Town is also at the

local level, and it proceeds from the perspective of the ruled. In these case studies, I interview front-line workers who were situated differently in the universities, ranging from junior lectures to Deans and Deputy Vice-Chancellor levels. The purpose here is to investigate how, despite their different institutional locations, academic staff and middle-managers get drawn into the same social relation. This standpoint organises the direction of my sociological gaze and provides a framework of analytical relevance. In all three cases, as an institutional ethnographer I take for granted that social relations are textually mediated and organised and my research investigates how front-line workers and students know, understand and relate to institutional documents of a range of kinds. Some important ideas discussed in this chapter are carried through and explored further in the chapters following. These concern the ontological and epistemological particularity of IE; experience as data; the text-reader-conversation; relations of ruling and the organisation of equity.

The epistemological and ontological specificity of IE has implications for my research. From the standpoint of IE, both researchers and also their subjects or participants are bearers of knowledge, contrary to more positivist or realist approaches to research that espouse objectivity and in so doing valorise the voice and viewpoint of the researcher. In my research, the participants are understood as “knowers” in their own right. This entails regarding my interviewees as experts in their own lives and their daily work. And importantly, in keeping with IE research, the knowledge of participants will not be subordinated to theory or manipulated to fit into it. Smith understands the social world as coming about through the concerting of people’s activities. While this ontology is not entirely unique to IE, Smith has certainly expand it through a number of means, including the concept of social relations, which refers to “the coordinating of people’s activities on a large scale, as this occurs in and across multiple sites, involving the activities of people who are not known to each other and who do not meet face-to-face” (DeVault & McCoy, 2006:17). My job, then, is to use the accounts of the respondents to identify the translocal social relations that organise the management of equity locally.

For institutional ethnographers, the social world is always coming into being through the concertedness of people's doings. In addition, it is composed by and yet not reducible to individuals. For example, organisations are brought about through the talk and actions of locally-situated people. Yet, this is not where the story ends, for there are other extra-local structuring factors that come into play. The extra-local can be extrapolated by beginning research at the local and experiential level and exploring out from this. This means that little has been taken for granted about the organisation of the universities researched, and the institutional phenomena described by the respondents and front-line workers I interviewed was seen partially as a result of the collective work of those located in the institutions, coupled with extra-local factors.

The IE investigation in my three cases begins its inquiry in the everyday/everynight lives of front-line workers and students, with the experiences and accounts of administrative, academic staff and students. However, rather than being analysed for the "truth" or the factual basis of these accounts, the more important task is to identify where and how "the institution" enters into and shapes people's daily/nightly lives, including by "noting the disjunctures between participants' experiential accounts of their work and the institutionally organized texts", while also exploring "the tension-riddled lines of fault where one's experiential knowledge bumps up against textual realities meant to manage it", regarding equity measure policies (Nichols and Griffith, 2009:244).

The idea of the text-reader-conversation illuminates the grounded nature of texts in organisations and their role in mediating and shaping local practices and processes. On this, Nichols and Griffith state that "texts... can only do so when they are taken up by people in their everyday work. Texts require someone who is able to actualise them as instruments for actions, and they move these (or consecutive texts) on to the next someone, somewhere, whose reading and action will continue the textually-mediated relation" (Nichols and Griffith, 2009:241). The role of the texts, then, is not understood as one that is imposing and all-powerful, thereby denying the agency of locally-situated people. Rather, the texts are activated by people and brought into the

social process. Consequently in my research, institutional texts and documents are examined, not in their own right, but for how they shape and influence the social organisation of equity in the three universities. Nichols and Griffith comment that “rarely do analyses investigate educational policy texts as they are activated by actual people going about their ordinary work” (Nichols and Griffith, 2009:244). My research endeavours to do just that. By investigating how the University of Pretoria sociology students, the staff at the University of Cape Town, and the staff, teachers and academic staff at the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal, engage with (read and talk about) equity texts, I directly access the social organisation of equality and inequality at local levels. Equity policy and its resultant texts at all levels of the organisation shape the daily activities of students, academic and ancillary staff and administrators. The case studies centrally involve the examination of texts - the legislation, regulations, policy directives, and standard paperwork documents - that organise the social practices and relations in the three institutional contexts concerned. These texts provide access to the social relations they organise, and consequently I pay particular attention to the text-reader conversation (Smith, 1990b), which is integral to how institutional discourses regulate people’s local activities.

Although my research takes the experiences of locally situated people as its entry point, this is not where the analysis remains. The analytical concern lies in investigating and explicating the extra-local relations of ruling that give rise to inequitable universities. Some aspects of this include the organisational or academic culture; institutional and State level policies; and dominant discourse of race, gender and equity. The investigation of how these extra-local factors come about and how they operate is essential to understanding the organisation of equity in each local context and to answering the question, ‘*how* does equity come to be organised in the way it is in three South African universities?’

Examining the organisation of equity in South African higher education has to include an understanding of how aspects of the inequity that was entrenched during apartheid remains in existence today. In addition, it is important to understand how the current management of equity at institutional and State level can exacerbate or

mitigate inequity. The organisation of equity, then, must be seen as a coordination of local and trans-local social relations that give rise to particular equity environments in each of the case study institutions.

In this chapter I have discussed a variety of IE studies, which address important features and areas of focus for my own research. The chapters following will explore policy and its impact on the social organisation of equity in South African higher education, the role of institutional and political discourse in shaping the social organisation of equity in the universities, and the textually-mediated nature of organisational knowledge in the universities.

Chapter 4

The Case Studies Introduced

This chapter provides an overarching introduction to the three substantive chapters that follow, in which my case studies are discussed and their data analysed in detail. In this chapter, I discuss some of the key national and institutional policies regarding equity in South African higher education, outline various important structural traits of South African universities, and provide a brief institutional overview of each of the case studies. UKZN is discussed more extensively than University of Pretoria and UCT because the background to the merger helps to put the current social relations of racial equity management into broader context more generally.

Dorothy Smith's Institutional Ethnography (IE) frames my research and its exploration of these institutions. This method of inquiry is based on an ontology that understands the social world as fluid and constantly unfolding through the coordinated activities of people in their everyday/every night actualities. Smith (2001) applies this same thinking to understanding organizations. Rather than accepting them as given or fixed, she understands organisations as being brought about through people's doings (Smith, 2001). In this approach, texts become essential to understanding organisations because of the role they play in standardising talk, accounts and the composing practices that results in what is identified as 'organisation'. Rather than suppressing the individual and local practices that in Smith's view constitute the organisation, the analysis of institutional texts in IE brings subjects (people) to the foreground by explicating how their activities are mediated and authorised by texts. Smith's approach to IE primarily focuses on the role of texts in mediating social relations, so the focus is not on the texts in and of themselves, but rather on institutional texts understood as coordinators of sequences of action. The connection between institutional texts is interlocking and in some instances hierarchical. Thus texts serve to regulate institutional activities and

processes, and when these are hierarchical this is known within IE as an intertextual hierarchy (Smith, 2006a:66). Although Smith recognises the interconnected and hierarchical nature of texts, her own work focuses less on the hierarchical aspects and more on how texts are interconnected in ways that cover all institutional eventualities. Smith's students and followers have expanded IE in various ways, one of which is in focusing on intertextual hierarchy. Other differences between Smith and her progenitors include them focusing on methods of data collection to include interviews and experience as data (DeVault & McCoy, 2006), observation (Diamond, 2006), and frontline organisational work (G. W. Smith et al, 2006).

The particular ontology and epistemology of IE positions subjects above objectified knowledge and organisations, with the embodied knowledge of my interviewees consequently taking primacy over the objectified knowledge presented by the organisations. At UKZN I interviewed members of the academic staff across a wide spectrum, ranging from a deputy Dean of the Faculty, a Head of one of the Schools, some senior lecturers, and a junior lecturer. At the University of Pretoria, I interviewed undergraduate and postgraduate students and two members of academic staff. And at the University of Cape Town (UCT), I interviewed members of senior management, middle management and non-academic department staff members. Overall, I interviewed people across a wide spectrum of staff and student locations in the three universities and through these I was made privy to different perspectives and vantage points and multiple experiences. I draw attention to the multiple standpoints reflected in the interviews, not to privilege some over others as some standpoint theorists are often seen to do but because it is important to see how people who are situated at different points and levels of an institution and having different standpoints are never-the-less drawn into the same social relations. In this sense, everyone is seen as occupying a valid subject position, and I use the term standpoint broadly to indicate people's shared location in relation to power. In addition, this concept has methodological implications for my research. Occupying a women's and people's standpoint perspective, as Smith does, means that this research begins from the local actualities of my informants' lives and it works outwards from this to

explicate the social relations organising their everyday world and the role of organisational texts in relation to this.

The concept of ruling relations is a central one for institutional ethnographers and their research. Ruling relations refers to the “specialised scientific, technical, and cultural discourses which operate through a wide variety of textual formats as constituents of the process of ruling” (P. R. Grahame, 1998:349). The term speaks to the visible and invisible social, political and economic factors operating and includes the institutional practices and structures that impact on people’s daily lives. Before I delve into an analysis of the three case studies, there are several critical points to outline and discuss that not only provide the context in which higher education exists in South Africa, but which also highlights some vital institutional information that ultimately shapes the management of equity matters in the three institutions examined.

The South African higher education system is currently constituted of 23 public higher education institutions: 11 universities, 6 comprehensive universities and 6 universities of technology. In addition, “as of January 2010, there were also 78 registered and 22 provisionally registered private higher education institutions” (CHE, 2010). My research has explored race and gender equity matters in three of the country’s public universities. The three institutions selected to explore my research question are the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal; the University of Pretoria and the University of Cape Town. Equity management in South African higher education occurs in the context of, and in response to, broader State goals, and includes various strategies and organising bodies to advise, audit and monitor the progress made. Some of these include the Council of Higher Education (CHE) and the Higher Education Quality Committee, which advise government about higher education matters based on research and institutional audits. In addition to these local conditions and priorities, the South African higher education system is influenced by global trends and discourse in the sector.

The 1994 ANC government developed a set of comprehensive policies accompanied by strategic plans, with the aim that these would be the main driver of change in South African higher education, as I discussed earlier in the thesis. Central to understanding the three institutions I have studied and their responses to the transformation mandate from the State is how the universities' view themselves, that is, the identity and culture of the institutions. Some of an organisation's key traits and characteristics are enshrined in its core texts, such as its vision and mission statements and its statutes. Consequently I will outline the vision, mission and goal (where available) of the three universities. The texts discussed below are important for another reason. One of the core assumptions of the social organisation of knowledge, which provides the conceptual framework for my IE research, is that organisations are textually-mediated. That is, what I observed and heard about in my research was mediated by text-based practices that coordinate the organization and its workings. This has two important implications for the research. Firstly, the experiences of my respondents, which form part of my data, are "organized through the text-based practices that coordinate it... practices built on their own textual realities" (Campbell, 2006:94). Secondly, it places texts (along with reported experience in people's accounts) at the heart of my analysis. Thus the vision and mission statements discussed in this chapter along with other texts form an important component of the analysis of these institutions, because as Campbell (2006) argues, a setting which is known through texts can seem different from that known only experientially.

As noted in previous chapters, equity debates, policy developments and implementation in South African higher education occurs within a legal framework developed by the post-apartheid government. To reiterate, the key State policies regarding transformation and redress in South African higher education are as follows:

- National Plan for Higher Education (2001)
- Education White Paper 3: A Program for the Transformation of Higher Education (1997)
- Higher Education Act 101 (1997)

These texts frame the local policy context of the whole higher education landscape as well as that of individual universities. In this chapter I will reintroduce the key features of the national policy texts above, as well as briefly discuss the local equity policy contexts of the three case studies. A fuller discussion of the interplay between the national and institutional policies and strategies will be presented in the chapters that follow.

In South Africa, the achievement of equity in the higher education system has centred on issues of redress. A distinction must be made between individual and institutional redress. While the two are connected, they involve different policies and institutional strategies. My research focuses on individual redress, which necessarily means discussing issues of enrolment and retention rates for students, and also employment and retention for university staff. Overall student enrolment rates have risen steadily from the 1990s to the 2000s. The proportion of overall enrolment almost doubled between 1990 and 2000, increasing from 32% to 60% (Cloete et al, 2004: 53). The proportion of Black students in higher education increased rapidly after open access was legislated. The percentage of Black students in total enrolment rose from 11% in 1993 to 52% in 2001 in historically Afrikaans-medium universities and from 38% in 1993 to 64% in 2001 in historically English-medium universities (Cloete et al, 2004:34).

Universities, like other large-scale organisations, operate according to rules and principles. They have their own structures and systems. Most universities are comprised of a management and governance structures made up of a senate, a council, and a legislature. I will briefly outline the role of each of these and some of the other supporting structures in order to frame how a university functions as a structural entity. This background information is important in understanding how various policies and agendas work themselves through each of the universities I am concerned with.

The Council governs the university and is subject to the Higher Education Act 101 (DoE,1997b) as well as the university's statutes. It is the highest decision-making

body of the public University. The composition of the Council includes: the Vice-Chancellor, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, members of the Senate, members selected by the Minister of Education, members of academic and non-academic staff, members of the Student Representative Council (SRC), members elected by Convocation, members elected by donors, and members from various industries and fields including law, finance, education etc. The composition and length of term of each of the Council members is spelled out in the Statute and Rules of each institution. In addition, the Council has the power to form Committees comprised of people in and out of the university to address various policy areas (UCT, University of Pretoria and UKN Statues). The duties of the Council I want to note here are those that relate to and can impact on equity issues at staff and student level. The functions of the Council are to appoint academic staff in consultation with the Senate, determine the universities language policy, after consultation with the Senate determine the admissions requirements and admissions policy for students. However, some research has suggested that the Council is not as hands-on as it ought to be, particularly around policy issues. Although the Council as a whole is not involved in the day-to-day management of the University, its bidding is done by the Vice-Chancellor, who in turn is accountable to it (DoE, 2008:103). The Soudien Report revealed from its numerous institutional visits that “the leadership role of council was limited, if not non-existent. Indeed, the overriding impression is of councils that have a prescribed vision, provide little or no leadership and strategic direction, and have weak management accountability measures in place” (DoE, 2008:104).

The Senate is responsible for academic governance of the university. It organises and controls the teaching, curricula, syllabuses, examinations and research of the university: “Senate consists of the Vice-Chancellor and Deputy Vice-Chancellors, the Deans and Deputy Deans of Faculties, the Heads of Departments, the professors, members of academic staff elected by the academic staff, members of the administrative and support staff elected by the administrative and support staff, members of the Council elected by Council, students and members of the Students' Representative Council (SRC) elected by the SRC” (UCT, 2010c). Although the number of representatives in each category may differ from institution to institution,

the Senate comprises these basic groups. Together, this group of people, sometimes working in conjunction with the Council, are responsible for a number of areas that concern both academic staff and students at the university. Some of their duties include the appointment of academic employees, determining the student admission policy as well as the specific entrance requirements of university programs (UCT, University of Pretoria and UKZN Statutes).

The Institutional Forum is responsible for advising the Council on equity issues and other human rights issues. All three of the universities in my research have an Institutional Forum that is made up of members elected by the Council, Senate and Vice-Chancellor. In addition, there are members elected by staff members through various staff bodies, and also members elected by the SRC. The members and alternate members of the Forum occupy the post for a term that ranges from one to three years (UCT, 2010c). The duties and responsibilities of the Institutional Forum are outlined in the Statute of the university. The Institutional Forum also elects three co-chairpersons, one from the members elected or appointed by the Council, the Senate and the Vice-Chancellor, one from the members elected by recognised staff bodies, and one from the members elected by the SRC (UCT, 2010c). The category of members comprising the Institutional Forum is mandated by the State and spelled out in the Higher Education Act 101 (DoE, 1997b). The number of people involved and how they are appointed to office is decided however at the institutional level and outlined in the Statute (DoE, 1997b).

University of Kwa-Zulu Natal

The 2001 National Plan for Higher Education outlined the goal of transforming the landscape of South African higher education, with mergers being seen as one of the key strategies for this. The mergers were to serve a dual role; firstly, to facilitate institutional redress and secondly, to aid in streamlining the sector as a whole, including making optimal use of facilities and minimising duplication, leading to a more efficient and effective higher education system. Mergers in South African higher education have been criticised as being part the neo-liberal turn in the country's leadership. However, social and institutional redress were, at least

partially, on the agenda at the time of the merger which produced UKZN. African students were a majority at the former University of Durban-Westville campus and the administrative and academic staff were Asian, while the University of Natal had a largely white student body and academic staff.

The UKZN merger was ostensibly driven by the State as with the others in the sector and was summarised as follows: “the University of Durban-Westville and the University of Natal should merge into one unitary institution with serious consideration given to the rationalisation of programme offerings across the three campuses” (DoE: 2002:6). However, Jansen (2003) and Schoole (2005) argue that this top-down and often linear understanding of mergers in this context is too limited. They put forward, instead, an approach that views mergers, their processes and resultant outcomes as a combination of governmental macro-political factors and institutional micro-politics. In their respective and case study based research on mergers in the higher education sector, Jansen (2003) and Schoole (2005) both argue that there is gap between merger policy and merger practice. Adopting what they call a contingency theory/approach, they dispute the commonly accepted assumption (by policy makers and merger theorists) that “policy implementation is a rational-technical process in which official policy (the formal intentions of government) is a mirror image of institutional practice (the ways in which institutions respond to change in relation to government intentions)” (Jansen, 2003:50). The contingency theory approach which Jansen offers “explains merger outcomes as the product of the complex interplay between governmental macro-politics and institutional micro-politics in transitional contexts” (Jansen, 2003:27). For both Jansen (2003) and Schoole (2005), existing merger theories are inadequate in explaining the merger processes and outcomes in the South African context. Schoole puts it this way; “contingency theory is not... about the formal arrangements for politics but the complex of political interaction-conflicts, contestations and compromises-that fuel and frustrate the trajectory of a merger” (Schoole, 2005:164). Although UKZN is not part of either of their studies, their research findings are none-the-less useful in thinking about the course and outcomes of the UKZN merger.

Two key features in particular draw me to Jansen (2003) and Setoole's (2005) approach. The first is that it addresses two separate yet related levels of analysis, which connect with IE as my research framework. The second is that it examines mergers in a transitional context, which for me captures the recognition that the social, including institutional, is moving and dynamic, something which is a key recognition of IE research.

Briefly returning to the macro-political context that shaped the UKZN mergers, as already noted, the newly democratic government in 1994 inherited a highly fractured and inefficient higher education system characterised by racial inequalities at both institutional and individual levels, a rural-urban discrepancy and massive resource disparities. Along with tasking itself with the goal of transforming the higher education landscape to make it more efficient, effective and equal, the State had external pressures on it as well. The global-economy of higher education was becoming increasingly information and technology driven and the country wanted to move in a similar direction. So, at the high policy level there was a dual logic for sanctioning mergers: "the logic of resolving the apartheid legacy in higher education, and the logic of incorporating the higher education system within the context of a competitive, globalising economy" (Jansen, 2003:32). Thus both redress and efficiency were addressed, though not equally, as Cloete et al (2004) have suggested.

In his research on mergers in South African higher education, Jansen (2003) argues that no greater equity was actually attained through the mergers. However, he fails to draw a distinction between institutional and individual redress. I would argue that individual redress may be difficult to pinpoint across the board, but that institutional redress has been achieved through various mergers, including that at UKZN. He goes on to point out, importantly, that "the motivation of government for pushing mergers in the first place had very little to do with equity, notwithstanding official claims and expectations" (Jansen, 2003:37), and there is a gap between higher-level policy and the implementations of mergers. Although equity was articulated as a goal at State level, this was not necessarily the focus or agenda at the institutional level.

The institutional micro-political context must also be considered. In his case study, which included the merging of technikon and university, university and university, and college and university, Jansen (2003) argues that the institutional micro-politics had as much to do with the merger processes and outcomes as the macro-political context did. For example, in an education college and university merger he discusses, some senior members of college staff and senior management were able to negotiate for professorships in the new configuration. Mergers, including those in higher education, often result in professional and emotional disruptions for the staff and management. These range from something like having to move offices to, in more extreme cases, the unceremonious termination of a career. The responses of staff have been understood by Jansen (2003) as constituting various forms of staff politics. Some of the micro-politics around the mergers were expressed through staff responses, and Jansen (2003) identifies three ways in which these were articulated: 1) corridor politics; 2) street politics; 3) and boardroom politics. In each of these, the site and style of protest and negotiation differed. In 'corridor politics', staff tended to express their grievances and concerns within the context of the institution, articulated through "strong feelings of betrayal and abuse", but these did not alter the tenor and outcome of the merger process. 'Street politics' were those concerns that were played out in the public arena, such as through public protests or through the use of media exposure. Even these public expressions of dissent did not stop the mergers, however, as the staff politics was subsumed under and overridden by the negotiations and compromises reached between the upper tier of the institutional leadership and governmental leadership. 'Boardroom politics' were those in which more private negotiations between smaller groups occurred and typically were led by the managers and leader of the respective institutions rather than campus-wide debates, and these yielded greater benefits for the staff.

The incorporation of the Edgewood College of Education into the former University of Natal can be called a subsumed integration. However, the merger between the former University of Durban Westville (UDW) and the former University of Natal was more of an equal partnership, and this is also referred to as a horizontal merger characterised by the merging of institutions that are both well-established, with

comparable physical assets and staff and student numbers. This type of merger is unlikely to lead to the dissolution of either institution, as both the former UDW and University of Natal were fully-fledged universities at the time of the merger, although with different statuses.

The merger between University of Natal and UDW occurred in 2004 and was mandated by the National Government of South Africa as part of its broader aims of social and institutional redress. Six main reasons were put forward to justify the merger. They are discussed here not to comment on the merits or demerits of the merger, nor to measure its success. Rather, the discussion of the main objectives of the merger and its outcome is aimed at providing a context in which the move towards equity in this merged institution has occurred. The six goals of the merger were as follows:

- 1) Overcoming the apartheid divide between a historically white and a historically Black institution
- 2) Promoting staff equity
- 3) Ensuring the effective and efficient use of resources through reducing overlap and duplication in academic programmes
- 4) Consolidating existing programmes to enable a wider range of academic programmes to be offered in response to regional and national personnel
- 5) Consolidating the deployment and use of academic personnel
- 6) Mitigating the effect of unnecessary competition

(Mogoba, 2007:6)

The first two goals indicate that the merger was, at least in part, designed to achieve both institutional and individual redress, a distinction that is important to make. Merging a historically white and historically Black institution ensured that the national goal of transforming the higher education landscape was met. In addition, the national imperative of promoting individual redress was captured in the goal of improving staff equity. The creation of a new institution involved the creation of a single vision, a single institutional mission, and the development of a new cooperate

identity. Relative to the other two case studies, the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal has a relatively new institutional vision and mission as this had to be formulated afresh when the merged institution came into being in 2001. The visions of two separate institutions, the UDW and the University of Natal, had to be considered and reformulated to form a single institutional vision. What follows below is an outline of the vision, mission and core values of the merged institution:

Vision: To be the premier university of African scholarship.

Mission: To be a truly South African university that is academically excellent, innovative in research, critically engaged with society and demographically representative, redressing the disadvantages, inequities and imbalances of the past.

Principles and core values: The University commits itself to the principles and values enshrined in the constitution of the Republic of South African and articulated in the preamble to the Higher Education Act of 1997 (as amended).

What is now known as the Education Department at the UKZN is a result of years of transformation, involving various incorporations and mergers. The current configuration has come about through various mini-mergers and absorptions. Today, the Education Faculty at the Kwa-Zulu Natal is spread between two campuses, the Edgewood campus, located in Pine Town in Durban, and a second campus, which is situated in Pietermaritzburg. The history of the Faculty of Education differs from other Faculties at the University and thus has interesting implications for how equity in and around the merger was implemented and experienced.

During apartheid, several Colleges of Education served the Natal province. Like most of South African higher education institutions, the Colleges were racially fragmented. Edgewood College served white students. In the post-apartheid context, the higher education system experienced radical changes, including absorptions, mergers and eradications. The key aim of these initiatives was to avoid duplication of services and programmes as well as to move toward having more racially representative campuses. Edgewood College did not escape the fate of many other such institutions. In 2001 Edgewood College was absorbed into the University of

Natal Education Department, which had education campuses at Howard Campus and in Pietermaritzburg. Initially all three campuses remained separate, but in 2003 all the Howard College staff were moved to the Edgewood campus. A year later, the University of Durban-Westville, a historically Black University, was merged with the University of Natal, a historically White University, to form a new institution called the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal. The merger of the two universities meant large-scale institutional transformation. One of the logistical decisions taken was that the Education Faculty would be located on two main campuses, so the staff and students of the education department of the former UDW were relocated to the Edgewood Campus after the merger, to form its current configuration.

My research aims to understand why some universities and contexts are more equitable than others and what kind of social organisation gives rise to social relations characterised by equity and inequity. My three case studies address these matters. The UKZN case study was aimed at exploring locally emergent equity issues in the context of a forced merger. It examines the implications of a State mandated institutional change and its impact on equity issues and how they were experienced by staff locally. Using an IE approach, I examine how race and gender equity are organised locally in the Faculty of Education.

The aim of this particular case study was to explore equity measures retrospectively in the context of a forced merger. In exploring this I conducted ten interviews with academic staff members at several levels of the Faculty of Education. I interviewed 1 a Deputy Dean, two Heads of School, two senior lecturers, four lecturers and one junior lecturer. This produced a spectrum of people ranging from middle management to the rank and file of academic staff. It was important to interview people from various positions and in different Schools within the Faculty, because of where they are institutionally located. That is, I wanted a reasonable cross-section because ruling relations shape up differently depending on where people are located. I interviewed six men; African, Indian and white as well as four women; African, Coloured, Indian and white. This demographic thematic mirrors that used in national and institutional texts and discussed in Chapter 1.

Participant Chart

	Women	Men
African	1	1
Coloured	1	0
Indian	1	2
White	1	3
Total	4	6

Table 1: UKZN Participants

In addition to these interviews, I analysed a range of equity and merger documents both within the organisation and out with it. The documents examined included the State-level equity documents and policies mentioned above, institutional merger documents, and also College, Faculty and School level equity plans, all of which will be discussed further in the chapter following.

University of Cape Town (UCT)

One of the oldest South African universities, the University of Cape Town, is a historically white university that fought vehemently for academic freedom during the years leading up to and during apartheid. The University asked the government for the right to admit a small number of Black students at a time when universities were divided along racial lines. Some attempts were also made by the University to hire Black academic staff, although this proved to be much more difficult as was evidenced by what has come to be known as the Mafeje Affair. This event involved the University Council being pressured by the apartheid government to revoke an academic appointment offer made to an African male scholar to the post of senior lecturer in the Department of Social Anthropology, in 1968. Today UCT, like all of South Africa's public institutions, has adopted a range of equity policies. The policies that will be discussed in this case study are those concerning both students and staff.

The appointment of Mamphela Ramphele as UCT Vice-Chancellor in 1997 began the trend of transformation-driven Vice-Chancellors at UCT. In his Installation Address (2000), her successor Njabulo Ndebele (2010) stressed the need for UCT to transform but spoke of this primarily in student terms, although efforts have been made to transform staff and management levels as well. Recently there has been a lot of activity under the administration of the current Vice-Chancellor, Dr Max Price, regarding the institutional and public debates on the Student Selection Policies and strategies at the University; and this debate will be returned to in a later chapter.

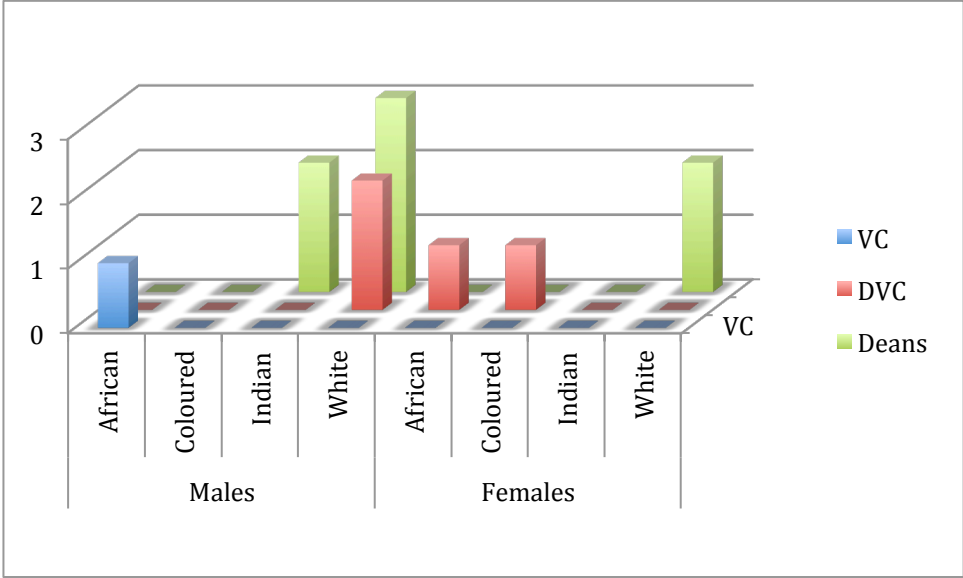


Figure 1: Staff Profiles of VC, DVC and Deans at UCT (2004)

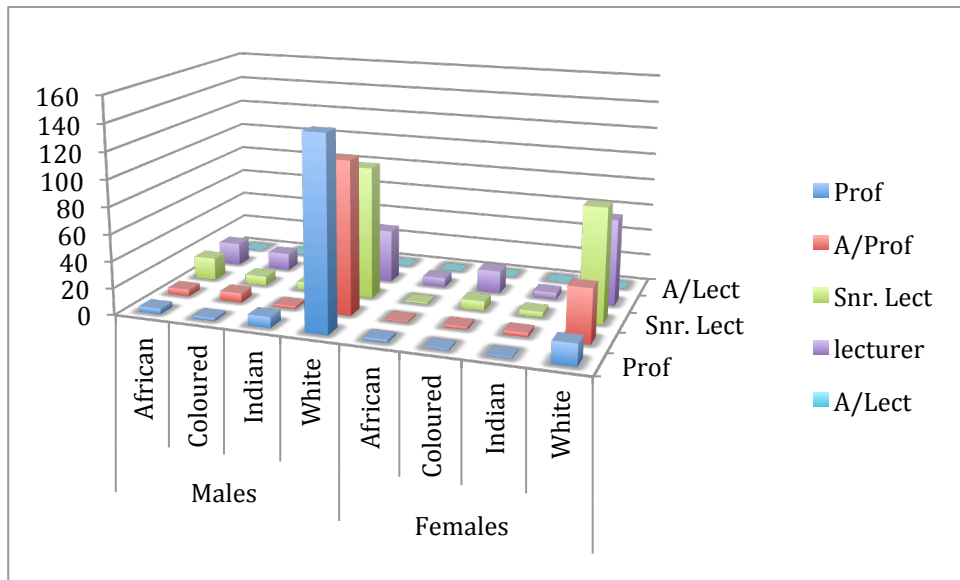


Figure 2: Staff Profiles of Academic Staff at UCT (2004)

The figures above are interesting because they display the gender and racial profiles of management and staff at UCT. They show that white men continue to be over-represented in middle and senior management and at academic staff level. Interestingly it is also apparent according to the data that white women are employed at a higher rate than women across all racial groups and more than African, Coloured and Indian men. The 2004 Employment Equity (EE) Plan at UCT reported that the institution was lagging behind in transforming its staff profile (UCT, 2004). Noting this in the 2004 UCT EE Report, a revision of the 1992 Employment Equity Policy was initiated in order to “accelerate the appointment and retention of a critical mass of Black, female and disabled staff” (UCT, 2004). In the same document, a key institutional principle is identified as “being able to ensure the development of a critical mass of Black staff, with an equitable representation of women and people with disabilities at all level” (UCT, 2004:7). However, four years later, former DVC Martin Hall echoed the points raised in the EE Report almost eight years earlier in describing the university as “only managing to meet the modest targets set in terms of the Employment Equity Act” (Anonymous, 2008). Hall argued that white people continued to be over-represented at staff level, occupying approximately 40% of the positions, which is far from being representative or reflective of the demographics of the country or province (Anonymous, 2008).

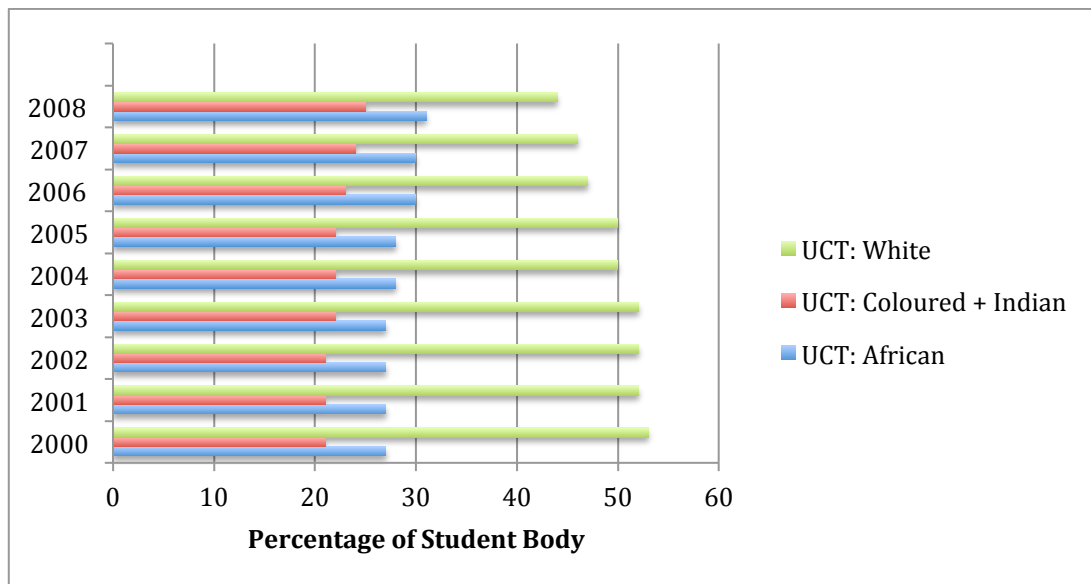


Figure 3: UCT Student Enrolments by Race (2000-2008)
(Source of data CHET 2010)

The figure above shows only a marginal increase in the numbers of Black, Coloured and Indian students took place at UCT over an eight year period. However, it is important to look beyond the numbers to develop a deeper understanding regarding transformation at University.

Today, UCT’s Mission Statement reads as follows:

“UCT aspires to become a premier academic meeting point between South Africa, the rest of Africa and the world. Taking advantage of expanding global networks and our distinct vantage point in Africa, we are committed through innovative research and scholarship, to grapple with the key issues of our natural and social worlds. We aim to produce graduates whose qualifications are internationally recognised and locally applicable, underpinned by values of engaged citizenship and social justice. UCT will promote diversity and transformation within our institution and beyond, including growing the next generation of academics” (UCT, 2012a: 1).

The last sentence is particularly important for my purposes. The aim of my UCT case study is to explore how texts work their way through the institution to shape social relations and relations of ruling that they do. In this case study, I interviewed a Deputy Vice-Chancellor; the Dean of an academic department; a head of transformation from a non-academic department; a manager of another academic

department and an HR manager. My data collection also included the documentary analyses of various institutional texts and policies pertaining to transformation and equity.

Participant Chart

	Women	Men
African	0	0
Coloured	1	1
Indian	1	0
White	1	1
Total	3	2

Table 2: UCT Participants

University of Pretoria

The aim of the University of Pretoria case study is to explore the relationship between students' experiences of equity matters and what the university's leadership say about equity at the institution. I interviewed ten sociology students, some undertaking undergraduate studies but most undertaking postgraduate studies, ranging from Honours to Masters. I interviewed both male and female students, and Black and white students. The white students were both South African while three of the Black students were foreign nationals. I also had two informal interviews with members of staff from two Departments in the Humanities faculty. In addition to interviews, my research included the documentary analysis of various equity and transformation texts both within and outwith the institution.

Participant Chart

	Women	Men
Black African	4	4
Indian	0	0
Coloured	0	0
White	2	0

Table 3: University of Pretoria Participants

I will now briefly outline some key institutional features of the University of Pretoria, including its vision, mission and student demographics.

Vision:

The university of Pretoria strives to be, among other things:

- A university with an inclusive and enabling value-driven organisational culture that provides an intellectual home for the rich diversity of South African academic talent; and
- The premier university in South Africa that acknowledges its prominent role in Africa, is a symbol of national aspiration and hope, reconciliation and pride, and is committed to discharging its social responsibilities.

(UP, 2011)

Mission:

The mission of the University of Pretoria is to be an internationally recognised South African teaching and research university and member of the international community of scholarly institutions that:

- enables students to become well-rounded, creative people, responsible, productive citizens and future leaders;
- is locally relevant through: its promotion of equity, access, equal opportunities, redress, transformation and diversity;
- creates an intellectually stimulating and culturally vibrant pleasant and safe environment in which its students and staff can flourish.

(UP, 2011)

The University of Pretoria is widely known to be the birthplace of apartheid, and it was there that Sociologists developed and promoted key ideas of the regime. Having once been a university that fiercely protected its right to prevent Black students from applying, today the University of Pretoria looks like a very different place. In 1995 the student demographics were: African, 16%, Coloured, 1%, Indian 1% and white 82% (CHE, 2004: 277). In 2001, the demographics were African, 47%, Coloured, 1%, Indian 3% and white 48% (CHE, 2004: 286). The Coloured and Indian figures reflect the demographics of the city so I will focus of the those for African and white students. While the increase in the African student body shows great promise, the numbers are inflated by distance learners. This means despite the numbers of Black students being relatively high, the impact is not fully felt on the main campus in Hatfield. Having said this, the transformation in the student demographics happened very quickly at the University given its conservative past, and in fact it has changed more dramatically with respect to numbers than other historically white liberal universities such as UCT. The historically white Afrikaans-medium universities and Technikons absorbed the major share of Black students when segregation was de-legalised. The figure below shows that in 2007 and 2008 African students outnumbered white students. At least some of the shift in demographics can be accounted for by the merger between a historically Black institution, Vista University (Mamelodi campus), with the University of Pretoria in 2004. The increase in the percentage of Black students is visible in the figure below, with a significant increase being seen between 2003-2004.

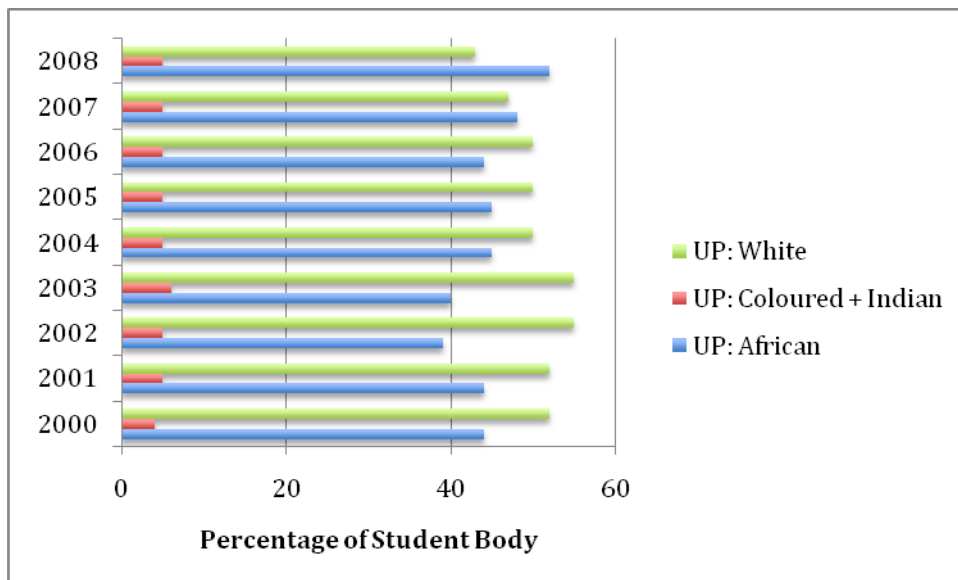


Figure 4: UP Student Enrolments by Race (2000-2008)
 (Source of data CHET 2010)

Despite the promising change in student demographics (as seen in figure 4), this has not necessarily translated to full inclusion or even tolerance. A study of integration at University Residence Halls at the University revealed some disturbing trends (Moguerane, 2007) as did the Soudien Report (DoE, 2008). Moguerane’s (2007) research exposed some entrenched cultural and racial barriers between white and Black students, which were often articulated in cultural terms by her respondents. Moguerance reports that an “Afrikaaner culture” dominated residences even, in those that were racially mixed (2007:52). The same year the CHE Institutional Audit commended the University for the “decisive manner with which it approached racial integration in the residences and on the commitment of the senior staff involved in the management of the residences to make this system a successful one” (CHE, 2007a:7).

In yet another account of race relations at UP, Jansen (2009), as the first Black Dean in the University, articulated the resistance to change he experienced from students and their parents, but also from his colleagues, including young Black academic staff. Despite this, great strides were made and observed by him during his time there. Jansen’s work is important because it shows the complexity of an institution trying to come to terms with its past, one looking to move forward in some ways, but

unwilling to do so in others. Later in the thesis, I shall discuss how students experienced the University of Pretoria campus as an equitable or inequitable space and how they made sense of the various institutional measures such as the Policy on Unfair Discrimination on the Basis of Race.

Conclusion

All three of the South African universities that form my case studies have publicly acknowledged the need to transform, and this has been expressed in various public external and internal texts, including policy, strategy, mission statements and institutional vision texts. Regarding each university, the chapters which follow discuss different areas of equity management and in particular how racial and gender equity matters become organized in the way they are in each institution. The accounts of the differently located respondents are used to direct analytical attention to the extra-local social relations of race and equity matters in the universities concerned, so as to illuminate and map the role of the State and its institutions, and also the dominant discourses of race and gender, in shaping and influencing the higher education landscape and its social organization of racial and gender equity. In the three case studies which now follow, the focus will be on how the everyday work lives of staff and students and the management of racial and gender equity are informed by factors out of people's immediate context and control but which they necessarily respond to, and which impact on them in profound ways.

Chapter 5

UKZN: Textually Mediated Realities

Introduction

In the previous chapter, I explained the purpose of my three case studies and how they work together to provide complementary views of the management of equity in South African higher education. In this chapter, I present and analyse data from the UKZN case study. The analytical imperative of IE, which frames this research, is to explore how things become coordinated as they are in a social setting or social event: in this case, how equity measures are as they are in these three South African universities. In addition to documentary analysis, I analyse interview material from various people at the UKZN. These people occupy different positions in the Faculty of Education, they belong to different racial groups and both men and women were interviewed. What is interesting is that despite their differences they are drawn in from disparate positions into the same social relations governed by ruling relations beyond their control. The interview data gathered in my research will not be the topic or object of interest per se, as they are in conventional ethnographies; rather they will be used as an entry point into the social relations of the Faculty of Education (Campbell, 1998). The approach I employ here is different from those that which espouses “the authority of experience” (Scott 1991:780) and in addition it challenges the notion that experience is a construction of sociological convention (Clough, 1993). Rather, experience is seen as data and the ground zero for analysis. It is only through this, or rather accounts of different kinds concerning it, that researchers can access the extra-local and therefore relations of ruling. Experience as accounted for provides an entry into the social relations of a setting and should not be seen in a limited way as a topic or an object of interest: “the idea is to tap into people’s expertise of their everyday lives, their ‘work’...” (Campbell, 2006:92). The local, which can be accessed through the experiential, leads to the uncovering of the extra-

local. Part of the work of explicating the extra-local from the experiences of my respondents as they accounted for them includes the analysis of various texts as these arise in the interviews. Along with interview data, this chapter therefore includes the analysis of various equity policy documents as well as observations made in the field. In my analysis of the interviews conducted as well as that of the documents examined, I have identified two key themes: 1) Textual realities, or, texts as constituents of social relations, regarding which I show how various texts operate at the institutional level shape and inform the social relations of equity management in the university; 2) The disjunctures that exist between institutional discourse and individual behaviours and experiences on equity matters. Under these two broad headings, I will discuss key examples that emerged from my data. The aim of this investigation is to provide an analysis of the social that is anchored in but not limited to people's everyday working knowledge of their lives. The chapter is organised around lengthy extracts from my interviews with academic staff, which illuminate the relationship between relations of ruling and institutional texts, after which I then present various analytical issues, some of which are also political. Before this, I provide background information about UKZN, focusing on the 2004 merger.

Background to the Merger

The South African government, as part of a larger project to consolidate and streamline the higher education landscape, and also to implement institutional redress, sanctioned mergers between institutions. This often meant the merging of historically Black and historically white institutions. Because these institutions often differed drastically in terms of demographics, resources (financial and human), management and governance styles, productivity (research output) and institutional goals and mission, the recommendation by the State to merge was in some cases met with resistance. In a number of instances this was so strong that the mergers failed to go ahead, as was the case with the proposed merger between Rhodes University (historically white) and Fort Hare University (historically Black) (the source of the opposition was that the VC of Rhodes University refused to merge with an institution with no Medical School, because that was what he thought Rhodes was lacking). Some proposed mergers were met with less resistance by the institutions in question.

There was, for instance, no widespread active or organised resistance to the merger between the University of Natal and the University of Durban-Westville. There were however rumblings about the logistics of the merger and its implications for staff location and movement. The Kwa-Zulu Natal merger was a large-scale one compared to other mergers that happened at the time. In some cases universities only had to pick up small bits of other institutions, be they universities, colleges or technikons.

The merger between the University of Natal and the University of Durban-Westville was strongly led from the top. The Vice Chancellor of UKZN (Mogoba) began in post with a strong merger and transformation agenda. That the merger was going to happen was not negotiable, it had been decided at the top level and people below had to fall in line. It is important to note that two things were happening. Firstly, the leadership of the university was interested in efficiency and in producing a large-scale university capable of being an international player; and secondly, the university had to carry forward the State's mandate of institutional redress. In addition to redress, there were other institutional goals, including increasing research output. The higher-level management of UKZN in 2007 described the University as a "research-led institution" (Mogoba, 2007:16). This was a few short years after the merger, and the University had recorded an 80% increase in publications recognised for subsidy (Mogoba, 2007). UKZN is one of five universities that together produce 60% of the research in South African higher education, and ranks it second in the country. The ultimate goal then was to create a strong academic university while simultaneously changing the demographics of the two old institutions. The discussion that follows presents some of my key themes, which focus on how race and gender equity were managed in a way that gave rise to a more or less equitable institution. The first theme to discuss is the textual nature of social relations.

Textual Realities

Mainstream sociology often presupposes what Smith (1990b) refers to as the inertia of texts. This is the view that texts somehow intrinsically exist on their own, as objects, separate from people and the social. Smith, however, argues that the

significance of texts lies in how they enter into the social relations of a place. Texts are understood as existing within a context, and they enter the social world through how they are taken up and interacted with by people. Texts are therefore seen as active and “the text itself is to be seen as organising a course of concerted social action” (Smith, 1990b:121). Equity management in South Africa depends on textual communication. This is evident in various policies drafted at State and institutional level. The discussion that follows uses two lengthy extracts through which to anchor my discussion of the textually-mediated nature of equity measures in the Education Faculty at UKZN.

Extract 1

“Well, the merger said that nobody was going to lose their jobs to start with ... and therefore equity in that sense, to mean that everyone was catered for... but then after the merger if there were going to be new academic appointments, obviously... then equity in terms of racial groupings creep in and this is quite conscious for equity issues ... for all academic appointments that are made ... for a long time every selection committee would have a person from the Equity Committee ... either from the faculty ... it's a bit lax now .. I think after some time people have now agreed that you don't necessarily need a EC person, whoever is in that selection committee must abide by those rules ... no longer the policing which originally was almost like the requirement that if you are going to employ somebody ... to start with ... before we even talk about what the candidates are ... is the selection committee itself ... for example ... you can't do a committee without women in there ... I suppose you can do without men... men are looked at as suspicious ...” (Participant A, lines 43-53).

Extract 2

“Look, we had developed institutional policies also in terms of the country itself we had to follow the country's regulations and rules governing equity redress so there is equity issues ... legal issues about that ... and institutions had to account to why they want to do it ... institutions set the target and the national policies will regulate the policies ... now translating that into practices you know in our adverts we would say that equity and redress is a major consideration and the way in which you now conduct your interviews and selections is also important ... because you can select out ... so the

way in which we engage with this is to say let us begin to understand what is the minimum requirements of the job ... interrogate that ... it is absolutely the minimum ... widen the pool ... in the process of selection ... in the interview for example ... you will find the person who is appointable ... it could be ten people and they could range in age and nationality ... then ask what does the equity plan suggest ... for this faculty ... for this university ... at the different levels ... in terms of the sciences this is what we need to promote ... we need more African female or we need more African males ... that will be your firstwhat does the faculty require ... and you work through that and what does the university require in terms of redress ... and then you say we have these ten people who are all appointable ... then we take the equity ... is there a person who meets a first helmet ... yes/no ... second helmet and so on ... and that's how we do it. It's amazing ... for example when we have a position and want to hire from a short list and interview and we didn't make an appointment and the individual passed ... so the selection committee feels that there should be another opportunity for selections ...” (Participant B ,lines 113-138)

These extracts are from interviews conducted with academic staff at UKZN's Faculty of Education. They involve two senior members of academic staff, both occupying positions that might be called middle management. The first extract is from Participant A, who is male and Head of School in the Faculty and has been at the institution for eight years. The second extract is taken from an interview with Participant B, a male Head of School who came from UDW and was appointed to the position. The positions these two informants occupy both as academic staff and as middle management tells the story from a particular vantage point/standpoint. While it is important to note that the working practices of all people in the institution are organised by texts, this happens differently at different levels. The first respondent was African and a foreign national (Participant A), and the other was South African and racially classified as Indian (Participant B). Participant A was part of Howard College until just before the merger happened. Howard College was absorbed into the former University of Natal, prior to the “big” merger. He had been at the Edgewood campus since 2003. Participant B was a former UDW staff member, until the merger in 2004.

These local details placed the two respondents at similar institutional standpoints although with different historical and institutional experiences. My discussions with

them centred on the management and implementation of equity measure during the time of the merger and after it. Also, these two extracts are distinctive in that they were conducted with academic staff who also occupied management positions, and as such they reflect institutional discourses in their talk and accounts. These accounts of the selection policies and appointment processes at UKZN are expressed from a particular location. Through exploring these multiple experiences or accounts, I illustrate how the same texts organise people at various points of the institution and how this may differ depending on the level at which they are located in the University. No text is completely determining and different people will experience their effects differently depending on their organisational level. However, the extracts are significant because they illustrate an area where people felt pressure to achieve equity in the institution. They also show the role that policies played in managing equity and how those impacted regarding a particular institutional process, that is, the selection of academic staff.

Part of my analytical goal in this chapter is to investigate and disclose how the activities of UKZN academic staff in engaging with hiring practices and broader debates of equity are articulated in relation to and coordinated by the social relations of the larger social and economic process. This is institutional redress and the transformation of the higher education landscape, including as expressed in various policy texts. In this context the 2004 merger can be understood as a fixed event that had splintering effects. One of these splinters or chards was a new drive towards redress, which played itself out in the employment policies and strategies of the University. Employment policies and practices were one of the key areas identified by all of my respondents as a site where equity debates played themselves out institutionally. Although the extracts above do not display this explicitly, one can deduce that there were different pre- and post-merger employment practices. Thus, the merger not only disrupted existing employment practices at the time it happened, but also affected all subsequent practices as well. These changes were textually-mediated, as evidenced in the second extract (Participant B), which points to the State and institutional texts that coordinated the shift in employment strategies.

Extracts 1, 2 and later Extracts 3 and 4, illustrate how equity matters have permeated the everyday lives of academic staff at UKZN. One of the areas in which this is apparent concerns the recruitment and selection of new staff as illustrated in the following response to a question about the importance of equity matters at UKZN: "... on the staff side it was and still is to try and get us to a profile that represents the demographics of the province in the country and there was attention to it and still attention to it how we are able to recruit and all those things there are policies around retrenchment and recruitment..." (Participant C, lines 150-154).

Smith (2005) argues that the contemporary world is distinguished by the extent to which texts mediate our everyday and everynight lives. The respondents in Extracts 1 and Extract 2 discuss how race and gender equity matters enter into their work at UKZN through the process of making academic appointments. The appointment process at UKZN is outlined in the Recruitment and Selection Policy, ratified by the University Council. The University is committed to the recruitment, selection and retention of high quality members of staff with appropriate expertise and experience who will strengthen its capability to achieve strategic and operational goals. This policy is guided by eight key principles. The three most relevant to this research are:

1. The University shall only appoint candidates who meet the minimum requirements and are deemed to be appointable by a duly constituted selection panel.
2. Recruitment and selection shall promote equity and diversity and shall be consistent with and give priority to the Faculty or Divisional Employment Equity Plans and the University Employment Equity Policy.
3. Appointable designated group candidates; South African citizens and permanent residents shall be granted preference for vacant posts at the University.
(UKZN, 2009a, 2009b)

Race and gender come to the forefront of the social organisation of staff appointments in two key ways. First, this governs the composition of the selection panels. Before the selection committee is even convened, there has to be somebody present from the employment equity committee (Participant A, line 47). This was

echoed by several other respondents: “I think there is an equity person in each faculty. Faculties have a business structure interview process and the equity person is part of that, to remind us of what we need to be keeping in mind always, even to appoint someone on a short six months contract. Checks are happening at various levels: school level, and faculty level. I'm in the school that still has a lot of whites, I think historically it has happened and it's taking long to change. That kind of practice seems to be comfortable... Equity is being engaged with sincerity but there are loopholes” (Participant D, lines 119-126). Another person said, “in our applications meetings we are asked to look at the different people and we have a person from HR and the person would say have you addressed equity” (Participant E, lines 343-344). Participant I further explains that “the school does the interviewing ... they set up these very elaborate numbers of people who have to be on a selection committee ... so you would have staff from the school but you would have somebody from the faculty ... so there is a whole range of people who sit on a committee ... and some would be people from that school into which people will come ... but my sense is they are working with other bigger university targets ... you can't hire that white woman because the university has too many ... although we might say that in fact in education we do not ... or whatever ... it's kind of a sense of trying to work between those things ... you have some autonomy but essentially ... I hear you have people from the college who would overrule ... DVC said NO” (64-72).

In addition to this, the selection committee itself has to be representative in terms of gender and race (Extract 1, lines 48-53), and people from various levels of the institution have to be present: “there is a selection committee for every post ... but of course... if we are going to select someone in the school then ... kind of ex-official head of school would have to be there” (Participant A, lines 56-57). Everything from the existence of a selection panel, to whom it comprises, is textually mediated and can be found in the Recruitment and Selection Policy:

“All selection decisions are made by a selection panel. Selection panels shall have a minimum of three members and a maximum of 12 members, with at least one member who is external to the faculty or division. Selection panels shall generally comprise at least fifty percent (50%) members from the designated groups (African, Indian,

Coloured, Women and Persons with disabilities). Selection panel members shall be chosen for the value that they could bring to the decision making process rather than sectoral or political representation. In the event that the selection panel is not race and gender representative, the Chair may co-opt up to a maximum of three further members. The Chair shall determine the composition of the selection panel within the following guidelines” (UKZN, 2009b)

In Extract 1, Participant A describes the requirement to have a representative from the equity committee present as a way of policing staff. Participant A (Extract 1, line 50-51) acknowledges the importance of institutional transformation, but how this gets achieved is open for debate, as will be exhibited later in Extracts 3 and Extract 4.

The second way in which race and gender enter the selection committees is through the social categories that come to organise and shape who the desired candidates are seen to be. Despite it being over a decade and a half after the end of Apartheid and a sustained commitment to a non-racial society being enshrined in the country’s Constitution, South Africa finds itself still grappling with racism and its effects, some of which is the legacy of the old regime. Post-Apartheid South Africa continues to be organised in racial terms. Many of the racial categories used during apartheid have been maintained and are now being used (administratively) to effect socio-economic transformation and to redress the inequalities of the past. In order to effect such changes, large-scale affirmative action measures have been legislated across all employment sectors and across all industries.

Extract 1 and Extract 2 demonstrate how equity, articulated in terms of race and gender, have become part of people’s consciousness and operation at work at the university (Participant A, lines 46-47). The ubiquity of race and gender as organising concepts is reflected in both institutional practices and institutional documents. In Extract 1, Participant A describes a standardised institutional process in talking about how new academic appointments are made. The institutional process of using selection committees in UKZN’s hiring practices is established and apparently unchallenged. Conflict arises through the introduction of an equity officer in the selection process (Participant A, lines 45-50). The presence of the selection

committees themselves is taken for granted as part of an objectified institutional order of the university. This is evident in the Recruitment and Selection Policy and supporting Guideline documents, with the statement “all selection decisions are made by a duly constituted selection panel” (UKZN, 2009a:10).

In Extract 2, Participant B (lines 113-117) points to the fact that the university, when developing equity policies and strategies, does so in the larger legal State framework for the transformation of higher education. Thus the Government and its transformation agenda is an important mediating factor in the social organisation of equity in South African higher education. What underlies and indeed frames the discussion that follows concerns the relationship between South African higher education and the State, a relation that is textually-mediated in nature. The post-apartheid government has viewed higher education not only as an object of reform but also as a key engine to produce reform (Jonathan, 2006: 4). The relationship between the State and higher education sector in the country is typically discussed in terms of State control versus State supervision/regulation (Moja and Cloete, 1996; Sayed, 2000), although it is sometimes referred to as cooperative governance and conditional autonomy (Hall & Symes, 2005).

Whatever the terminology, the relationships mentioned above denote either a situation where the government tightly controls what occurs in universities in a range of aspects, ranging from staff appointment to dictating the curriculum, or else a situation where universities are self-governing and make key administrative decisions themselves. The two forms of governance are often polarised in the academic literature, with the proponents of the former asserting that the State needs to steer or intervene in order to effect institutional transformation and the latter fearing that academic freedom and institutional autonomy are being eroded (Jansen, 2004). However, Moja and Cloete (1996) argue that governance need not be thought of in these dichotomous terms and propose instead that a hybrid model is preferable.

The nature of the relationship between South African higher education and the State has changed from the apartheid era to the current democratic state. During apartheid,

the government exercised a state-control model of governance, which reflected the apartheid ideology of Afrikaaner affirmative action and separate development (Moja & Cloete, 1996). After apartheid, a model of State-supervision was adopted. In the Education White Paper 3 (DoE, 1997a), the higher education system and its respective institutions are granted institutional autonomy but simultaneously bound to public accountability. This document defines institutional autonomy as “a high degree of self-regulation and administrative independence with respect to student admissions, curriculum, methods of teaching and assessment, research, establishment of academic regulations and the internal management of resources generated from private and public sources” (DoE, 1997a:1.24). It is further added, “such autonomy is a condition of effective self-government. However, there is no moral basis for using the principle of institutional autonomy as a pretext for resisting democratic change or in defence of mismanagement. Institutional autonomy is therefore inextricably linked to the demand of public accountability” (DoE, 1997a:1.24). Public autonomy means that institutions are “answerable for their actions and decisions not only to their own governing bodies and the institutional community but also to the broader society” (DoE, 1997a:1.24). In addition, they must demonstrate “how they have met national policy goals and priorities” (DoE, 1997a:1.24). One such priority is the promotion of equity. Although the essential relationship has remained the same, some argue that the policy developments and reforms since 1997 (for example, those enshrined in the National Plan for Higher Education (DoE, 2001)) have increasingly eroded the autonomy of the higher education sector.

The discussion regarding university academic appointments at UKZN has to be understood within the larger context of how the State governs the higher education sector. As mentioned above, individual universities are free to govern themselves as they see fit, provided that the equity measures and goals outlined in various government documents and policies are met. One such equity measure is the Employment Equity Act (DoL, 1998). The academic appointment process in this is defined and determined at the micro level of procedures and protocol by the university, but how these become organised is largely coordinated extra-locally. The ruling relations of the South African higher education governance result in a situation

where the local actualities of how university employees go about their daily work are in fact coordinated outside their immediate context.

Before I discuss the appointment process in more detail, it is important to highlight the importance of texts in the daily operation of UKZN and more specifically the role they play in mediating equity matters throughout the institution. At each level of the university, various texts come into operation to organise and coordinate people's actions. The diagram below illustrates the relevant documents at each level, but also shows that such texts are not isolated but linked to and informed by higher order texts, including what I shall discuss later as 'boss-texts'.

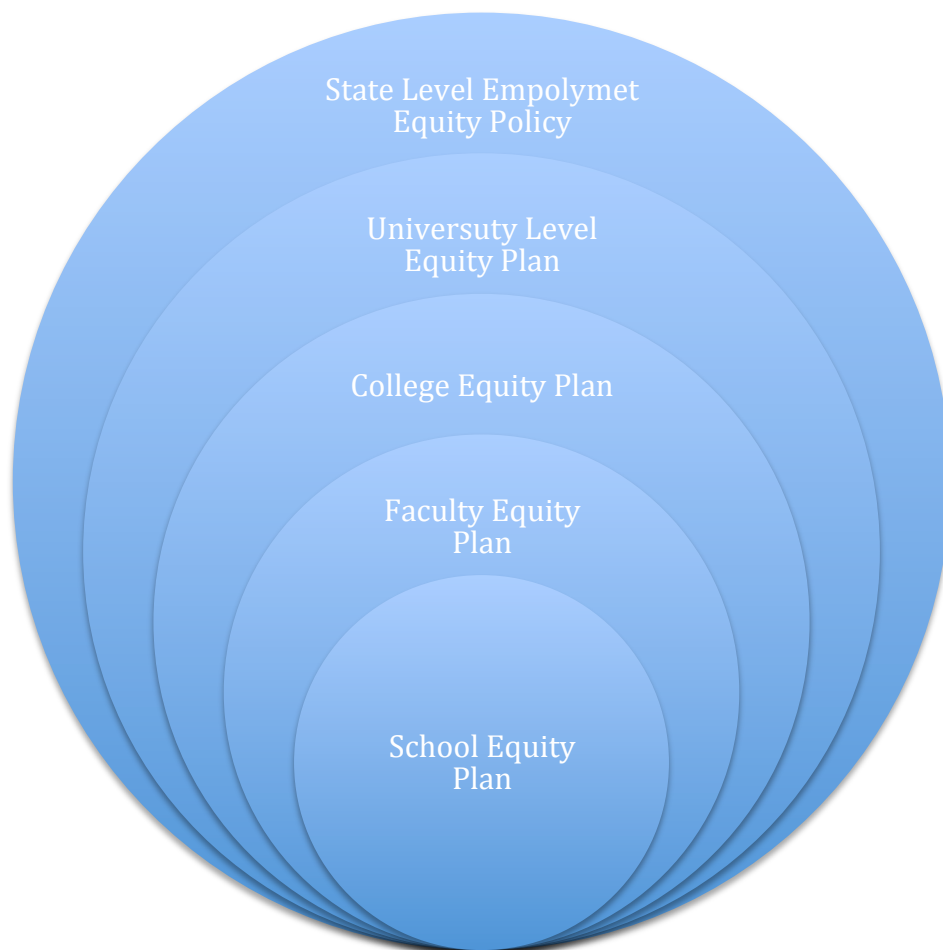


Diagram 1: Intertextual Hierarchy

This diagram provides a graphic illustration of what Smith (2005) calls an intertextual hierarchy. This is a literary term, borrowed by Smith to refer to the idea that texts do not stand-alone but are dependent on other texts. Such interdependence is often hierarchical, characterised by higher level texts establishing the frames and concepts that shape the actual impact of subordinate texts. Boss-texts, that is, texts that regulate or govern how other texts are written, create the intertextual hierarchies which regulate organisational/institutional discourse. An example of such a boss-text is the National Employment Equity Act. The policy outlines what is expected of employers as far as institutionalising equity measures. As well as illustrating the hierarchical nature of these texts, the diagram shows that smaller texts are encompassed by the larger ones. To put it more clearly, the interlocking nature that characterises institutional texts can also be arranged hierarchically.

The boss-text frames how UKZN addresses equity matters and it shapes the overall institutional discourse. The institutional texts of UKZN EE policy and the Recruitment and Selection Policy can be seen as subordinate texts to the Employment Equity policy at State level. But similarly the institutional policies govern other subordinate texts such as the Equity Plans and also College, Faculty and School levels of textual activity. The Equity Plans at Faculty and School level referred to in Extract 1 act as regulatory texts and coordinate how academic selections and appointments are made. This links back into how texts coordinate people's activities, in this case concerning the selection and appointment of academic staff.

It is important to note that very little is static when it comes to addressing equity in higher education. The appointment of academic staff is a dynamic process mediated by various texts, one such being the Equity Plan, which Participant B mentions in Extract 2 (line 123), and also elsewhere in this interview where he explains that “we had to have an equity plan and this was based largely on information and a lot of things ... we had to have a clear information on situation analysis” (lines 78-79). The compilation of the Equity Plan requires that both the School and the Faculty equity plans include the recording of their respective current demographics and also

projected figures for the upcoming years. The Equity Plan then influences and informs who the desired appointees are in a particular time period for the School or Faculty, with the aim of supporting transformation and moving towards greater equity. This dynamic process is illustrated in Extract 2 (lines 121-131). In addition to keeping within the equity goals of the School or Faculty, Participant B (lines 123-124) also describes how an appointee has to meet certain minimum criteria in order to be “appointable”. Another respondent explains the appointment process further, “..it is formalised to the extent that you have a page for final ranking [in the selection file] and when it comes to doing the final ranking, in the case of all things being equal and balanced in terms of the criteria, then we would look at race and gender according to the faculty's profile, then we would rank them according to that, all other things on the experience and qualification side. Then race and gender would be brought into consideration, the racial profile of the faculty is used in selection and recruitment ‘we need an Indian man...we need a Coloured woman, and so on. And all the job adverts ask people to think about the race and gender profile when making nominations” (Participant C, lines 170-177). The employment process is clearly one which is shaped by various textually-mediated and textually-organised practices. This process is made up of a series of interconnected actions and texts that together lead to a particular institutional outcome.

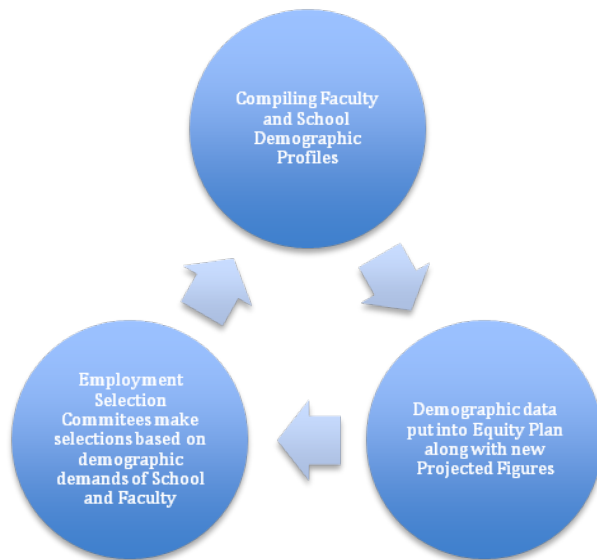


Diagram 2: Text-Action Sequence

There are institutionally mandated sequences of action which link identification of the School's and Faculty's short-comings, draw up numerical targets and goals, and use these figures to make academic appointments. These sequences move in one direction. The process is a cycle; the demographic information is used to generate an equity plan and demographic targets, which in turn feeds into the demographics information, gathered again for the next cycle (See Diagram 2 for this process). Although, there is often a lengthy gap between these sequences, they give rise to the particular social relations of UKZN, specifically regarding the appointment process. Many people and individual courses of action play a part in this sequence of action, thus involving them in the same social relations. As the Recruitment and Selection Policy quoted above states, all academic appointments at the university are made by Selection Committees, all of which are required, at least on paper, to have present an employment equity officer, who ensures that correct procedures for employment are followed. Although these general procedures are similar across Schools and Faculties, the target demographic can differ, as each appointment has to meet the need of the particular School and Faculty. So, for instance, the School of Education Studies, which in 2008 already had a lot of women on staff, although not in senior positions, needed to become more racially diverse (see Table 4). In these instances, all else being equal regarding qualifications and so on, then Black (i.e. African,

Indian and Coloured) candidate had to be hired in preference to white candidates, because white women are ranked lowest in the designated group, while white men are not in the designated group at all. Another 1998 priority in this School might be the appointment of white women specifically, as they account for a lower percentage of the designated groups. At Faculty Level (see Table 5), it would be harder for the Selection Committee to justify the appointment of a white woman because they already account for 26% of the academic staff.

Number of academics	African		Indian		Coloured		White		Total
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	
As of 31 January 2008									
Have doctorates	3	0	0	0	0	0	1	4	8
Registered for doctorates	0	2	2	1	0	0	0	1	6
Intending to register for a doctorate	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Without doctorate and not intending to register for doctorate	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	3
Have a Teaching / Education Qualification	3	2	7	1	0	0	1	4	18
Intending to register for a Teaching / Education Qualification	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table 4: School of Education Studies: Equity Profile 2008 (UKZN, 2008)

Permanent Academic Staff in 2006

	SAHE	SED	SES	SLLMDE	SSE	SMTE	DEANS	Total	%	Race %
AF		6	1	4		3	1	15	13	25
AM	1	3	5	1	2	2	1	15	13	
CF		1				2		3	3	4
CM	1	1						2	2	
IF		5	6	1	1	4	1	18	15	27
IM	1	2	2	1	2	5	1	14	12	
WF	8	9	2	3	4	5		31	26	44
WM	3	6	5	1	4	3		22	18	
Tota l	14	33	21	11	13	24	4	120	100	

Table 5: Faculty of Education Equity Plan (2006-2010)
(www.ukzn.co.za)

The UKZN academic staff who were interviewed as part of my research had different experiences and views of the University's academic appointments procedures. People at more senior management levels, for example Heads of Schools, tended to see them as a necessary evil, something to be done when striving for a more equitable environment. They understood, at least intellectually, what the goals of the government and consequently the University were and recognised that strategic and systematic measures had to be put in place to change the demographics of the University. Other members of academic staff found the emphasis on race and gender in appointment procedures to be divisive and ultimately undermining of the quality of the department because they felt that the best people were not being hired. It is clear that the decisions about social transformation and equity made by the State and the University Administration impact on the work-lives of academic staff.

An analysis of Extract 2 above and Extract 3 below, as well as the various texts I have referred to, illustrates how the work of making academic appointments is

mediated by texts that organise the local setting of selection committees, but is in fact mainly coordinated extra-locally at university administration and at State levels. The ruling relations of universities divorce the aim of equity from their particularised setting, as seen in the restrictive practices around making academic appointments. What is local becomes superseded by the extra-local, i.e., the institutional demands and state mandates. Employment equity texts such as the Equity Plan work in conjunction with disciplined institutional practices such as the use of selection committees to nominate employees. Examining equity policies and documents at government and university level demonstrates the power these have in organising people's activities across various locations or sites within the university. This in turn is complemented by the standardised practice of administratively regulating selection committees as a process of appointing staff. Little has been said thus far about disjunctures and the various tensions and challenges that arise in trying to institutionalise equity measures. This will be explored in what now follows.

Textual Impacts and Disjunctures

The extracts presented below are taken from interviews with two white male members of academic staff in the Education Faculty at UKZN. These two people are, by virtue of their job descriptions, part of the same relations of ruling that organise and coordinate the accounts of everyday work lives of the academic staff discussed thus far. Typically the differences between the experiences of white and Black staff in South Africa are framed in a way that highlights points of disconnection rather than exploring how it is that people come to have different experiences. Discussions of their sometimes divergent experiences often fail to go beyond essentialist assumptions. The term *lines of fault* is used here to refer to the gap between the experiential embodied way of knowing and the discursive consciousness of the relations of ruling. There is a dialectical process at play in the contradictory versions of different respondents concerning the same event or set of institutional events, as well as a disconnection between institutional discourse and what people articulate as their experiences of the institution (Smith, 1990). The experiences outlined in Extract 3 and Extract 4 should be read in juxtaposition with those in Extract 1 and Extract 2

in order to illuminate how texts work in practice to shape the experiences of the UKZN staff.

Extract 3

“...the only way a white can get employed at this university is if no one of colour makes the short list ... equity ... the appointment thing is that if a person is deemed employable (I have sat on selection committees) it's not even that you are employing the best person for the job in terms of competence etc., all you have to do in terms of universities equity plan is to get over the hurdle of being declared employable ...unless they changed it but that certainly was the case when I've been sitting on the panel ...” (Participant F, lines 105-110).

Extract 4

“It was made immediately apparent to us, by the new management, that the transformation was going to be sped up... there were all these imbalances... every time we went to a meeting we were told how imbalanced things were and that this was going to change ... so the demographic imbalances were frequently highlighted ... so were the gender ones ... we all knew them anyway ... but ... when there were staff vacancies the minute a person “of colour” - can I use that term? I don't wish to offend – the minute that person met the minimum criteria they got the job ... there was no excellence after that ... my understanding of affirmative action, from the ANC, is that the person should meet the minimum criteria and then be able to compete ... and if there was an equal degree of excellence (let's say between a Black person and a white person) then affirmative action would require the Black person.... but not at this lower level of meeting the minimum requirements ... that has caused huge bitterness amongst the staff ... and of course it's led to record transformation and quite honestly it has put in place people who should not be there ... we have a number of staff who have been served to the disservice to themselves of being put into a position they should not be in” (Participant G, lines 113-121).

In Extract 3 and Extract 4, the tensions and challenges faced by employees in engaging with the appointment processes of academic staff can be discerned. The new demands placed on employment procedures in the post-merger context are seen by Participant G (lines 115-117) and Participant F (lines 107-108) as lowering the employment standards. For Participant G and Participant F, the racial and gendered

transformation agenda is seen to take precedence over excellence, but also they see white people being disadvantaged in the university's employment process, with this issue of excellence being expanded on in the following section. Expressing his frustration, Participant F (101-103) argued, "...If you look at the employment policy of the university generally you will see that it is very difficult for a white to be employed. In fact the only way a white can get employed at this university is by default". Extracts 3 and Extract 4 draw on procedures outlined in the Recruitment Policy and Selection Policy (UKZN, 2009b) of the university and its accompanying Guidelines (UKZN, 2009a). In the Preamble to the Policy, the following is stated: "the University of KwaZulu-Natal recognizes that to achieve its mission to be academically excellent, innovative in research, critically engaged with society and demographically representative, it requires staff of the highest calibre. It accordingly must have appropriate policies which support the recruitment and selection process" (UKZN, 2009b:2). The Policy Statement in the same document states "the University of KwaZulu-Natal is committed to the recruitment, selection and retention of high quality members of staff with appropriate expertise and experience who shall strengthen its capability to achieve strategic and operational goals" (UKZN, 2009b:3). In these statements, there are two key goals; the first is to ensure and maintain academic excellence, and the second is to promote demographic representation. The tension discussed in what follows concerns the interpretation of these two goals and the priorities they are given.

On the surface, Participant G and Participant F are correct in saying that it is difficult for white people to obtain employment at the university. This is reflected in some equity documents. However, consider the following statements in the Equity Plan for the Faculty of Education:

- The choice for a national demographic target disfavours Indian potential staff; White staff members are over-represented in both the national or regional profile.
- The choices for a regional demographic target disfavours Coloured potential staff.

- The target recruitment of African potential staff is evident across the national and regional demographic profile.

(UKZN, 2010:10)

These statements show that the Faculty targets are quite prescriptive regarding what kind of person is a favourable academic appointment and who is not. It is also worth noting the interplay between regional and national demographics and thus employment goals. Additionally, these statements show that the Faculty's Equity Plan clearly disfavours the appointment of Indian, White and Coloured staff. Interestingly, however, it was only the white male staff in my research who expressed feeling particularly disadvantaged: white men may feel particularly marginalised in the broader socio-political discourse on redress and equity, which consistently places them at the bottom of the pecking order.

Part of the recruitment process and the work of the selection committee when making appointments is to rank candidates according to their racial, gendered and physical characteristics. The ranking is based on the staff demographic profile and the goals outlined in the Equity Plan. One of its main goals is to assess where the Faculty is, in terms of being demographically representative or not of the province and country. Any inequalities are identified and used to draw up new goals and projections that will shape the targets of the period to come. The Equity Plan identifies the recruitment policy of the Faculty of Education in 2010 as being geared toward increasing the number of African employees along with disabled persons, who together were ranked the highest in the designated groups.

The Academic Staff Ranking of the UKZN Education Faculty in 2010 was as follows:

Designated groups

- 1) Persons with disabilities
- 2) African males and females
- 3) White females
- 4) Coloured males and females
- 5) Indian males and females

Non-designated groups

- 6) White males
- 7) Foreign nationals

The Equity Plan also states that “the 2010 target ranking constitutes a fresh commencement of projected goals for the Faculty. These 2010 projections (phased in over three years) reflect a steady decreasing of academic staff groups over-represented in terms of the national demographics (Indian and White) and an increasing of academic staff under-represented (African and Coloured)” (UKZN, 2010:10). In addition, the aim of the Faculty is that “the number of 16 (8M and 8F) African staff should be recruited across the Faculty in 2010; and 1M and 1F in each of the other race groups categories for 2010” (UKZN, 2010:10), while it is important to note that “employment equity ranking is only applied to appointable candidates” (UKZN, 2009a:14). For Participant G in Extract 4, this contradicts the pursuit of excellence at the University.

Thus, upon closer examination, Participant G in Extract 4 and Participant F in Extract 3 are only partially correct in their assessment that it is harder to justify the employment of white people in the Faculty. Not all white people occupy the same ranking; while white men rank sixth, white women rank third, so it is easier, at least in some contexts, to hire some white people over others. The point of comparing my respondents’ accounts and experiences with what is found in various equity texts is not to nullify nor justify their experiences. Rather, it is to draw attention to what institutional texts are intended to do and what they ultimately produce in terms of the social relations of a particular context. The views of Participant G and Participant F can be seen as examples of extra-institutional talk, and also of disjuncture. The experiences recounted by Participant G and Participant F are echoed by other colleagues; “in fact you will find complaints from the other side of staff saying you can't get employed here at this university if you are a white male ... you can't get promoted ... it's like a new ceiling now” (Participant C, lines 208-210). Participant H adds that “you end up with only two appointable people who happen to be white. Then you end up appointing someone because there is no one else who meets the criteria, actually against the equity profile when there were good people in the pool

who did not meet the specific criteria. Decisions are not based purely on the selection criteria the chair of the committee is given a little leeway, We've had these for a while, equity advisors who would sit and monitor and they were often trained in a mechanical way, to object to anything, for example, 'it's unfair that that person had a different question'. It was very frustrating but recently things have eased up and the VC started saying the academics must make the decisions. The HR people must not drive the process, it's a lot to do with trust, what people want is to really move forward around the equity, people want to change" (Participant H, lines 296-305). Their experiences conflict with the institutional order, whereas the opinions and experiences of Participant A and Participant B in Extract 1 and Extract 2 are in line with the institutional goals and are more obviously an example of institutional talk, but of course Extract 1 and Extract 2 also display this although in more negative form.

One of the Heads of School I interviewed described the intricacies of the appointment process in the following way: "actually we mediate ... because as you have to understand it is a dynamic situation and it changes almost instantaneously ... for example in a school if we find there are too many whites and male ... but on the faculty level there is not too many white and male ... so what you have to do is say what are the other targets of the faculty ... it can be actually used to change the faculty ... maybe the institutional top level are used more as deciding and guiding and moving towards ... so the smaller parts move here and there and there could be a dominance of white male..." (Participant B, lines 134-139). Here the intertextual hierarchy plays itself out in actions guided by various texts, at several institutional levels, and these work to inform and shape local practices. This tension between equity and quality will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter.

Other challenges that emerge in the selection of academic staff are outlined by Participant A, particularly that of balancing the need to be transformative and striving for a more equitable institution while also maintaining the standard and calibre of the academic staff. He argues that "the College model tried as much as possible to address gender and equity issues like we discussed ... each time there is a

post there would be those kind of considerations ... but this university is always saying equity issues, gender issues, are issues which are considered when everyone under that umbrella qualifies for a certain post ... so the first port of call is one of determining whether one qualifies ... they are not going to compromise quality because of gender and equity issues ... so its equity/gender are about people who have a necessary qualifications to begin with ... because of the disadvantages that we mentioned ... in the qualifications levels are not the same and so the university ends up employing (sometimes against the grain) in relation to equity and gender because there are just not enough people in the categories that they would have wanted... that is one of the challenges and one hopes, as we proceed, that there will be more and more women and people of colour to be able to occupy positions” (Participant A, lines 157-167).

The Equity Plan emphasises the use of social categories as a way of organising redress and transformation. The meeting of the numerical targets set organises how academic appointments are made. The over-determination of social categories is viewed by some as necessary and by others it is experienced as alienating (Participant F, lines 102-104), divisive (Participant G, line 119) and counter-intuitive to the aims of the university. Participant F proposes that “the way in which the university has attempted to achieve equity and I am very much in favour of strategy achievement don't get me wrong but it's all about the way you choose to do it now the impression generally that is created is that its a problem of how you achieve equity how you achieve affirmative action whether it is general affirmative action or racial affirmative action is that we have had a history of the whites being affirmed and others not so now you want to redress that in fact the minute you start to redress that you create a new group of people who are being discriminated against we've done that the university without a doubt has done that I'm not sure what your results will show but from my perspective this institution is not a very welcoming or affirming place for a white person” (Participant F, lines 119-125). The racial tensions occurring around this are further reflected in the following statement “...race is still an issue very much fore-grounded in a lot of appointment processes. Whenever we get to vote of senate issues like these voting ballot forms that come around, they

always carry a little line at the bottom although it is an open vote we need to take cognisance of race and gender issues and how we set up committees, how we link people to being representatives of Council and other structures. So, race is a feature and there have been times especially uncomfortable painful times when its become more to the foreground as a sort of racialised tension” (Participant C, lines 93-99). In many ways one might argue that equity issues, or at least how they have been managed, are reproducing a racialised higher education system.

The discussion of social categories and their relationship to each other is an important one for my research because it points to the institutional discourses and processes that shape the management of racial and gender equity in higher education. I am using an intersectional approach to conceptualising individual experiences as well as for the analysis of social structures and cultural discourse (Davis, 2008; McCall, 2005). My variant of IE, consequently adopts the temporary use of social categories, with the aim of capturing inequality among social groups. However, for Smith (1990a), while it is important to recognise that difference has relevance, it must not be forgotten that people from various standpoints and different intersectional identities are ultimately drawn into the same relations of ruling. For Smith, it is the relations of ruling in organisations, including Higher Education institutions, that give rise to social categories and certainly the social categories of race, gender can be seen to organise employment practices at UKZN.

The extracts from the interview provided above show how race and gender equity come into day-to-day decision-making about whom to appoint in the Faculty of Education. The wishes of the staff who sit on the Selection Committees are mitigated by the procedures and demands placed upon them by the University Administration, as evidenced in the following: “there is no quota system, not that I'm aware of, there might be in someone's head, the employment equity policy is that if people apply for the job they get rated as to or not ... the minute they get rated appointable the equity thing comes in and it's African female – African male – and so you go down” (Participant F, lines 142-145). This respondent sees very little flexibility in the employment practices of the university, but more than that, that the decisions made

are not locally determined. In addition, the demands of the legal framework that shapes university academic appointments has meant that primary decisions about the composition of a School, Faculty or College are taken outside the local context of those that it impacts on. This is, the staff, and to a large extent university management, as other interviewees commented.

In South Africa, staff equity in universities, as in other public institutions, is governed by a constellation of labour polices including the Labour Relations Act 1955, the Skills Development Act 1998 and the Employment Equity Act 1998. Each university is required by law to produce an Employment Equity Report for the Department of Labour. One of the Heads of School interviewed discussed the dynamic of making academic appointments and being accountable to the State: “now you see it is a requirement from the Department of Labour ...it says you have this equity profile you told us in five years you are going to try to shift this and we assess you and audit you ... and then the university then says across the university this is how it is ... so colleges then need to see how we are shaping up and contributing to the change ... and then that cascades down to faculty the when it looks across its staff ... and it goes down to schools ... so every year we're saying now hang on we have a lot of white women and we can't really take another person like that ...of course when it's the strongest candidate and there are no other candidates then you end up appointing such a person ... but there was a time when you had to make a special motivation ... if the candidate you are appointing did not really meet the targets ... and you could only appoint that person if the special motivation has received approval by the executive ... you can't pretty much do what you want to change the status quo ... when it comes to recruitment certainly... but there are other places where we don't have the mechanisms to address that and I think that's where ... equity tied to race comes into play” (Participant C, lines 181-190).

The production of the equity report overall necessarily requires a compilation of equity texts at different levels of the university. For example, at UKZN, which has a College model, the different Schools in the Faculties each have to produce an equity plan, while another has to be produced at Faculty level and yet another at the College

of Humanities level. The university level report has to include “staff recruitment and promotion policies and practices, staff developments, remuneration and conditions of service, reward systems, and the transformation of institutional cultures of support diversity” (DoE, 1997a: section 2.96). Thus each public university is bound by law to produce and implement an Employment Equity plan that is monitored by the institution itself and which it is held accountable by to the Labour Department. One of the equity measures taken by university administration involves the appointment of Equity Officers at various levels of the institution, to serve as institutional watchdogs over equity matters in their given constituencies.

The work of making academic appointments at UKZN, far from being locally defined, draws those employees on selection committees into a series of coordinated and textually-mediated processes that tie them into larger priorities of the university governance and the State. The activities of the University regarding its equity matters are coordinated by various policies that form part of a larger governmental agenda, namely, transformation and redress. At the State level, the key priority is individual and institutional redress. And one of the key ways in which individual redress is managed is, as I have already explained, by the use of social categories in making job appointments, with these priorities spelled out in various texts, including the Higher Education Act 1997 and the Employment Equity Act 1998.

The Employment Equity Act 1998 necessitates that people be classified by race, gender and physical ability in order for individual redress to be effected. According to the Act, all designated employers (defined in the Act as people who employ fifty or more people) are required to implement affirmative action measures “for people from designated groups” in terms of the Act. Designated groups are identified in the Employment Equity Act 1998 and it is these people that should be given priority in recruitment and selection processes. The management and governance of UKZN is charged with implementing this policy and the Council approves a Recruitment and Selection Policy which is to be read and used together with a procedure and guidelines document. This institutional policy like many others at the University, is developed within the context of a larger legal and policy framework at State level,

which simultaneously prohibits unfair discrimination while promoting previously disadvantaged groups. Public institutions, universities included, consequently have to take up the larger State agenda of transformation and incorporate it into their daily operations.

The selection process at UKZN involves a systematized set of practices that combine both State mandated demands and institutional agendas. So, UKZN has both to hire people who are suitable for the University while simultaneously addressing equity issues. In order to protect the integrity of the University's standards, affirmative action measures are used regarding those candidates that are deemed appointable i.e., they must meet minimum criteria (UKZN, 2009a). The ranking is necessary to achieve institutional transformation and to move towards a more equitable higher education system.

In what follows, I move away from discussion of the selection process and pay analytical attention to the disjunctures that arose in my interviews, the gaps between embodied experiences and institutional discourse, and what often seems the chasm between what occurs locally and what is intended by institutional policy and goals. Akoojee and Nkomo distinguish between active and passive pursuits of equity. The former is characterised by the "active recruitment of traditionally excluded groups and initiatives to ensure retention by, inter alia, deliberately ensuring staff diversity and inclusion by attention to education deficits present in other parts of the system" (Akoojee & Nkomo, 2011:118). The latter refers to "initiatives including admission requirements, 'meritocratic' perspectives of standard being retained while committing to diversity" (Akoojee & Nkomo, 2011:118). I would argue that most South African institutions, including UKZN, find themselves straddled somewhere between the two, as they struggle keep hold of maintaining standards while simultaneously promoting equity.

Given the University's high status and strong research portfolio, there is pressure at local level to keep producing published research. One person explains that "there are many, many strategies ... one strategy is to assist people is to acquire PhDs ... it could

be by way of scholarships ... it could be by way of reduction of workloads, and so on... there is considered effort from all quarters of the university to assist people without PhDs because the argument is that once you have a PHD then you have grown to some degree towards becoming a researcher” (Participant A, lines 83-87). Another respondent adds “now the PhD is kind of a benchmark and I don’t know because sometimes you might employ somebody who has a PhD but they might not necessarily have other things have vision take initiative and other things it can be unfortunate” (Participant I, lines 164-167). Contrasting the demands of the pre-merged institutions with those of the single entity created as a result on the merger, Participant G explains, “you see the old University of Natal and the association they had with Edgewood ... there were three kinds of individual on the staff ... there were those who were good researchers and the institution preferred them ... there were those who were good university teachers ... and the institution affirmed them ... there were those who could do both of those and the university affirmed them ... now you are affirmed only if you are a good researcher ...publish or oowww... that leaves a bitter taste in my mouth ... (Participant G, lines 97-106).

As already noted, in South Africa the role of higher education is seen as vital to the economic and social development of the country, and to fostering widespread transformation. Academic achievement is seen as an essential tool in achieving those ends, and is understood in all its forms and functions to be “perhaps the most powerful vehicle that we (South Africans) have to deepen our democracy” (DoE, 2001:61). In one of its principle goals, the White Paper on Higher Education (1997) makes an explicit connection between research, the country’s technological advancement, and its social development; in addition, it also “recognises that research plays a key role in the production, advancement and dissemination of knowledge and development of high-level human resources” (DoE, 2001:60). Given this, in 2005 the South African government introduced a new funding formula directly linked to research and graduate outputs (CHE, 2009; DoE, 2001). This meant that universities that produced more published research received more money from the State, with “the amount is based on publication units which differ by the type of research output” (CHE, 2009:48). This shift from block-funding to more

targeted and competitive funding for specific types of awards and research publications has meant that universities are competing more directly for financial resources. Some of the strategies undertaken include aggressive headhunting of employees with PhDs, and producing more Masters and Doctoral students from within the given institutions. Some universities have been more successful than others in this. At least two of the respondents at UKZN made the point that pressures felt in the Faculty of Education to employ people with Doctoral degrees, coupled with research experience, and with themselves produce graduates with PhDs, is strongly connected to funding issues. One responded commented, “that's where the money is ... you publish and you can pay a fortune ... it's the institution gets the fortune ... and so if you don't publish ... Bye ...”(Participant G, lines 93-94). Another argues that “the more people you have with PhDs the more you can do in that department ... you could also have PhD graduates out of your system because government grants are determined by output and the PhD is the highest in terms of what government gives to institutions ... so the more an institution produces more PhDs the more subsidy it can get from government... so there is a financial issue attached to that” (Participant A, lines 83-87). Here Participant A explicitly ties the emphasis on PhDs as experienced locally in the Faculty of Education to the ruling relations of South Africa’s higher education system.

UKZN has pushed its employment criteria up since the merger and almost all academic appointments now require a PhD. There was a concern amongst some of my respondents that this demand, compounded with the new highly procedural process of making employment decisions, did not allow for the identification of talented young Black candidates with potential, because they did not have a PhD. Participant H describes a scenario where practices designed to promote equity are constrained by the strict demands to follow procedure, in this case the minimum qualifications criteria. He commented, “here is a really good young black academic, has the potential, we know he has been a Masters student ... is really good... no doubt he will excel ... will be an outstanding person with proper support ... then you have the really plodding mediocre person who has got a PhD from a university with not very high standing ... and they have written and published one or two articles ...

because this person has the on-paper qualification you have to give it (the job) to him.... you don't have the space in our system to grow your own timber and to give the preferential treatment... to use those privileged – old network privileges - you cannot use those old networks to advance equity ... at the moment this system is premised on lack of trust that people actually want to do the right thing ... it as seen as they have to be regulated and forced to do the right thing” (Participant H, lines 285-294).

Part of the transformation of many of the country’s institutions including the higher education system, has involved the dismantling of centres of power and old boys networks, mentioned in this quotation. One of the former Heads of School I interviewed said about the shift, “it ... disrupted the old patterns of employment of patronage of all of those sort of things... things became a lot more procedural and ... you could not just get people in because they were your mates or you know they could do the job ... which often was how things worked in the old networks ... so ... aggressively” (Participant H, lines 95-105). People now feel like their hands are tied, so when they want to bend the rules in favour of a disadvantaged candidate, they are unable to do so. Thus what was meant to be a process that ensured the employment of more previously underprivileged and under-represented groups as seen by Participant H has had the opposite effect. The old networks were discriminatory, but sometimes they could be used to do ‘good’. It is not the existence of such networks in themselves that is problematic, as Participant H sees it, but what they were once used to achieve. Indeed, it is true the use of less formal process in job appointments can be used to advance previously disadvantaged students and staff who would otherwise not qualify for the posts in a more procedurally strict process.

Having the PhD as a benchmark has also affected academic staff already in post. There have been instances where these stringent requirements have led to the loss of academic staff to other universities where their promotion track is not hampered. There are also structural differences for different disciplines: “we don't have a lot of Black academics. If one looks at the demographics it is difficult to find Black academics who have a Doctorate. At the same time as they pushed the whole thing

[transformation] they pushed up the criteria for posts hugely. Now everyone has to have a Doctorate. There has been a huge push in education ... very few people have Doctorates, if you are a scientist you will do your BSc, then you do Honours and then you get a Doctorate by the time you're 27 or something or in psychology or any kind of discipline where you are moving through the system ... in education most people would come in and go and teach for 5 years or 10 years whatever they... probably study part time that is the nature of education it is very different and it is difficult to find people who have Doctorates and who have published in the field” (Participant I, lines 135-145). Participant I here points out important challenges. It is difficult to find Black academics with a PhD, a deficit also recognised by the State and reflected in its ongoing imperative to increase Black and female participation at post-graduate level. This concern is echoed in Participant A’s assertion that “having declared itself a research institution meant that the institution (UKZN) was going to be driven by researchers ... people who can research and publish ... and that is not done by new comers in the academic field. It is often done by seasoned academics and seasoned academics have historically been white people. And as we speak, if you went to the records of who are the most prolific researchers, most of them will be white males... so we have kind of given up that ... it is not something that can be addressed in a short period of time but the situation still remains, those who were more advantaged are the ones that tend to feature more in terms of publication” (Participant A, lines 90-97). The shift towards a research focus appears then to be counteracting equity concerns, for in the move away from ‘teaching’, which at least implicitly is regarded as vital in promoting equity and equality, the transformative element of the sector is lessened.

There are several important points here. There is still just a small proportion of Black postgraduate students, and in 2008 of the 30% of students who were postgraduates, just 13% of these were Black, meaning 3.9% of all students (CHE, 2009). The higher education system is still riddled with inequity, exhibited in the low success rates of Black students. And there has not yet been a broad- based increase in the proportion of black students with postgraduate qualifications. My argument here is that while it is important to insist upon a PhD and research experience to maintain standards,

simultaneously promoting equity in this context of strict credentialism conflicts. There is not a sufficient base of Black academics with PhDs, at least not yet. There is also a sense that perhaps UKZN management is being too demanding, as reflected in the comment that “it is interesting in that the actual criteria is incredibly high criteria quite strange really. A colleague left last year to become a Professor she became an Associate Professor at Warwick University and here she would never have become an Associate Professor she was a lecturer, not even a senior lecturer here, and moved straight to Associate Professor it would never have happened here. It is ridiculous in terms of the criteria that they set, I don't know why they have a bee in their bonnet about everyone having a Doctorate” (Participant I, lines 152-157). In reality Warwick University does not have lower standards than UKZN. However, this is not the point. The comment illustrates the concerns about staff and the preoccupation with academic staff holding PhDs, as well as the focus on research and publications. Together these are for some seen to overshadow equity matters, surely an unintended consequence of the attempting to balance quality and equity if it is actually so. Nkomo et al (2007) and Cloete et al (2004), indeed, argue that quality in developing countries such as South Africa cannot be discussed outside the equity imperative.

Another respondent also discussed the pitfalls of being too focused on qualifications: “this is where you have the university saying ‘let us talk ability first ... qualifications first’ ... in other words ‘is this person we are wanting to employ adequately qualified?’ The argument is if they are adequately qualified they are going to be efficient, they are going to be effective ... and then we are discouraged from employing people just because they come from historically disadvantaged backgrounds and the argument is counter-productive ... we employ them ... they are not going to deliver ... they become costly ... become a liability, these issues run with equity issues at the expense of ability and effectiveness ... yes there is that danger... its not easy to balance those things” (Participant A, lines 181-190). This is an example of how attempts to maintain the integrity of the institution can conflict with attempts to forward institutional transformation and bring about equity. However, whether these two goals are ultimately irreconcilable is open for debate.

Another challenge that the earlier quotation from Participant I raises is that, in the particular discipline of Education, the typical career trajectory makes it difficult to accrue teaching experience *and* research *and* publication in the time-frame demanded. These concerns are echoed by another respondent, in commenting that: “they come to academia as a relatively new academic but quite advanced in terms of their life course then you say to them get your PhD and they get the PhD and then suddenly they are 50, 10 years away from retirement we know around the world a lot of academics only reach their stride around about that time the guy that I used for my thesis theoretically really started publishing after 65” (Participant H, lines 355-357). Here Participant H is suggesting that the emphasis on credentials, in this case the a PhD and publications, has had unintended racial consequences, although given the history of the country this is not surprising of course.

Yet another area in which the embodied everyday experiences of locally situated academics appear to clash with institutionally defined imperatives concerns balancing the recruitment of new staff while retaining existing staff, both the recently appointed and more experienced academics. In response to a question about how effective the implementation of equity measures at UKZN had been, Participant A replied that “I think that there have been good strides forwards ... I think we are talking two things here from my view ... we are talking access on the one hand and success on the other... in terms of access I think that we can say 'yes' but in terms of success ... there is a huge challenge around helping people to succeed in their jobs ... I think this is still a big challenge ... it is one thing to say let's put a Black woman to become something in this department ... it's another thing for them to really succeed ... yes... they might have the qualifications ... they probably did not have a necessary exposure to rise to the occasion ... the academic is another whole game altogether ... where you either have the qualifications and the credentials to get promoted or you don't ... and this is where the issue is ... for all cases of promotions among academics you have to convince the selectors that you are putting yourself in research ... research is something you have to learn and learn from others ... so that is an area which I think we still need lots of work, particularly among the historically disadvantaged” (Participant A, lines 60-74).

So young Black female academics, the example Participant A uses in this comment but probably as a proxy for all previously disadvantaged people, may have the qualifications but lack the experience needed to succeed in a research-oriented environment. Compounding this problem is that the education field does not lend itself easily to the attainment of higher qualifications like PhDs because of practical requirements of the discipline. Participant H explains that “the strategy was to get the older generation out and keep the retirement age low at 60 it does move people out and opens up spaces in the context of those broader social phenomena around our education system and the poor production of academic skills we actually don't have the next generation to fill those and we do not have them from the historically disadvantaged communities it takes longer for someone to get to professorial level every time you lose at 60 the best you can do is replace him with a lecturer who might just be completing a PhD with 30-40 years in their career to go so I personally would not have” (Participant H, lines 340-346). Participant H here points to the tension that exists between, on one hand, demanding that academic staff have PhDs and, on the other hand, adhering to the strict retirement age of 60. In some disciplines this might not pose a challenge, but in Education five to ten years are usually spent in teaching in schools before people return to academia, and so the School of Education, unlike other disciplines, draws in academic staff at later points in their life course and career. Whereas in the pre-merger days a member of academic staff could join the College from teaching and without any further qualification and continue their career path, now additional qualifications are required.

Of course the work of academic staff is not limited to research. Connecting the increasing enrolment rates with the workload and other demands placed on academic staff, Participant A (lines 101-111) explains that the Faculty of Education has taken active measures to support young academics. Participant A and others recognise the tensions that can arise from the fact that junior academics take the bulk of the teaching load while simultaneously trying to become prolific researchers. However, the reality is that it is incredibly difficult to strike the balance between teaching and research when there is an ever-increasing teaching load. However, Participant A

comments on attempts to ameliorate this: “one hopes that universities take young people ... there is a programme ... young people like you and puts them in the system and helps them to grow within the system and at the end of three years they enter into an established post in the system ... there are other programs like finding money to pay for scholarships to up and coming young people who can then fill posts some day” (Participant A, lines 189-191).

Some of the sentiments expressed in quotations above illustrate hostility from some older white male academics, who feel they are being pushed out of the institution. One respondent, for instance, said that his “impression often is and its un-stated thing probably a biased perception there is almost a desire for revenge: you had your time in the sun it's someone else's turn now. I'm leaving this year it is a year early in terms of my normal retirement because I've been approached by another company to join them. In fact, if I had felt happy here I would have stayed on ... in this faculty you have seen a steady outflow of white people and they are being replaced by Indian or African and if you want to know about equity what do you mean by equity? Some sort of proportionate balance in terms of the demographics of the country? I don't know what you mean by equity, so how do you know when you've achieved it? How do you know if you are not going beyond equity into another level of discrimination” (Participant F, lines 130-140). Failing to see these equity measures as part of a process of transformation, Participant F and Participant G also expressed the feeling that they were being forced into retirement despite wanting to keep working. For Participant F, this has caused considerable frustration because he perceives the equity policies as discriminatory: “there were equity plans and all sorts of things drawn up as to how to achieve (equity)... and they were mapping out old white men like myself: when they going to retire, when can they be replaced and so on; and the faculty had to devise a strategic plan around the plan. To a large extent it has happened if you look at the number of white males; it is considerably fewer than it used to be and in fact we are rapidly reaching a state where you wont have a white male on the staff, that's the impression I have” (Participant F, lines 90-99). This respondent clearly feels negatively targeted by the equity policies at UKZN.

Several strategies for promoting racial and gender transformation were employed at the new institution post-merger. Alongside its selection and recruitment policies has been the university's retirement policy, and as already commented this has produced some problems in the Faculty. Together these policies are aimed at ensuring that the university transforms its staff demographics, but the changes have not been easy. Describing a process of moving towards a more equitable institution, Participant A says "... therefore in the process of equity and gender issues one of the things the university has put in place is that, because particularly the former University of Natal ... most academics are white, ... the termination age is fairly heavy ... 60 years ... you retire ... The sense we get is that part of the reason for that decision was to say 'lets provide space for new younger academics,' obviously from the historically disadvantaged ... but of course the university also is aware that they need people to continue the research agenda ... the older you are the faster you publish articles ... and so the university is now saying if you are researcher you can stay longer ... In summary you want to redress in terms of gender and equity but it's a process and not an event and one would want to say that we are still struggling and battling with that" (Participant A, lines 167-175). As a Head of School, Participant A appears to be both sensitive to the challenges of balancing older or more seasoned academics with grooming younger ones. It is clear that the aim of the upper-management of the university was not to oust all older white men, and the university and the Faculty of Education have stood their ground in implementing equity measures, however unpleasant the process involved is for some people.

Yet another area of contention at UKZN concerns what some respondents referred to as 'the new managerial culture'. South Africa, like Britain in the 1990s, combines egalitarian and radical terminology, and a focus on structures that produce disparities, and it views universities as possible instruments of change but also as sites where inequality is reproduced. Equality discourses in South African higher education today are rooted in a liberalist ideology, a change from the early 1990s when a different political philosophy drove government policies. However, the macro economic policy adopted by the South African government in the mid 1990s, GEAR (Growth, Employment and Redistribution), reflects a commitment to a neo-

liberal approach, which has impacted on how universities are governed and how they manage themselves.

One respondent commented on the effects of this, that “previously we had the Executive of the University ... we had a Senate and so forth... in the new institution all of those things changed, the composition of the bodies changed, so while the college system would say there is a devolution of powers at that level, but it also seems to cloud the decision making process .There is a discipline level, school level, faculty level, college level, can you see how many levels of decision making there are. So while we have a decision making chart that tells you what decisions can be made at what level, that is very useful ... ultimately ... but the rings you have to climb to make important decisions... that becomes troublesome. Let me give you one example, if you want to introduce one course, it has to be discussed at discipline level and get accepted ... school level needs get acceptance and so forth ... then it comes back to the person who proposed it ... then it goes to faculty level and if faculty decides on changes it goes back ... sometimes to school level ... who may suggest changes that are not what the faculty wants ... college level might say – we don't agree – we think you should do this and this ... it's not a simple thing” (Participant B, lines 234-245). Participant B here describes some of the changes made in the structure and management of UKZN, with the introduction of a college model during the merger, and what might be called the daily institutional troubles that act to slow processes down, including the management of equity.

The entrepreneurial trend exhibited by many of the world leading universities has been visible since the 1980s. Securing additional funding is seen as paramount and one way of securing such funds is through research and publications. Universities are increasingly run like corporations and business models are adopted to run them. The merger brought together two institutions with different histories and different organisational cultures, styles of management, governance and different overall strengths and weaknesses: “University of Natal had to merge with a partner that did not have a strong research culture (UDW)... so the overall effect in the merged institution was that their productivity had fallen because your partners were not

strong [regarding research]. If you look at Natal before the merger ... how many productive units or publications they had, and if you look at it post merger ... across the institution then it's lower... But that was the nature of apartheid ... because those institutions [historically Black] did not have strong research cultures because they were under-funded ... But our faculty is the most improving faculty across the university [research output]. I think that for us there is a sense ... stronger sense of hierarchy and the bureaucracy .. because being a big institution you start to feel that it's less personal and more ...the way decisions are made which I think is a feature of becoming a big organisation but it's also a decision around corporate culture I think the university has taken a stronger around organising itself like a corporate which hasn't been before, that's an effect that would be another change ...” (Participant C, lines 248-259). Participant C here recognises both the strengths and weaknesses of the new management approach introduced during the merger, for example resulting in greater productivity, but also in a less personal work environment.

However, not all people were as diplomatic, and some respondents portray the new approach as oppressive and malevolent. For Participant F, for instance, the post-merger context was characterised by divisions and a general lack of trust amongst colleagues and that “... more was done to actually protect someone's turf and domain... than to actually bridge any serious gaps ... not an awful lot was done to say 'this is a new faculty let's build a collegial spirit where everyone feels welcome' ... not very much was done ... my experience of tertiary education generally, higher education, universities in particular ... there are exceptions ... but generally it is quite a cut-throat territory and almost an attitude of ‘don't be nice to anyone’” (Participant F, lines 65-71). Other people repeated this sentiment as well. What is particularly interesting to note is that, in the comments following, Participant F placed the blame for the change squarely on the shoulders of Durban-Westville (UDW), rather than this being seen as a collaborative decision taken by the management of the merged institution: managerialism and UDW are conflated. Participant G argues, along similar lines “that was the sort of modus operandi... UDW came with managerialism and performance management ... this is what you will do and how you will do it ... and we got a new Dean and new senior people and they drove this thing...

managerialism (call it what you will) ... but it wasn't the old university of Natal which was far more easy going ... we had in those days ... on the staff some eccentrics... some characters ... and you could sit and laugh, chat and debate ... that's all gone ... now it's account for your time ... report to your line manager ... you can't blame it all on UDW ... I think universities are far stronger ... universities are supposed to teach and generate knowledge but gosh in the last 3 to 4 years, it's brutal.... (Participant G, lines 84-91) and he added, "it's a different ball game" (Participant G, line 92). Participant G spoke poignantly about the shift in management culture he experienced as a result of the merger leading to some people being marginalised. Other respondents use words like 'bureaucratic', 'cooperate', 'individualistic', 'performance based', 'less collegial' to describe the post-merger environment. This sounds very much like what Ranson and Stewart describe as a culture based on "freedom rather than equality, individualism rather than community, efficiency rather than justice, and competition rather than co-operation" (Ranson & Stewart, 1994:48). And as discussed in Chapter 1, the transformation in the South African higher education system was driven by, and in response to, global trends in the sector, as well as reflective of domestic demands and goals, with the same trends observable elsewhere too.

The issue of management style and approach raised above exists in other parts of the world too, including the UK, where Deem (1998) argues there has been a shift in recent decades. In her research on higher education governance in the UK, Morley posits that "central to new managerialism is the promotion of a corporate mission, with goals, monitoring procedures and performance measurement", and in addition "new managerialism appears to be linked to enhancing efficiency" (Morley, 1997a:234). Other strategies used include "the use of internal cost centres, the fostering of competition between employees, the marketization of public sector services and the monitoring of efficiency and effectiveness through measurement of outcomes and individual staff performances" (Deem, 1998:50). South African higher education institutions are moving in this way, as evidenced in the accounts some respondents gave of their work environment and the management style of the institution as a whole. Morley also comments that "there has been an insertion of the

quality discourse and public accountability” (Morley, 1997a:235). In South Africa, these are deeply tied into discourses of redress and transformation in the higher education context as seen in the White Paper on Higher Education (DoE, 1997a) and the National Plan for Higher Education (DoE, 2001). Deem (1998) interestingly raises the gendered dimension of this ‘new managerialism’, arguing that there is a “gender-specific set of practices and values, both infused by masculinities and developed by male managers” (Deem, 1998:49). The gendered aspects of work and organisations is discussed later in this chapter and also in the next.

For several of my respondents, tension was created, both leading up to and after the merger. People felt as though they had little input in decisions that significantly affected their working conditions. The management of the new institution is recognised as having to deal with a difficult situation, but is also perceived as having dealt with it poorly, without sensitivity. A top-down approach was adopted and as a consequence people felt alienated and out of control: “people wrote long documents about why ‘that’ was a bad idea and none of that had any impact, the decision was already taken, there was a strong feeling of disempowerment” (Participant H, lines 166-173). Another example of difficulty concerns how jobs were re-allocated once the institutions were merged, “the Deans (former) of the faculties had to give up positions ... contractual positions ... so people did give up ... that’s why I had a former Dean in my school ... so you had to apply for jobs ... it's one of the equity issues ... and selection process ... and then deal with it ... then there were people who were 'Heads of Schools' previously ... who may not have got positions ... major changes ... suddenly from being in charge you are the follower ... people had to move ... people had jobs in different schools now had to compete for jobs ... sometimes, because of the equity issues, we may compromise efficiency ... staff had emotional problems ... lots of tensions” (Participant B, lines 245-252).

Two things are important to highlight here. Firstly, two separate institutions were coming together and there was a lot of overlap in terms of courses and administrative and academic posts. And secondly, there was a change in the structure of the new institution, compared to the two separate ones, because a College model was adopted

and this disrupted the operations of both institutions. A great deal of tension arose from these changes: “the VC basically just instructed them and they were moved ... people arrived and packed up their offices and took them across ... there was lots of unhappiness about that and it kind of lingered and then with the merger discussions” (Participant H, lines 158-160). Participant H adds that the ensuing management style “can be incredibly authoritarian and autocratic ... really pushed us very hard and he used sometimes quite unorthodox and intimidation techniques to make people get on and do it ... so has not been an easy, happy merger in the sense of people all happily following the leader ... some were bludgeoned, some were pushed out” (Participant H, lines 147-150).

One gets a clear sense from this last quotation that the time surrounding the merger was tumultuous and that many of the problems were caused by management not being adequately sensitive to the situation. Recognising the mammoth task the university management had on their hands, one of my respondents commented that, “I suppose the form of change and the magnitude that we have been talking about ... I don't think you could avoid it; perhaps some of the tensions could have been avoided, lessened ... if some of the individuals who were placed into senior management positions were a little softer, a little more flexible, but you see they were all driving this process (I will be judged according to how successful I drive the process) and there is a heck of a lot that needs to be done so let's do it. I think perhaps a few more softer, more caring, more flexible people driving the process, perhaps a little more focus on the humanity and a little less focus on the hard efficiency. I mean people can deal with change if they are coached and shown and supported, but to have things thrown at you, is not helpful” (Participant G, lines 141-149). Clearly, not all aspects of the merger were amicable and collaborative, which in reality is the nature of most mergers, whether hostile or not. Another respondent put the tension down mainly to academic culture, arguing that “it's always had a cut-throat attitude ... I've spoken to people from universities all over the world in fact, over the years, and their attitude is pretty much the same ... universities are not nice places ... you tend to think there's a competitive ruthlessness in the commercial world but this is very powerful in universities ...” (Participant F, lines 74-77). I am

not inclined to agree with Participant F, but suggest instead that what people at UKZN have experienced are some of the necessary challenges and discomforts that come with such large-scale institutional change, and wherever change on this scale is embarked on there will always be issues and problems at local levels in particular.

However, it is important to note that some of the challenges discussed thus far are not purely local problems. For instance, the impetus to be more research oriented reflects a global trend in higher education. Multiple factors must therefore be considered when examining equity in higher education. This is reflected in a statement from one of the respondents at UKZN who is a Head of School: “it’s ongoing and as we start moving towards equity progress other things will start working out... there are a lot of drivers ... higher education [sector] for example. While you may have teaching force that is largely white or largely Black after equity interventions... there is difficulty in getting public recognition and institutions of higher learning is as good as its research ... so you see how this now alters the situation ... at the one level trying to meet those demands of the country ... of equity ... there are other drivers in higher education ... so for example you could be pushing the idea of research because you want this to be a research institution so you have to employ researchers who will be able to deliver ... you have to make compromises and balances of those things” (Participant B, line 142-150). Another example that is not locally specific concerns the challenge faced by junior academics. The increased student enrolment rates to a large extent reflect global trends and have meant that universities and lecturers all over the world find themselves teaching in classrooms where numbers exceed capacity and they have to balance the often conflicting demands of teaching, administration and research. In addition, it is sometimes junior staff who have higher overall workloads, which further constrains their time to do research. A recent doctoral graduate in UKZN’s Faculty of Education, who was also part of a mentorship program designed to groom students in the university for an academic career, expressed these tensions. In her estimation, “junior lecturers cannot move up because they are too busy teaching and doing administration and they have no mentors” (Participant J, line 10). In addition, the emphasis placed on having the right credentials and publications can help

academics to advance in their careers, but in the South African context the unintended consequence is that this frequently reproduces the place and privilege of senior white academics who already have publications under their belts. Wherever it stems from local or global level, such pressure has put a further strain on the move toward a more equitable higher education system.

Some of the academic staff in UKZN's Faculty of Education talked about their experiences of the management style of the new institution as rule-bound and constraining, which relates to the discussion above on the shift to a research focus. Also the struggle between maintaining the integrity of the institution and moving towards equity remains acutely felt by the staff. Initially the post-apartheid government emphasised both the need to achieve social and institutional redress, and the need to improve quality and global competitiveness. That has shifted somewhat in the last few years, with quality and efficiency fore-grounded, while equity takes a relative back seat. As a result race, and gender equity concerns play themselves out in the context of larger organisational and institutional troubles, some of which are local, others of which are national, and some of which are global. The different 'spheres' or 'geographies' of textual influence are differently concerned with equity and with quality and in the depth of the everyday, the pressures of requiring PhDs, of demanding research-output, of mentors, and so on, results in a persistent disadvantage that is less and less addressed in institutional texts and discourses.

While it is true that the texts discussed in this chapter have an organising function, people at different levels of the institution interpret them differently, and this is true of both State level and institutional texts. The discussion that follows further investigates the gap between the expressed intentions of various texts and policies and how these are experienced locally and in practice.

Texts in Practice: Personal Futures, Institutional Fates and the Vanishing of Women

Around the new democratic State, South Africa's political and religious leadership banded together with the common goal of a united, multicultural country. Bishop

Desmond Tutu coined the phrase ‘Rainbow Nation’, which quickly became the State and popular mantra, encapsulating the hopes and dreams of a new non-racial and non-sexist society. This vision was symbolised in a new national flag, and a new national anthem that included two African languages, English and Afrikaans. This was framed and institutionalised in the liberal, rights-based discourse enshrined in the Constitution. It would be accurate to say that the nascent years of the democracy left many South Africans hopeful about future change. The metaphor of the Rainbow Nation continued while policy after policy required redress, and required it quickly. The hope of a Rainbow Nation began to dissipate, as it became increasingly revealed as more statement than reality.

It is very clear, for instance, that in the UKZN Faculty of Education Employment Equity Plan (UKZN, 2010) the long-term agenda is to produce a Faculty where white men are a minority and Black African people are a majority. This does not sound like Rainbow Nation people. So in Extract 4, Participant F’s exasperation comes partially from believing that the ANC’s Rainbow Nation could be achieved without pain and would exist above legislation and institutional goings-on. The reality of a rapidly Africanising of the country and foundation of a set of associated institutions is rather different. As sector by sector began to enforce the employment equity strategies mandated by the government, people like Participant G (Extract 3) and Participant F (Extract 4) became quickly disillusioned.

The metaphor of a rainbow was perhaps not the most useful one to guide an approach to equality and multi-culturalism, even if one accepts the emotion espoused in it. But analytically it is important to explain what happened with regards to equity and transformation when the dream of the rainbow nation did not work. As the preceding discussion shows, a much more stratified and targeted approach took its place. The South African higher education landscape was fractured and segregated along racial, ethnic and geographical lines. The UDW was a historically-Black university created for Indian students, and the University of Natal was a historically white-institution for English-speaking students. At the time of the merger, UDW had a predominantly African student body and Indian staff, and the University of Natal

had mostly white students and staff, with a small number of Black students. The struggles and tensions experienced at the newly merged institution were not just ideological but material. Because of the nature of Apartheid, physical bodies and the social categories arising became a strong organising symbol. Depending on the colour of one's skin, people largely were on side or the other. Whiteness became synonymous with apartheid, and blackness with the anti-apartheid struggle. In reality of course things were much more complicated; there were Black people who worked for and tacitly supported the apartheid regime, police officers for example, and similarly, there were white people who had fought against apartheid and supported transformation.

When the merger happened, the two institutions with more different demographics and management styles were consolidated, with lot of conflict arising as a result of: "it was quite hurtful and it still is ... when the merger took place with UDW for the new managers to label the old Edgewood and those of us on the old management team as sort of coming straight out of the racial system of the past ... it was not appreciated, I don't think, the degree to which we tried to do what we could not do to undermine the system and fingers were pointed ... you come out of white privilege ... now take your place in the queue ... and do as the rest of us tell you ... of course that's part of a changing system ... but I think there wasn't a full appreciation ..." (Participant G, lines 26-34). Participant G felt that he was being labelled as an apartheid sympathiser, reflecting the racial and political binary that had earlier characterised South Africa, the legacy of which exists in social and political life.

In the same discussion, Participant G added, "I think that ... when there's a merger like that you square yourself up: what are we in for, who is gunning for us, how shall we defend? It is true to say ... my perception ... that the Indian folks came all guns blazing and [in] the white liberal camp ... we were caught 'What's happening' and the Indians took over in many ways ... lot of white folk were caught totally off guard ... it sounds racist but I don't intend it to be ... and their way of doing things quickly established itself as opposed to the old university of Natal which was far more, I think, respectful of the individual, and the growth of the individual, and the space for

the individual to grow. In that sense it was very much your liberal institution ... our focus was on the individual student and we as staff members could try this or try that ... as long as were being ... delivering ... in the loose sense of the word you were left ... your peers and your students would soon know if you were drifting, or working” (Participant G, lines 74-84). What is interesting here is that institutional troubles are reduced to racial ones, and they are depicted in a clear binary way. The dynamics of a power struggle that could result from any merger become, in this context, refracted through race. I say this not to discount what the respondent has said, but to illuminate the underlying tensions as revealed in a discourse that perceives one side pitted against another. The discourse of ‘us and them’ is mentioned again and again by UKZN respondents. For instance, another respondent said, “I think there was a bit of apprehension around the merger between Natal University and UDW, that apprehension was from both sides. Ex-Natal people and ex- UDW people vie for power and position. My perception was there was a lot of concern that particularly with the appointment of the Dean at the time that the UDW was going to simply try and impose its way of thinking on the new faculty from their side they were very concerned that what existed here was so entrenched and so established that heaven and earth would not move it, so I think there was a lot of apprehension from both sides about whose vision and whose model of teaching education was going to prevail was it going to be the Westville one, the Edgewood one, University of Natal one, the Dean appointed was an overtly Westville person and was quite aggressive in whole style of speech and so on...” (Participant F, lines 18-26). This is a particularly strong expression of the divide.

In the various equity reports and other documents, there is a ranking, a pecking order, in which women, particularly Black African women are positioned at the top. However this was not reflected in the interviews, in which it is Black men who were articulated as benefiting most from the equity measures. In policy texts at State level, as well as at institutional level, and also as exhibited in the Faculty and School Equity plans, gender equity is very much part of the transformation agenda. However, does the discursive presence of gender equity necessarily lead to confronting and overturning the entrenched institutional sexism and male dominance

that exists? In exploring this question, I draw on my interview with a white female academic who has been at UKZN for seventeen years to illustrate the challenges that remain, despite proactive gender equity policies and strategies.

A cursory look at the demographics of the Faculty of Education (Table 6) might lead one to conclude that women enjoy considerable inclusion, as reflected in their relatively high numbers overall. Education as a discipline almost universally draws a higher number of females; however, they often remain on the lower rungs of the academic ladder. This pattern of having higher numbers of women in lower academic positions is reflected across the higher education sector, as shown by in Figure 3. Even in a Faculty with a disproportionate number of women there are few in senior positions and rises important questions about what the possible obstacles are to women moving up the academic ranks.

What was notable in my interviews, which were conducted with both men and women, is that gender was conspicuously absent. The gender inequities at UKZN were occluded in people's organisational talk. When the respondents made reference to gender, it was as an appendage to race, which reflected the organisational discourse. Why is this so, when women are clearly prioritised as a designated group in employment equity strategies and plans? At least some of the explanation is to be found in how organisations are configured and how gender enters into the discourse and practice of the day-to day functioning of the University. The Extract 5 and Extract 6 are taken from my interview with a white female senior lecturer, who spoke of the challenges of being a woman in academia.

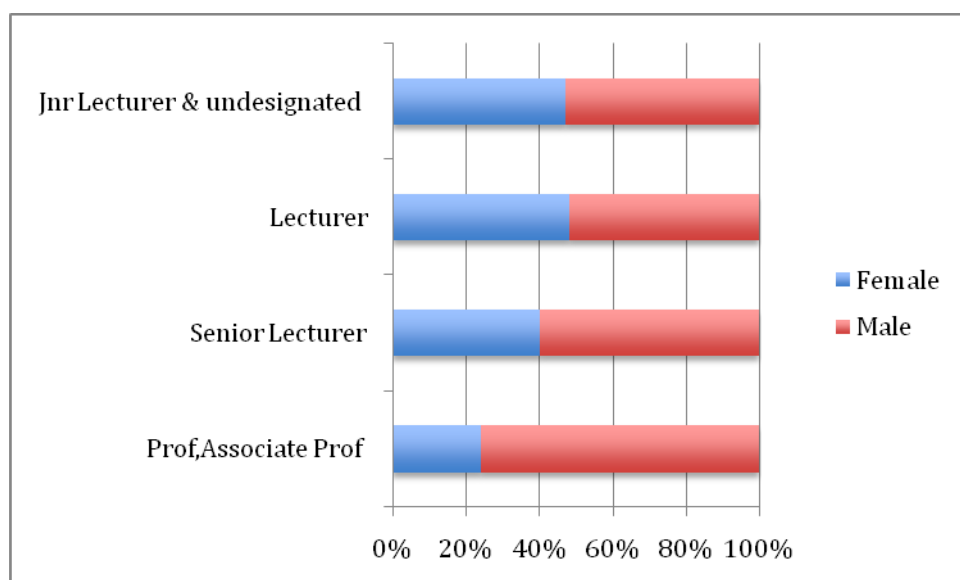


Figure 3: Academic Staff by Gender and Level of Appointment (2007)
(Source HEMIS)

Academic Staff Ranking in 2006 (Permanent and Contract)								
	Senior Prof	Prof	Assoc Prof	Senior Lecturer	Lecturer	Junior Lecturer	Total	%
AF			1	4	13		18	12
AM		2	1	2	11	1	17	12
CF					4		4	3
CM				1	2		3	2
IF		2	2	2	19		25	17
IM			1	5	9		15	10
WF			2	5	31	1	39	27
WM	1	1	3	9	12		26	18
Total	1	5	10	28	101	2	147	100
%	1	3	7	19	67	1		

Table 6: UKZN Faculty of Education by Academic Ranking

Extract 5

“We tend to talk in education like gender is not really an issue but it is an issue. In a sense there are far more women in education but far less in leadership. And in the case of students there are more women in schooling sector, and in terms of staffing as well. There has always been a sense of a fairly large number of women in staff but not necessarily in management...” (Participant I, lines 42-47).

Extract 6

“I’ve never had a sense of being discriminated against and I’ve found it a very supportive environment. I’ve been asked many times “would you stand for Head of School?” and I say I can’t right now, I have 2 children who are 8 and 11 and part of me feels like I’m letting the side down because we need more women in leadership. I know I could do the job the demands are just too excessive, in terms of time you need to work, hours you need to work. Our Dean must be working 12-13 hours a day... with family you cannot do that... those executive jobs... outside academia jobs, any corporations, they demand stuff of you and if you want a balanced life it is not possible” (Participant I, lines 107-116).

Read together, Extract 5 and Extract 6 point to two important elements concerning the experiences of women in higher education. In Extract 5, Participant I (lines 42-47) points to the lack of women in leadership roles in Education, despite the high numbers of women in the Faculty. In Extract 6, Participant I (lines 106-116) communicates that she has experienced no individual discrimination, indeed to the contrary. However, she does point out that there are time constraints which have stopped her from advancing in her career. I understand these barriers as being structural, because ‘the job’ in practice exceeds the normal working week. As a consequence, Participant I experiences a sense of guilt because there is an opportunity to be taken, but at the same time she is unable to due to the excessive time required to fulfil the obligations of leadership positions.

Acker (1990, 1999), Buswell and Jenkins (1994) and Martin (1994) offer useful ideas concerning how women become over-looked, sidelined or actively discriminated against in organisations, in particular concerning the structural and

procedural elements of organisations, rather than interpersonal prejudices and sexism. Their work is useful in analysing how, even in the presence of strong equity policies and strategies, women continue to be disadvantaged at UKZN.

Rather than concerning gender as a social role and identity, Acker understands gender to be “a fundamental aspect of social processes and structures” (Acker, 1999: 178), arguing that “this understanding of gender (is) fundamental to arguments that organizations are ideological formulations that obscure organizational realities, including the pervasiveness of male power” (Acker, 1999:178). She also proposes that, “underlying both academic theories and practical guides for managers is a gendered substructure that is reproduced daily in practical work activities and, somewhat less frequently, in the writings of organisational theorists” (Acker, 1990:86).

The work of Acker (1990; 1992; 1999), Buswell and Jenkins (1994) and Martin (1994) indicates that the dominant discourse in organisation theory is that organisations are an abstract, gender-neutral entity. By contrast, Acker (1990, 1999), Smith (1990a), Czarniawska (1992) and others challenge the ontological basis of organizations as abstract entities by separating organisational structures from the people in them, and reject the view that they are gender-neutral spaces. Acker (1990; 1999) and Smith (1990b) in particular argue that organisations are embodied and consequently gendered spaces. For Acker, organisations are a key site of the social reproduction of gender and class relations and she views organisations as comprised by and articulated through social relations and networks: “the work of organising goes on through interactions between people, women and men, women and women, men and men, supervisors and subordinates, co-workers and between employees and customers, clients, consultants, or others from the outside” (Acker, 1999:183). This concept of an embodied and gendered organisation is important for understanding gender inequality in institutions, including higher education. Acker summarises a gendered organisation as one in which “advantage and disadvantage, exploitation and control, action and emotion, meaning and identity, are patterned through and in terms of a distinction between male and female, masculine and feminine” (Acker,

1990:146). Starting from this position, I am interested in exploring *how*, rather than *why*, this might be so in the UKZN context. Acker argues that a gendered organisation means, “that gender is present in the processes, practices, images, ideologies, and distributions of power in the various sectors of social life” (Acker, 1992:567), and this is certainly observable at UKZN.

Acker (1990; 1999), uses the example of a ‘job’ to illustrate her point, proposing that ‘a job’ relies on the notion of an abstract and disembodied worker and is defined in terms of reified tasks and duties legislated from within the larger organisational context. However, rather than being truly neutral, the worker in fact most closely resembles male patterns of behaviour: “the concept of ‘a job’ is... implicitly a gendered concept, even though organizational logic presents it as gender neutral. ‘A job’ already contains the gender-based division of labour and the gendered separation between public and private sphere” (Acker, 1990:149). These render it masculine. Acker goes on to argue that “the closest the disembodied worker doing the abstract job comes to a real worker is the male worker whose life centres on his full-time, life-long job, while his wife or another woman takes care of his personal needs and his children” (Acker, 1990:149). An example of how seemingly gender-neutral or indeed anti-discriminatory processes are disembodied in this may concern the UKZN Recruitment and Selection Policy on ‘Inappropriate questions’. This specifies that “the panel should ensure that they do not ask inappropriate questions that may appear discriminatory to the applicant or other panel members. For example: “Are you married?” “Do you have children?” or “Who collects the children after school?” Asking questions about aspects of the candidate’s life outside of their work experiences may be discriminatory” (UKZN, 2009a:24). While it is easy to see that such questions are often discriminatory they also refer to the material realities of some women’s - and some men’s - lives and indicate that these may not be being completely separated from their work lives. Forbidding gendered questions in a space that is only nominally ungendered avoids reframing the worker as actually gendered and also avoids institutional accommodation to many women’s everyday reality.

Acker argues, then, that in working practice, organisations are embodied processes and always “located in material, concrete bodies, mediated, of course, by meaning and ideologies” (Acker, 1999:191). This can be linked to Participant I’s articulation of the rules and demands around work hours at UKZN. Extract 5 and Extract 6 point up that time is a commodity required to rise up the ranks of the organisation, but is one that many women (those with children) lack. The demand to commit as many hours as possible in leadership positions, which Participant I expresses in Extract 6, is understood as merely part of the job and seen as gender-neutral, with the best worker defined as the one who is able to give the most time to the organisation (Buswell and Jenkins, 1994). However, many women experience different time pressures from men, due to domestic responsibilities or what Martin (1994) calls the second shift. Employment equity policies consistently fail, at State and also institutional levels, to recognise that men and women often have different assumed obligations outside the work-place, and Martin (1994) argues that women are less likely to move up the academic ladder specifically because of this. The Education Faculty at UKZN, for instance, has no female Heads of School, as Participant I points out in Extract 6. And interestingly, none of the men in the interviews mentioned to me any concern they had with balancing work and home life. The result makes it possible for institutions to construct any tensions between them as essentially a personal problem.

Buswell and Jenkins argue that “the effectiveness of control through time as a patriarchal strategy is increased when equal opportunities policies and practices define ‘merit’ and ‘ability’ in terms of total commitment to the organisation” (Buswell & Jenkins, 1994:83). The UKZN employment equity policy embodies more than an equal opportunities policy. Recognising that in South Africa the playing field is far from equal, it adopts affirmative action to avoid benefiting those who have previously been advantaged and to actively promote redress. It can be argued, given the commitment to redress, that the UKZN policies sensibly recognise the need to address structural obstacles to promoting gender equity. I would also argue that such policies are limited by UKZN’s failure to fully appreciate the role of domestic divisions of labour in impacting on women in the labour market. As Buswell and

Jenkins state, “employment equal opportunities policies operate by treating workers as competitive individuals whereas women’s additional careers of motherhood, consumption and housework need to be studied in the context of the labour market and the labour process” (Buswell and Jenkins, 1994:86). In addition, Martin (1994) argues that the continued reification of the public/private dichotomy disproportionately disadvantages women. One way this plays out in academia is through what she calls the tenure clock – referring to US academia – and its coincidence with the biological clock. The timing of what is in the South African case ‘promotions review’ similarly often coincides with the raising of young children. Thus Participant I, (lines 113-121) comments that she has been unable to take up more senior positions in the Faculty because she has young children, and her responsibilities as a parent at present clash with her career mobility.

The institutionalised gender inequality that characterises the academy faces little challenge for as long as the focus remains on numbers. The discourse around gender, more so than around race, at State level (and often taken up at institutional level) it focuses primarily on increasing the number of female bodies in various institutions. But, as Martin (1994) comments, a simple ‘add on’ approach is unlikely to lead to major success, for fails to address the structural issues that impact on women’s experiences once they are in the academy. This means that even if the number of women in an institution reaches a critical mass, this is unlikely to change the hierarchy of posts if there are structural factors that keep them primarily in lower academic positions. Women’s experiences can be explained through their structural location within the university and its organisational practices, rather than by personal characteristics. And as discussed earlier, similar, issues also prevent racial equity from being sufficiently addressed by using a ‘numbers’ approach.

The pervasiveness of gender policies and strategies at the institutional level might lead to the view that there is recognition, at least discursively, that universities are indeed gendered spaces. In reality, however, these policies do little more than bring in a few more female workers, with little concern for the structural location of women and the overall masculinity of the organisation. The central problem with

viewing organisations in the gender equity way is that it perpetuates and reproduces the domination of masculine principles and practices in the authority structures of organisations (Kanter, 1977). As long as organisations are understood as being gender neutral as exemplified in the notion of the disembodied workers and extra time commitment used as a measure of suitability, the problem of gender inequity and inequality will persist.

Relations of Ruling

The UKZN case study was selected because it is a merged institution that eventuated from the State goal to promote and achieve institutional redress. Importantly, UKZN also provided an opportunity to retrospectively examine an equity process that began several years previously and thus it provides a departure point from which to gauge the progress made towards achieving greater equity. Examining equity in the context of a merger is interesting for several reasons, the most salient for my purposes being that it was the merger of two institutional realities, each with their own vision and mission statements, their own textually-mediated discourses, processes and practices. And the Education Department was a particularly interesting site of research because of its history of smaller mergers and incorporations and so having a longer history in dealing with redress and equity than the other two universities I am researching.

The IE approach encourages my research to explicate *how* equity has come to be organised as it is at UKZN. Consequently in this case study, the interviews have been used as an entry point into investigating the social and ruling relations of the Education Department. The accounts provided by my interviewees have led me to the conclusion that despite having the progressive policies in place, that equity remains a challenge. Three important analytical themes have emerged as a result: the textually mediated nature of equity management at UKZN, the fault-lines or disjunctures between the institutional and the embodied/experiential, and the gendered nature of the organisation.

In the investigation in this chapter, I have discussed various State and institutional level equity texts, with such texts of course central to IE research. Firmly anchored in the experiences of my interviewees, I have explored how these texts come to organise the work of academic staff of the UKZN Faculty of Education. The textual relations of ruling are in fact such that texts do not necessarily produce the desired interpretation or desired goals at local levels. Boss-texts, that is, the higher-level texts that produce subordinate texts, may not directly impinge on the day-to-day realities of the people in the organisation. Also texts do not always have the impact they are designed for. In some cases, the policy texts themselves seem to embed conflicting agendas, as with the Recruitment and Selection Policy (2009b) at UKZN, where the simultaneous demand for excellence and the pursuit of redress have led to obstacles in meeting the latter. These tensions, both within the policies, and those between the policies and the larger institutional goals, in the UKZN case result in the blunted effect of equity policies in the institution as a whole. In addition, the Employment Equity Act (DoL, 1998), a document intended to ensure race and gender equity, can be used as a means through which some people, women in this instance, continue to be marginalised. Thus the lack of coherence in the Recruitment and Selection Policy (2009b), resulting from the pressures to meet both institutional demands and the requirements of state level policy, leads to equity policies and measures that can only ever have a limited effect.

The disjunctures between institutional discourse and individual experience were most apparent in the accounts of some white male academics interviewed. They are located in non-managerial posts and express feeling disempowered and marginalised by equity measures. This is largely to do with their institutional position and location and demonstrates to them that the promise of the rainbow nation is broken. For these men, the realities of the institution, and their actualities of their lives, is characterised by disjuncture between personal futures and institutional fates. The white man interviewed who was at middle management level had a more positive view of the institution, and he articulated his experiences less in terms of a personal attack and more in terms of an inevitable and desirable institutional transformative process. Standpoint and institutional location inform experiences; however, they are drawn

into the same institutional processes. Importantly here, the UKZN case study also reveals disjunctures at multiple levels in and outwith the institution and between the local and the extra-local. The tension between local needs and national demands, which relates to the hierarchy of texts that exists, conflict with and impinge upon local, institutional texts and needs. In addition, the disjunctures between equity and quality, teaching and research, and junior and senior positions, discussed in this chapter lead to the perpetuation of discrimination at UKZN.

Also strongly emerging from the interviews was the absence and continual marginalisation of women at UKZN. UKZN, like all organisations, is a gendered institution. The University's structures and processes disconnect people from their lived and material realities, creating a context in which a disembodied but actually male worker comes to define the accepted institutional practice and discourse. Understanding organisations as essentially gendered sheds significant light on how gender inequality can continue to persist despite progressive equity policies and strategies. Even affirmative action can fail when it does not tackle other structural pressures but focuses on numbers, rather than the experiential reality of women's lives. So, in spite of 'gender-neutrality' having been overcome in hiring criteria, it persists in the everyday realities of work in a supposedly gender-neutral institution. Indeed, it might with some justification be claimed that the equity in practice and supports the illusion of the 'gender-neutral' institution, by affirming gender at its point of access only.

Grounded in the experiences of the academic staff of the Education Department at UKZN, this chapter has been useful in revealing the ways in which texts organise local practices and procedures in the daily work of equity management. The daily activities of these frontline workers are coordinated by institutional and trans-local texts with resultant disjunctures being apparent. It has also explicated the extra-local relations of ruling that impact on the management of equity.

Chapter 6

UCT: Inequality Regimes

Introduction

This chapter deals with equity at the University of Cape Town (UCT) at both staff and at student levels. Although the initial aim with this case study was to explore the role and sequences of action regarding UCT's equity texts, all my respondents directed me to an important debate that was occurring on the campus at the time, which concerned student admissions, and this is why the chapter has focused on equity at both levels. Smith (1999), whose Institutional Ethnography (IE) approach frames my research, argues that researchers adopting this approach need to be guided and steered in their research by what the respondents articulate the problematic for investigation to be, and this is what has led me to explore in some detail the UCT Admissions Debate.

The process of discovery is key to IE. Part of this process involves the analysis of various documents and texts, and my concern here is how they have entered into the social organisation and social relations of race and gender management at UCT. Smith describes texts as being "the bridge between the actual and the discursive" (Smith, 1992:92). Institutional ethnographers share an understanding that the work of individuals becomes abstracted to the institutional level through texts, and "...the activities of a wide range of individuals are obscured in these phrases and final documents produced" (Eastwood, 2006:183). Smith argues that these texts "perform a lexical suppression of the presence of subjects and the local practices that produce the extra-local and objective" (Smith, 2001:159). Eastwood adds that "the texts take on a fairly nebulous status once they are negotiated, in that they become available to be taken-up in various settings by various people who may be other wise unconnected with one another" (Eastwood, 2006:187). This process is important in my analysis, in that under the ontology of IE, the "dynamics that have been

abstracted ideologically into concepts such as...[equity, redress and transformation] seemingly operating without human agency, can be reattached to actual activities being carried out by actual people” (Eastwood, 2006:184). Thus I aim to reinstate, as much as this is possible, the activities that have become abstracted phrases and processes, such as “policy is produced”, as phrases such as these obscure the work done by people in their local contexts of equity management. I gain this understanding by explicating what it is that people actually do in their daily work of equity management at UCT.

Eastwood (2006) argues that discourse has the ability to conceal political agendas. Part of my research is to explicate the ideological character of the concepts drawn on, discussing how it is they become abstracted and what the implications are, giving close scrutiny to the terminology used by the University. It is important to elucidate the discourses of equity, redress, diversity and transformation that dominate the policy texts and equity documents that emerged as important through discussions with my interviewees and also which I have discovered along my research journey. The work of producing and implementing the University’s equity policy and its supporting texts is hidden, in that the researching, meeting, discussing and negotiating involved are rendered invisible in the formal textual level of institutional discourse. At UCT, a glimpse of the actual work that goes into achieving equity can be gained, a view that is absent when examining texts alone rather than in action and as people see them working.

Though it is not always easily discernable, the process of policy-making and its implementation is always a contested terrain and by extension the texts which produce and are produced can be seen this way too. Through the then recent events referred to above, UCT’s equity policies were placed under the spotlight, illuminating the contested nature of policy documents and equity texts at the University. It has suggested that: “...the larger discursive terrain serves to organise the ways in which actual people and the issues they represent get incorporated into (or disenfranchised) in the policy making process” (Eastwood, 2006:183). Some of the related questions I hope to answer in the course of this chapter are:

1. What is the prescribed sequence of action of equity documents at UCT?
2. What is the actual sequence of action of equity documents at UCT?
3. Are there standardized, recognisable formats through which the institutional actions of UCT become visible?
4. What are the standardised text-based work processes involved in employment and admissions policies?

Some, although not all, of the relevant policy documents emerge from one work site, senior management and its committees. Also, they have a definite destination, which is the faculty or departmental level of the institution and also HR, where they are then taken up and processed as ‘what occurs next’.

I began my exploration of race and gender equity at UCT through carrying out interviews with five people located at various institutional levels. It is through the accounts of their experiences that I gained an entry point to explore the ruling relations of equity management in the University. I interviewed an HR manager, a Dean, a Deputy Vice-Chancellor and a Transformation Committee Chair. My discussion in this chapter consequently draws on analysis of two forms of data: interviews with people who tackle transformation and equity issues at UCT, and various documents and texts taken from both within and outwith the University. These documents are all publicly available texts, while their purpose varies between internal and external use. In order to set up the discussion, I first discuss some important features of institutional texts.

Intertextual Hierarchy and Policy Texts

Institutional ethnographers are interested in texts, their intertextual relationships to one another, and how they enter into the social relations of a place or context. Dorothy Smith’s (2005) work discusses the interlocking nature of institutional texts such that they are rendered all-encompassing, covering effectively all institutional eventualities. In this discussion I focus on the hierarchical nature of texts, focused on by some Institutional Ethnographies. I also draw on the work of Stephen Ball (1993), who is not an institutional ethnographer but who none-the-less offers a useful contribution to the subject. Intertextual hierarchy is a concept introduced in the previous chapter to explain the inter-linked and hierarchical nature of texts in an

organization, as illustrated in Diagram 3. What resemblance does the subordinate text here bear to the boss-text? The boss-texts are used to legitimate the work of the faculty and department. The boss-texts also serve to establish the official discourse on equity and redress at the University level, and they have effects on the dominant language used and discourse drawn on throughout the University. The terminology and concepts in subordinate texts is organised by the boss texts. As policy moves between State and institutional level, there is opportunity for interpretation and reinterpretation. And during this move, as also with its moves within the institution, “gaps and spaces for action and response are opened up as a result” (Ball, 1993:11).

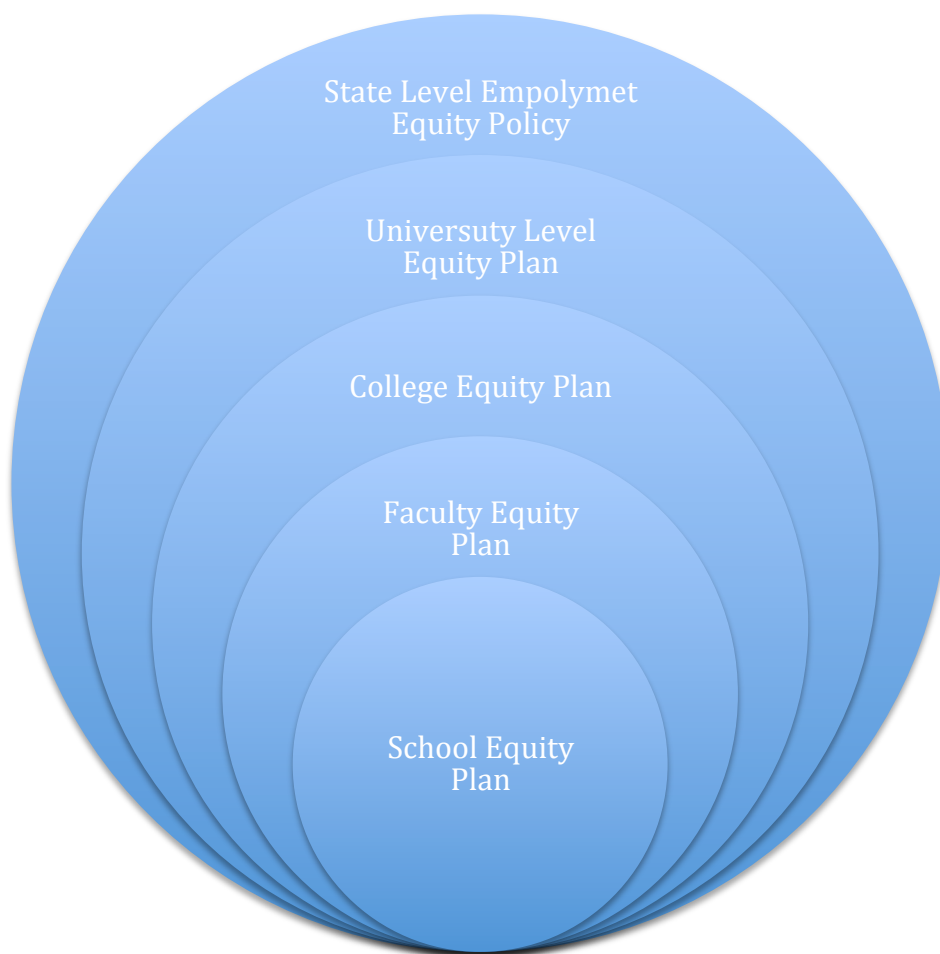


Diagram 3: Intertextual Hierarchy

Describing how equity policies are formulated at UCT, Participant U comments that they are “... largely driven by the Department of Education the employment equity

plan that each faculty has its rationale is state driven but within the university it is obviously included in its mission to appease diversity ...” (Participant U, lines 15-18). Policy developed and sanctioned at State level thus establishes the parameters around which equity is understood and taken up at institutional level, and as Ball adds, “state policy establishes the location and timing of the context, its subject matter and the rules of the game” (Ball, 1993:14).

Although not an institutional ethnographer himself, Ball’s (1993) approach to texts and institutional analyses very much echoes that of IE, which frames my work. I draw on his thinking about higher education policies and his argument that it is important to “bring together structural, macro-level analysis of education systems and education policies and micro level investigation, especially that which takes account of people’s perception and experiences” (Ball, 1993:10). He adds, “we can see policies as representations which are encoded in complex ways (via struggles, compromises, authoritative public interpretations and reinterpretations) and decoded in complex ways (via actors’ interpretations and meanings in relation to their history, experiences, skills, resources and context). A policy is both contested and changing, always in a state of ‘becoming’, of ‘was’ and ‘never was’ and ‘not quite’; “for any text a plurality of readers must necessarily produce a plurality of readings” (Ball, 1993:11). This approach is similar to Smith’s idea of the text-reader conversation discussed earlier in various parts of the thesis. Institutional ethnographers understand the text as being brought into being in the social world by the action of a reader. For Ball (1993) and Smith (2005), texts are not inert; they are also processes and outcomes.

Ball highlights the complexity of policies, arguing that they are rarely taken up in a local context in exactly the way they were intended to by policy-makers, and in addition, “policies have their own momentum inside the State; purposes and intentions are re-worked and re-oriented over time” (Ball, 1993:11). Importantly, Ball argues that policies “do not enter a social or interpretational vacuum. The text and its readers and the context of response all have histories” (Ball, 1993:11). This might explain why the EE policy has been met with such resistance in some contexts, as illustrated in some of the accounts of academic staff at UKZN. In this case study,

UCT understands itself as liberal and as having taken a stand against apartheid, and this complex history impacts on its current responses to equality initiatives.

Drawing on Foucault's understanding of discourse, Ball (1993) conceives of policy as discourse, asserting that it sets up the parameters of what can be spoken of and what positions can be taken up. Through policy discourse, further concepts and vocabulary are constructed and then later taken up institutionally. This does not mean, however, that policy-making and enactment is not a contested terrain. In fact, struggle and conflict often constitute an important part of the policy process, from policy-making through to implementation, and this will be illustrated in the second part of the chapter when the UCT Student Admissions Policy is discussed. Ball argues there are "real struggles over the interpretation and enactment of policies. But these are set within a moving discursive frame which articulates and constrains the possibilities and probabilities of interpretation and enactment (Ball, 1993:15), a point I very much agree with.

Employment Equity at UCT

In the Soudien Report, equity is described as a component of a broader understanding of transformation that includes effecting change in the "academic, social, economic, demographic, political and cultural domains of institutional life" (DoE, 2008:35). The Report goes on to say that "transformation could be reduced to three critical elements, namely policy and regulatory compliance; epistemological change, at the centre of which is the curriculum; and institutional culture and the need for social inclusion in particular" (DoE, 2008:36). In the discussion that follows, I will explore how the issues of regulatory compliance and institutional culture unfold in practice.

Extract 1

Participant T "... the big policies and the ways in which policies come into being at the moment ... are in a sense mandated from the top ... so you would have a ... brief that would be given from the Senate or Council for a policy to be developed. So that's where it

would start ... but it might have started from a debate down below and brought to that kind of level (senior)... so ... it could have begun almost anywhere ... and it is very possible that somebody would simply write a letter to the Vice-Chancellor and say he or she is very unhappy about such-and-such and he might say ... yes I recognise how important this is and I'll take it to Senate ... I'll take it to Council ... and what happens in this institution generally is that a small task team is put together to generate a report .. and in most occasions in this institution these task teams will do a little consultation around the university, talk to people and they would then bring draft reports to Senate and Council meetings .. depends on what the issue is...sometimes longer or shorter. We've just now gone through eight drafts of the disability policy and it's still not satisfactory to many people. It went to Council and has just now gone back, actually it's eleven not eight and just gone back to the disability unit where it started. That is not normal, that's an unusual case. There was another one: the racial harassment policy took two years. There had been an earlier one but the one that was adopted last year had been debated and backwards and forwards for about two years. It really depends on what it is. In contrast to that we just finished now a mediation policy on alternative dispute resolution approaches inside the university ...really an important part, and that by contrast we were able to pull off in three months, but maybe in some ways that is not as controversial as this other stuff, so it really has depended on what the subject has been on the issues under discussion. The sexual harassment policy took one year ...” (Participant T, lines 60-80).

Extract 2

“What happens is ... when you draw up employment equity plans for the Department of Labour over three to four years, what first happens is each year's report on the plan, at the Faculty level and in each Department. Say you take the psychology or sociology departments, they must on one form state what their profile is, then on another form they must say ... this and that .. then on another form they must say, what are the projections for next year, what do they predict for instance, they must say so that's 2010, then say 2011... they must predict how they change, obviously those are predictions based on retirement, new posts that they create, so then you must look at your plan and say “well I have got too many coloured females. What about the Black females in the whole university? The shortage would be African females, African men in senior ranks ... there are a lot of African women but they are all at junior ranks and all in admin ... so .. the few who have to benefit from employment equity are White women ... OK ... they are also candidates ... they have obviously not had the same education, so they are privileged in employment equity .. anyway ... then that's the

plan. Then in a few years you must have to report on the plan to see that you have met the targets were set out .. if you did not you must say why. So .. the normal reasons are no qualifications, suitability .. you know .. they not always not true .. they are true in a lot of cases .. but sometimes a particular person has somebody in mind and that is all they want and if they can convince the Dean that that is the best person that person will be appointed ...” (Participant U, lines 103-12).

Extract 1 explains from one person’s standpoint the dynamic of internal policy development. It is not a linear process, but cyclical in nature, going back and forth between various people, committees and institutional layers. But what is clear is that this very much depends on the issue and the level of consensus that can be reached. Extract 1 also explains the top down nature of policy implementation at UCT. Equity management work requires the compliance of numerous people across the various levels of the institution, including Faculty and Departmental leadership. What is interesting in this is that the impetus for policy development could have begun anywhere in the institution, not just top management, and this says something important about the democratic nature of this institution.

The process of policy development is also clearly a dynamic and collaborative process, as seen in Extract 1, where Participant T explains that there can be several drafts of a policy document that have to go back and forth between various parties, across various institutional levels, before it is adopted. Just some of the people and institutional bodies involved in the generation of these texts include the VC, DVCs, Institutional Forum, Deans, HODs, HR, selection committees, and Working Groups. While it is true that the original impetus for the development of the Employment Equity Policy came from the State, within the institution it will have gone through the same process as the racial harassment and sexual harassment policies mentioned by Participant T in Extract 1. Ball echoes this view of policies and asserts: “the texts are not necessarily clear or closed or complete. The texts are the product of compromises at various stages (at points of initial influence, in the micro-politics of legislative formulation, in the parliamentary process and in the politics and micro-politics of interest group articulation)” (Ball, 1993:11). This open nature is

characteristic of both State and institutional level policies, and in the latter what Ball terms ‘interest groups articulation’ is represented by members of Council and Senate.

The State-level Equity Act becomes articulated and institutionalised in the university through the production and utilisation of various documents and procedures, such as the Employment Equity Plan and the Equity Reports which have to be submitted to the Department of Labour and which Participant U also refers to (Extract 2, line 105). In Extract 2, Participant U describes the process of compiling the Employment Equity Plans and Reports of the University as involving different levels of management, both faculty and departmental. Targets have to be set for various levels and categories of staff, requiring institution-wide involvement in the composition and collation of the report, a process that another informant describes as “religiously forward planning” (Participant T, line 30). Participant U elucidates the textual nature of making academic staff appointments, through describing the role that the targets set in the Employment Equity Plan play in shaping the appointment process. The sequences of action involved in this are inextricably tied to texts such as the Employment Equity Plan. Thus the textual dimension of equity management itself as a whole cannot be underestimated. Indeed, that Employment Equity Plans and Employment Equity Reports have to be compiled at all and entered into the daily work of both middle and senior management is a testament to the importance of texts in equity management at UCT. The analytical procedure of IE, which I have employed here, “results in an account of the day-to-day text-based work and local discourse practices that produce and shape the dynamic on-going activities of an institution” (Eastwood, 2006:189). Thus, in response to the question posed earlier, “What are the standardised text-based work processes involved in employment and admissions policies?”, I have shown through the accounts above that the Employment Equity Plan and Employment Equity Report are a significant part of a standardised text-based work practices in the management of equity at UCT. However, that there is visible implementation of equity policies does not necessarily mean that there is deep commitment to it.

Extract 2 suggests that the employment process at UCT is a mixture of more formal processes of selection and more informal ones founded not in equity texts but rather the unspoken realities of academic life. When Participant U says that the reason Black people are not hired is not always a matter of qualifications but because Deans already have someone in mind this points to the every-day institutional factors that can impede transformation. While it is not unusual for academic departments all over the world to have internally earmarked posts, in South Africa this is damaging to transformation goals.

Ostensibly there is a widespread buy-in to institutional transformation and a drive toward equity at UCT, with examples ranging from direct intervention on employment figures, through an employment equity policy, to diversity workshops. Participant U explains some of the institutional strategies and activities that aim to transform the institution: "... the transformation committee works on the demographics then it also works on improving the institutional culture, so we have activities like, celebrating different days, June 16th, Africa Day, those things, we also have workshops where we train our transformation reps, we have workshops in mentor-ship, on job shadowing, improving peoples professional status and we have welcome teas to celebrate peoples achievement... because the people in (Unnamed Department) are spread across the faculty we try and bring them together once a quarter so there is some connection in identity, those are some of the things you do" (Participant U, lines 88-95). Unfortunately not all these interventions will be useful. For instance, the Khuluma workshops in which staff met to discuss inter-racial conflict and stereotyping do not always receive the follow-up and review that will make them institutionally significant (Participant U, lines 182-194). Problems were identified, and then further plans were made to remedy these, but they had limited impact on equity measures and institutional transformation. The following extracts illustrate the institutional resistance to transformation efforts, despite widespread institutional policies and strategies.

Extract 3

“...institutions have actually adopted and bought into the policy framework of the State ... that's quite clear. So you've got compliance ... not ... actual ... it's more than implementation, it's the buying into what these policies are all about that one has not seen. So, you've got a commitment to see that all of these institutions to ... transformation ... all of them say so ... all have transformation plans... all of them... but all have people inside of them that are deeply unhappy... and I think that ... the way in which these institutions work is that they are very complicated spaces in which it remains possible ... within the discipline for these disciplines themselves to be spaces in which white supremacy can continue to play itself out. It's a hard thing to say ... because ... ostensibly ... a lot of these disciplines ... particularly in humanities ... are about inclusion ...but the way in which the disciplines get appropriated ... is to make that knowledge ... which is ... assimilated and internalise their white knowledge... in unconscious kind of ways ...” (Participate T, lines 209-220).

Extract 4

“Structures in which these kind of ideologies and attitudes of power are allowed to circulate and to make themselves felt, if you like institution building structures, structures like faculties, boards, senate meeting and so on, now those structures don't deliberately go out to exclude and to marginalise people. They don't say in their rules that we are against the inclusion of Black people in the university, but just the way in which democracy works here is that there are no rules in a democratic institution which forbade or foreclosed the ability of the will ... if you like, of the groups of people to express themselves. So the will in these institutions, its structures, is such that any issue that might arise ... can be ... an opportunity for the majority to be able to push it in one or other direction, it could be any issue... and so if you get a large number of people who ... think ... that standards matter... people will say that we, as senate are committed to preserving standards within the university ... you need to be pretty observant to recognise how that can be an exclusion and racialising phenomenon... it does not set out to be that ... but the effect is ... that... that is what it doesso the real difficulty is making the ...these spaces, spaces for the kind of debating which people are ... sufficiently self conscious and aware of their own institutional histories... and what those histories contain ...what those histories exclude and de-legitimise ... it's a very hard thing for those institution ... to do that ... unless you have ... a ... viable, critical mass of people inside those structures that will raise those kinds of issues ... so ... those structures will tend by default to be preservative,

conservative ... having difficulty being critical about themselves, they have immense difficulty.” (Participant T, lines 109-127).

In Extracts 3 and 4, Participant T refers to the conservatism that characterises many universities. This can occur at various levels of the institution, from the senior management structures down to the Faculty and Disciplinary levels of the University. Elsewhere, Participant T asserts that, “these structures ... if you like ... the heart of what a university is all about, so many universities are very jealous ... of how these structures are allowed to operate and they tend by nature to be conservative ...” (Participant T, lines 152-154). Speaking further on Senate and Council as structures, Participant T posits, “so you go into these structures and these structures would have immense difficulties in the sense to undo their own histories ... to abolish in a sense the mandates which they committed for themselves” (Participant T, lines 158-160). In both Extracts 3 and 4, Participant T asserts that it is the conservative nature of the university that is proving to be a hindrance to its own equity measures. The challenges facing equity management are understood more in structural than in individual terms by these respondents. This approach is in line with my own analysis of universities which is predicated on understanding them as being cultural entities, something which cannot be understood fully by focusing on individual actors and actions (Czarniawska, 2004; Tierney, 1988). In line with IE, I favour an approach that allows both the macro- and micro-analysis of institutional life.

The challenges that UCT faces, which Participant T (line 152) refers to as “the heart” of the university, can be interpreted and framed as cultural, that is, as pertaining to the institutional culture of UCT. For the purposes of my research, institutional culture is defined as “the deeply embedded patterns of organisational behaviour and shared values, assumptions, beliefs, or ideologies that members have about their organisation or its work” (Peterson & Spencer, 1991:142). Institutional culture has been identified by both the South African government (see Higher Education Act 1997) and by its higher education institutions as a key site of transformation (DoE, 1997a). In South Africa universities, rigid institutional cultures have been blamed for the lack of transformation and diversity (Kezar & Eckel, 2002, Steyn & van Zyl, 2001, DoE, 2008). Participant U reports that “people have found the institutional

culture at UCT very alienating, so that has been one of the major reasons for Black staff leaving ...” (Participant U, lines 60-61). Keup et al (2001) argue, “organisational culture can either facilitate or inhibit institutional transformation, depending on the fit between existing culture and proposed change” (Keup et al, 2001:3) a sensible conclusion to reach.

UCT’s institutional culture was identified by some of my interviewees as conservative and resistant to change. Participant T, for instance, argues that “most universities are jealous of what they think are their achievements and operate in a very similar way as this one (UCT), it would be unusual to find a university even a fairly modest university which isn't going to be in some ways a conservative space. Of course that is not what universities are all about, universities are not meant to be so conservative, not so self preservationist. They are meant to be spaces that are hospitable to dissent in every kind of way, they should be encouraging dissent. But unfortunately our universities are, virtually all around the world, are so preservationist are about keeping intact the structures of privileges and power” (Participant T, lines 181-187). If, as Keup et al (2001) contend, the success of transformation depends on the fit between the existing institutional culture and the proposed change, then in the case of UCT one can speculate that transforming the institution and moving toward greater racial and gender equity will be difficult.

Participant T argues in Extract 3 that while UCT, like other universities in the country, has adopted equity policies, it lacks buy-in and enthusiasm around these policies and transformation. This is echoed by Martin Hall, the former DVC responsible for Transformation, who has written that “UCT has not moved away from seeing employment equity primarily as a compliance requirement, rather than as an opportunity for the advancement of diversity” (Anonymous, 2008). There is, then, some resistance to transformation at UCT despite the outward display of being progressive.

Keup et al (2001) identify resistance to change as one of the primary things around which institutional culture during institutional transformation can be organised. In

Extract 3 and Extract 4, Participant T expresses resistance to transformation at various levels of the institutional, most of it stemming from senior management structures such as Senate and Council as well as from disciplinary sub-cultures. Keup et al (2001) helpfully point out that, “sub-cultures-based on organisational role, institutional position, or disciplinary affiliation often flourish within university environment, supporting their own set of customs, beliefs, and practices that are frequently incongruent with the larger university culture, not to mention the goals of most transformation efforts” (Keup et al, 2001:3). This is seen in Participant T’s comments. In Extract 3, Participant T suggests that disciplines can be places where conservative ideologies are fostered and white supremacy remains unchallenged, despite ostensible transformation. On this, Keup et al point out that “sub-cultures can also create symbolic spheres of ownership on campus that create serious stumbling blocks to change, especially when proposed innovation appears to threaten these rights of possession” (Keup et al, 2001:3). Well-intentioned equity policies can become weakened or vitiated as they move through the institutional processes from development to implementation, and sub-cultures within the institution play a part in this.

Regarding resistance to transformation on university campuses, more generally, Keup et al state that, “historically the greatest clash has occurred between administrators, often the initiators and leaders of campus transformation efforts, and the faculty, the body frequently charged with implementing educational changes” (Keup et al, 2001:3). The Soudien Report (DoE, 2008), argues that “employment equity planning at most institutions has become a compliance exercise with no focused discussions, leadership and direction on confronting the manner in which employment equity, particularly with regard to Black South Africans is compromised by traditional hierarchy of higher education institution” (DoE, 2008:40). Despite their general adoption and implementation, employment equity policies and other transformation initiatives face challenges which persist, and the findings of the Soudien Report are strongly echoed in accounts of my interviewees.

Extract 5

“... it was clear that the message, as it goes up and down the line .. there was no clear communication ... often with that faculty level ... was completely dependent on how active the transformation committee was .. and how the staff in a particular faculty related to transformation ... so ... it was the collective at that sort of level broke down .. each selection committee that interviewed a candidate had to have a equity representative ... and again.. that was not so for each faculty ... in some faculties we would just call them in at the last minute to rubber stamp an appointment ... and also a lot of the time those reps felt without power within the selection committee because often they were quite junior ... and the power dynamics happened there .. one complaint about it .. it worked unevenly... structures worked unevenly .. and it all depended on the leadership of the faculty .. in some way the individuals were important ... as you were saying you don't want to look at the individuals but individuals actors do take a particular role .. OK .. so all depended on the leadership ... and then a few years ago they made the Deans accountable for transformation .. which meant that the Deans had to take it seriously because it was part of their performance appraisal ...” (Participant U, lines 43-56).

In this Extract, Participant U indicates it is not just a matter of lack of buy-in, but that there are real structural and communication barriers to successful equity and transformation initiatives. Participant U places responsibility for this squarely on the shoulders of middle management and what occurs as Faculty level, proposing that the success of transformation and equity measures is dependant on the commitment of the Transformation Committee. For instance, the lack of an equity representative on Selection Committees might be viewed as being flexible and as a display of trust amongst peers, as in the UKZN case study, but it is experienced and described in the UCT context as disorganised and inconsistent and reflecting the lack of commitment to transformation on the part of the Faculty. This is further illustrated by the last minute inclusion of equity representatives to “rubber stamp” appointments and by appointing junior staff member in those positions. The challenges, then, are not always the result of active resistance to transformation but of structural issues. Participant U adds that the policies and strategies are “all very good but it's how they filter down and how they get acted on (that is) not always so good and then always depends on individuals and the ideology the agency” (Participant U, lines 68-69).

Participant U concludes, "... I think the biggest stumbling block where the policies get unstuck is at middle management with the HODs because it all stems from them whether they will implement it and what kind of environments they create, so there is a policy but how it is implemented is then up to individuals and the accountability isn't enforced, if accountability was enforced, then they would be maybe more proactive rather than reactive" (Participant U, Lines 95-99). This is the key point at which the sequence of action gets disrupted according to Participant U. Keup et al (2001) comment that "reform efforts are predicated on the assumption that proactive, intentional change efforts in... universities can succeed despite the predilection for tradition and maintaining existing culture" (Keup et al, 2001:3), and the departmental level is where this could happen.

The ruling relations of UCT, and indeed most universities with similar leadership structures, mean it is possible for people at middle management to frustrate the equity goals of senior management. While it is true that universities have a top-down hierarchical power structure, this can become complicated: "because faculty members' average tenure with the university far outlasts that of most presidents (VCs) and administrators, faculty are often the gatekeepers of culture and traditions on the campus" (Keup et al, 2001:3). As a result, managers at middle levels hold a significant amount of power relating to the success or otherwise of equity measures in a university, relying on the commitment and buy-in of the Deans and Heads of Department. Extract 5 also helps to answer the questions posed at the start of the chapter, regarding the prescribed and actual sequences of action. These are not always the same (prescribed and actual sequences), because Faculty and Departmental equity management work takes on a character and life of its own that can differ from what is prescribed in the policies. The following extract shows how a Dean can determine the direction and tempo of transformation in their Faculty.

Extract 6

"It all varies ... all depends how people interpret how serious they are about it how committed they are to it all, it's very uneven ... in a faculty like ... we have a transformation committee .. when I was Chair I saw to it .. and also our Dean .. she was very forceful about .. so that in each selection committee there is a transformation rep and that person is there from the start to the end ... from the time that the

job is registered as a job description to the end where the interviews and nominated and also she was very clear that we had to change the profile .. she was also very clear that if there were two candidates and they were not of equal standard ...but if a Black person was appointable then that person was ... OK ... but even so ... with a very clear directive we have made some changes .. but there is still a lot of room for improvement .. and then the argument is ... a new field .. and this and that .. but you know ... some of the academic staff that we have appointed ... Black staff .. they haven't lasted that long ... even though CHED is supposed to be smaller, more nurturing, accommodating people ...” (Participant U, lines 73-85).

In Extract 6, Participant U illustrates how the commitment to equity and transformation of the Dean can create an environment conducive to promoting racial and gender equity. Thus while earlier interview extracts show how middle-management can serve to hinder the process of transformation at UCT, Extract 6 illustrates how the opposite can be true. Regarding his role in the transformation of his faculty, Participant V comments that, “I'm free to implement my own strategies when I can think of any novel ones I deem likely to be effective. This doesn't happen often, because the strategy space is quite pinched. One measure I introduced was to give recognition for promotion and tenure purposes to academic staff who mentor more junior staff in research. I think that lack of research networks has been one (comparatively minor) barrier to transformation in Commerce staff (Participant V, lines 18-23)”. Echoing the relative flexibility of middle management, Participant U suggests, “there are rules and procedures which they have to follow but if they deviate then they have to provide motivations for this, so this is a kind of autonomy with responsibility and accountability” (Participant U, line 100).

Thus Deans and also HODs can play an active and pivotal role in effecting local and by extension institutional change, through creating incentives for staff in a Faculty or Department. On this point, Eastwood suggests that, “...rather than view institutional discourses as prescribing actions, we might see them as providing terms under which people become institutionally accountable” (Eastwood, 2005:113), something I find helpful in thinking about equity matters at UCT and elsewhere.

However, having a Dean or HOD who is active in redress does not always guarantee success in equity goals. In lines 84-85 in Extract 6, Participant U importantly points

to both local and extra-local factors that impinge on institutional transformation at UCT, for despite the best efforts of middle-management, retaining Black academic staff members can be difficult. Discussing the push and pull factors impacting on the retention of Black staff, Participant U argues, "...you know the big argument people use is that... with Black people, for instance ... it can take long to train someone ... to become an academic and people don't necessarily want to wait that long .. salary is low ... better uptake in other positions .. that is ... but the converse is also that people have found the institutional culture through UCT very alienating .. so ... that has been one of the major reasons for Black staff leaving" (Participant U, lines 59-63). Referring to the same challenges, although in an academic Department, Participant V asserts, "... in the Commerce Faculty staff transformation is more of an abstract aspiration than a living reality. We have no difficulty in attracting Black staff from outside South Africa. However, almost no Black South Africans with good business degrees are willing to pass up the high salaries they can earn in the private sector to study for postgraduate qualifications. There are thus typically no Black South African candidates for academic posts we advertise. In this context, maintaining attentiveness to equity objectives in selection committees is somewhat beside the point" (Participant V, lines 30-37). Both these quotations show that there is a general understanding that Black South Africans are more drawn to the private sector than they are to academia. Participant U explains this partially in terms of the ruling relations of academic life and the inhospitable institutional culture of the University, but significantly also in terms of salaries and financial rewards and the extra-work needed for academic success.

In the discussion above, I have shown the important role that middle management plays in the success of equity measures. In UCT's recent history it has focused on appointing VCs who have had a transformative agenda. Participant U describes: "...you can say the new VC he was appointed as a transformation VC ... so his portfolio is transformation ... so he takes the ultimate responsibility for transformation... and in his office ... he appointed some people that deal with transformation" (Participant U, lines 18-20). Another of my respondents adds to the picture, commenting that, "people bring different emphases to the job, when Prof

Ndebele (former VC) was here there was a fairly high emphasis on issues of policies of transformation .. very high level .. in the sense ... it tried to encompass the whole university because it was so high level it wasn't really visible ... it was not part of how people would think about ... how they would do their jobs .. whereas now.. we are very much more ... it began under him also.. this shift .. we have very much more ... focussed and smaller policies that are aimed at ... dealing with facets and issues of what this climate and environment are all about, they are not general. So they look at particular difficulties that we are having ...” (Participant T, lines 90-97). Mamphela Ramphele was the first Black female VC in the history of UCT, holding the post between 1996-2000. She spear-headed long-lasting changes, some of which included a heavy focus on employment equity. But according to some people, these measures were fast and harsh, driving the institution from transition to transformation. Dr Price (the current VC), however, puts it more positively in saying that “Mamphela Ramphele took the institution by the scuff of the neck, shook it up, restructured and reshaped it, and brought it into the 21st century” (Price, 2008:1).

These comments emphasise the role and importance of senior leadership at UCT, because it is from there that widespread institutional change has been initiated. They also show the importance of middle management in the successes and failures of equity and transformation initiatives. The chain of command in employment equity policies and strategies is that: “Heads of Department are responsible to the Deans and Deans are responsible to the DVCs” (Participant W, lines 81-82). Even though there is officially a top-down hierarchy, in actual practice middle management wields a lot of power. On the surface, transformation at UCT is driven specifically by senior leadership, but its success is contingent on middle management. Inequality is embedded within the structures and structural practices of the University. Participant T argues that the institutional structures of UCT and of universities generally allow for the reproduction of closed and racially uniform systems of power. If this actually so then equity measures can have little chance of success, no matter how many equity polices and interventions are put in place.

So far in this discussion I have drawn on interview data to explore from particular standpoints the equity policies at UCT and how they are managed and experienced. Ball argues, “it is difficult to say what the effects of policy will be by reading off a text, rather they are the outcome of a struggle between interests in the context” (Ball, 1993). My analysis indicates that the role and power of middle management in effecting institutional change cannot be underestimated. Indeed, the position of middle management constitutes the fault-line along which equity measures, their definition and implementation are contextualised and struggled over. My respondents highlight how Deans and HODs have both welcomed and resisted the changes. Keup et al optimistically argue that, “resistance can be perceived as an indicator that the change effort has permeated the outer layers of the institution and is moving beyond a state of adjustment or isolated change to alter the cultural and structural elements of the institution on the collective level” (Keup et al, 2001:3). If this is the case, then perhaps UCT is merely experiencing growing pains. In what now follows, I explore another policy pertaining to the transformation of UCT, the Student Admissions Policy and the role it plays in the institution striving for greater equity.

The Students Admissions Policy and the ‘Great Debate’

Investigation student equity matters at UCT includes analysis of several texts and in particular the Higher Education Act 101 (DoE, 1997b), White Paper on Transformation of Higher Education (DoE, 1997a), Students Admissions Policy (UCT, 2008, 2011b, 2012), and Student Equity Policy (UCT, 2004). The focus is primarily on the student admissions policy at UCT. The UCT case study was originally focused on mapping the documentary trail of equity texts, but through the interviews carried out I became aware of the student admission ‘Great Debate’, the result of which had led to the textual and the actual and local realities at UCT colliding. In response, the case study data includes the institutional texts, the interviews conducted and transcripts from the admissions debate that took place in September 2010.

The enrolment pattern in universities in South Africa began to change in the late 1980s and early 1990s, on the eve of political transformation. The overall trend in

university access from the early 1990s to 2010 can be summarised as increase in enrolment. However, although the overall picture is one of increase, this is not the case throughout this twenty-year period. There was an influx of students, Black and white, between 1990-1994, followed by a dip in the latter half of that decade. One of the key goals outlined in the Higher Education Act 1997 as well in the White Paper for Transformation (DoE, 1997a) was to increase overall participation rates nationally. The biggest growth was seen in the Technikons, with an enrolment growth of 126% between 1990 and 1994. This was a period of rapid growth and it was in this context that the first phase of policy interventions was developed. In this period of excitement and change new goals and visions were envisaged for the higher education system (Bunting, 2006b). But despite the growth in overall participation, in the mid 1990s racial disparities remained significant, with 9% African, 13% Coloured, 40% Indian, and 70% of white people enrolled in higher education institutions (from the age range 20-24 in the respective populations). It has also been argued that, rather than reflecting a large increase of people from the previously disadvantaged populations, in fact “changes in the racial distribution of student enrolments are not the result of a major increase in the rate of participation among those who were previously excluded from higher education system. They stem primarily from a sharp decline in the enrolment of white students in the public higher education system” (Cloete et al, 2004:104).

UCT’s enrolment data shows similar trends. Disparities in access and success rates at UCT continue along racial lines as evidenced in the data shown below. The gap between student enrolments along racial lines has been closing over the years, which is a result of key policy interventions at the university, but still success rates amongst previously disadvantaged students remain problematically low (Soudien, 2010). Jansen argues that the current problem of access for Black students has to do with the legacy of Apartheid and its discriminatory impact at all levels within South Africa (Jansen, 2003).

In 2000, the percentage of African, Coloured and Indian students in the headcount of enrolment in historically white institutions was 62% and the percentage of women

was 58%. Despite these promising figures, when I interviewed Participant T he commented that, “we now have a real problem of getting students through. The historically disadvantaged students progression is not as good as those of white kids, we don't have a single policy, but there are a lot of initiatives that have been put in place to try and address all of these and this is a result of the time. So it’s the VCs but it is also the time in which we find ourselves now, there is much more awareness now in the country than there might have been before, around social justice and success. It had been a part of the discussion even 20 years ago but much more so now, there's a lot more consciousness around the country around transformation and having to include these issues at the personal and individual experience of the student in the environment, and how the individual student is doing in relation to the environment...” (Participant T, lines 97-106). Participant T points out the increased consciousness concerning transformation issues at State and institutional levels, and also the focus on individual students and their chances of success. However, despite these attempts, the cohort-analysis data below show continuing disparities in success rates between students from different racial backgrounds:

Cohort Analysis at UCT by Race:

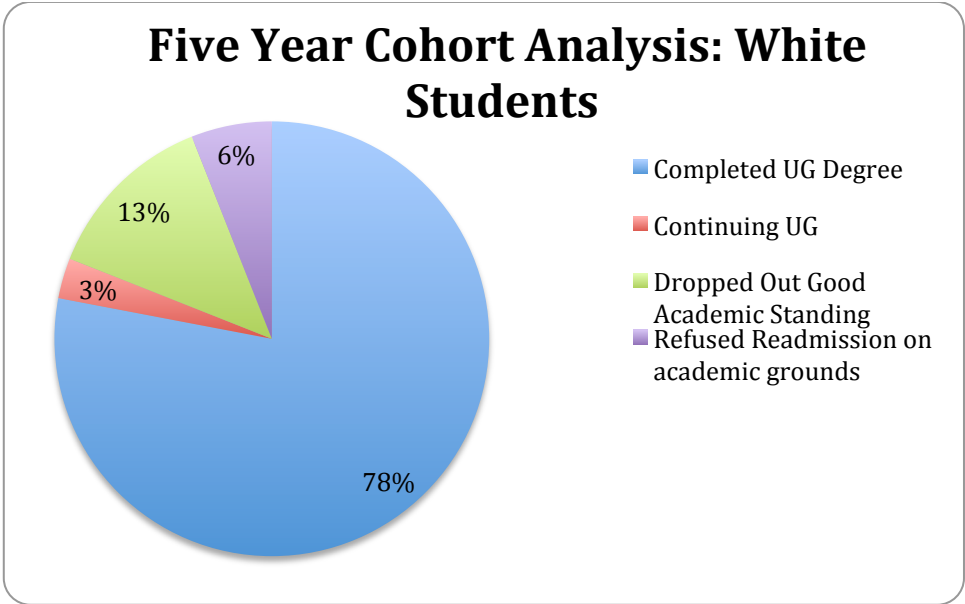


Figure 6: White Students

Five Year Cohort Analysis: African Students

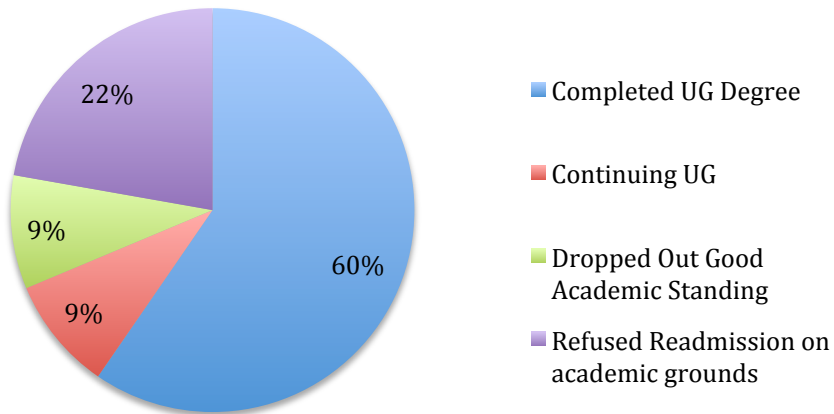


Figure 7: African Students

Five Year Cohort Analysis: Indian Students

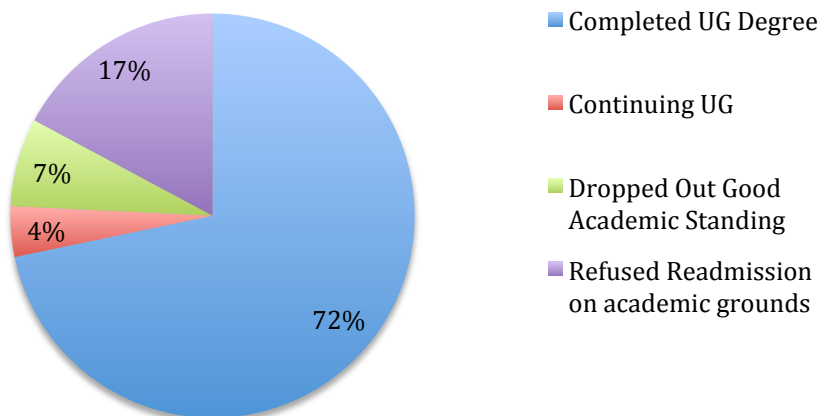


Figure 8: Indian Students

Five Year Cohort Analysis: Coloured Students

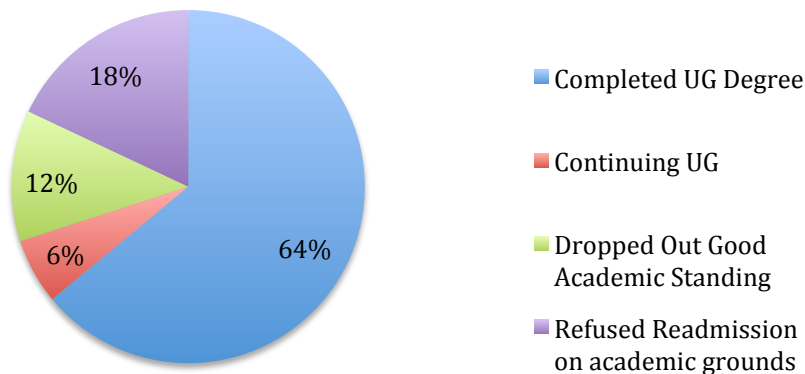


Figure 9: Coloured Students
(Data from UCT Admissions Cycle, May 2010)

The challenges that UCT faces regarding access and success amongst previously disadvantaged students also exists nationally, and are not unique to the institution. Reporting on the national picture regarding access and success, Soudein states that “the national higher education participation rate is 17%. For Black students it is 12% compared to that of about 60% for white students. Of this complement of 12%, based on the 2000 cohort, only 30% graduated after five years, and 56% left the institution without graduating” (Soudien, 2010:10). As this indicates, even though access has improved, success rates amongst previously disadvantaged groups remain low. The cohort data above show there are clearly unequal success rates along racial lines. This challenge is mitigated by UCT using a range of interventions to redress access and success rates among previously disadvantaged populations, some discussed earlier in the chapter.

The main factor behind problems with access and success rates is what Soudien (2010) calls the crisis in the schooling system. Nan Yeld (2010: 180), Dean of Centre of Higher Education Development (CHED) at UCT, similarly argues that there are significant inequalities in the schooling system characterised by disparities in funding, resources, teacher qualification, all of which lead to an overall disparity in

university preparedness: in a 2003 study, for instance, the math and science scores of formerly white schools were double those of formerly African schools. This problem is popularly accepted both within and out with academia, and was echoed by an interviewee who commented, "...I think students come to university unprepared in many ways ... the schools are very dysfunctional ...if they cannot solve the schooling problem they will never solve it at the university ... and we are getting fewer and fewer Black students ... they are not making it ... even on the lower point score ..." (Participant U Lines 217-220). Here Participant U, like others I interviewed, draws a direct link between challenges in diversifying university access and challenges faced at the secondary school level. Her thoughts are echoed by another respondent, who suggests, "you will have to start back with the schooling system .. because they have millions of children and there is a small limited amount of teachers as people are not seeing this as an attractive career any more ... not even at primary school level ... so that is going to be a big job for the government" (Participant W, lines 67-75). This dilemma perfectly illustrates how the extra-local (the schooling system) can be linked to and impinge on a local university context. The equity work at UCT, then, cannot be seen in isolation from the educational, socio-economic and political context of the country as a whole. These concerns were also echoed in the UKZN and discussed more extensively in the University of Pretoria case study, where students and academic staff expressed concern over the gap between school leavers and first year university students.

Recognising the external or extra-local challenges that impede the transformation and equity work of the university, as early as the 1980s UCT had policies in place aimed at mitigating the deeply entrenched inequality. One such was the Academic Development Program (ADP). ADP is a Department housed in the CHED Faculty and its aim is "... to develop and run a range of programmes and courses designed to foster the access, retention and success of students from disadvantaged educational backgrounds" (UCT, 2012c). Participant U discussed this and stated that, "ADP are an academic support program dealing with a lot of student issues about economic development extended programs, the writing centre here, computer technology centre, the language development, recruit foundation courses there is lot of support

for Black students and also financial support and at the residences. There are quite a few new initiatives and basically the admissions is still race based, we still have a quota for Black students but because of the poor schooling they don't meet those quotas the schooling is so dysfunctional for Black students ... ” (Participant U Lines 123-129). Institutional strategies and interventions include the Alternative Admissions Research Project (AARP) as well as the ADP. The ADP was previously known as the Academic Support Programme (ASP) and was in place from the early 1980s (Mabokela, 1997). These programmes were developed in response to the changing demographics of UCT at the time (Mabokela, 1997; Leuscher, 2009, Favish and Hendry, 2010), and have been criticised by both academics and students. In particular, students taking these programmes reported feeling separate from the larger departmental community and this often caused friction in classrooms. But this is not widely appreciated, so although the course of my research I found that the University of the Witwatersrand recently decided to drop their ADP programmes, at the same time the University of Pretoria was considering implementing them. The idea is to help previously disadvantaged students to “catch-up” academically but the result of a lack of belonging compounds the situation rather than helps.

Extract 7

“In terms of the redress responsibility, or commitments that the state has made in legislation that we have adopted here ... we have an admissions policy ... and I think we are one of the few institutions in the country to have an explicit admissions policy which specifies how we will deal with previously advantaged and disadvantaged and spells out on what basis students will be admitted into the university. The admissions policy is an important instrument which we actively renew every other year, so each time its come up for renewal there has been a great deal of debate around how it should be updated .. we are now in one such phase ... there is a lot of discussion about... how redress ought to be carried out through this process ... and it's involved wide layers at the university .. and so that is an interesting manifestation of how policy in some ways is more than just a piece of paper” (Participant T, lines 15-25).

Extract 7 points out several important features of the UCT admissions policy, including that is inspired by State-level activities, and importantly that the policy is not an all-powerful dominant entity at the university but is open for negotiation.

Extract 7 also comments that the admissions policy is tied to larger state level policies (Participant T, line 15). In fact, the Admissions Policy 2008-2009 cites the Higher Education Act 101 (1997), which requires that “the admissions policy of the public higher education institution *must* [my emphasis] provide appropriate measures for the redress of past inequalities and may not unfairly discriminate in any way” (Higher Education Act, 1997, Section 37). The use of the word *must*, which I have emphasised, points to the demands and made of public institutions such as UCT. Indeed, the University recognises and perceives the State demands about this as binding and asserts that they “interpret the requirements of the Constitution and the Higher Education Act as an *obligation* [my emphasis] to address the legacy of racial discrimination in schools and in the higher education system, and to address the legacy of other important categories of inequality, in order to build a diverse student profile that substantially reflects the demographics of Southern African society...” (UCT, 2008:2). It is clear, then, that the University’s policies have been influenced by the commitment to redress, diversity and transformation at State level. Both the State and the institution’s equity texts frame equity and transformation in terms of obligation rather than desire, as illustrated in the use of words such as “*must*” and “*obligation*”. This emphasis therefore impacts on how policies are taken up at institutional level and how they are received there. Implicit in the language of obligation is possible lack of acceptance, whereas the success of widespread transformation of this nature depends on it being framed as benevolent and desirable.

As discussed in previous chapters, texts can be understood as existing in a connected and often hierarchical relationship to one another. Boss-texts are those texts that organise how other, more subordinate texts are to be organised. An example of a boss-text is the Higher Education Act discussed here, and it is on the basis of this that the university’s admission policy, the subordinate text, was developed. This connection is made explicit in the 2012 Admissions Policy, where it is spelled out that “our admissions policy is framed within the values of the Constitution and requirements if the Higher Education Act. This Act requires that our admissions policy must provide appropriate measures for redress of past inequalities and may not unfairly discriminate in any way... We interpret these values and requirements as

placing an obligation on us as a University to provide redress for historical, racially-based discrimination in society, schools and higher education; we accept this obligation in part we acknowledge that the effects of apartheid-era discrimination remain structural fault lines in our society” (UCT, 2012c:2). The policy was ratified by Council but with the input of various committees, among them the Admissions Review Task Team. The policy can be summarised as having two key imperatives: firstly, to ensure redress in access for previously disadvantaged students; and secondly, to ensure their success once in the institution. The dual goals of access and success are echoes from national level policy such as the White Paper for the Transformation of Higher Education (DoE, 1997a) and the Higher Education Act (DoE, 1997b), which later states that “ensuring equity of access must be complemented by a concern for equity of outcomes. Increased access must not lead to a ‘revolving door’ syndrome for students, with high failure and drop-out rates” (DoE, 1997a:17). This connection between the State and institutional level policies can produce issues regarding coherence that ultimately impact on the effectiveness of the university’s policies.

One of the key analytical goals of IE is to explore and understand the local, exploring its interface with and differences from the abstract and translocal. UCT’s admissions policy, like many institutional texts, is abstract and elides the human actions that go into both the construction of the text and also its implementation; in short the work that produces and enacts the policy disappears. In Extract 7, Participant T highlights how texts come not only to organise but to become part of social action and of the social relations of UCT (Participant T, lines 24-25). What is also important to draw from Extract 7 is that policy enters into the discursive realm of the university (and sometimes spills outside the institutional boundaries). The Admissions Policy goes under review annually and through the ensuing debate it is brought into the local context regarding the equity work that can change the shape and culture of the UCT. Such debate brings into the open the work behind policy-making and implementation, while this is usually hidden in the daily functioning of the institution.

Through this annual debate, the translocal (public discourse on equity) and local (institutional realities) are brought face to face, making it possible to observe how the institutional intentions and discourses mesh or clash with the more local intentions and discourses of academics, students and the general public. This is an important instance of the disjunctures that Smith (2005) urges institutional ethnographers to be aware of. In addition, there is no single institutional voice, even if it appears this way in equity texts and policies. It is clearly not as simple as people with a single vision drawing up a single text and implementing it without any issues arising. Policy-making and implementation is a messy and complicated process, even in institutional contexts, and Smith argues that “in institutional settings, such procedures subordinate people’s experience to the institutional; in that transformation, local actualities become institutionally actionable” (Smith, 2005:187), something which certainly plays out at UCT.

In Extract 7, Participant T refers to the annual renewal of the admissions policy. There were two reviews of the policy requested by UCT’s Senate, the first in 2006 and the second in 2008. In 2006, the Admission Review concluded that race was the best proxy for disadvantage (Anonymous, 2009). On 28 April 2009, a panel was assembled to discuss transformation and the use of race categories in UCT admissions policies. A newspaper article by Vice-Chancellor Price sparked a second wave of the debate both inside and outside the academy. The first review led to the production of a report, headed by Professor Martin Hall, at the time the current DVC then responsible for transformation, and the second by Professor Crain Soudien, the current DVC holding the transformation portfolio. In both cases, the recommendation was to continue with the use of racial categories in the student admissions process (Favish & Hendry, 2010). When requesting the second policy review, the VC also requested that a university-wide debate should take place. A task team was put into place to oversee the review process in early 2009.

In 2009 the UCT Council requested an analysis of whether race should continue to be used as a proxy for disadvantage in admissions decisions, that sparked an institution-wide debate known at UCT as the ‘Great Debate’ and was revisited in

2010-2011. In April 2009 a panel discussion was held on the University's campus. The controversy and debate this generated reverberated from the UCT community to the larger academic circles of the Western Cape as well as extending to mass media both locally and internationally, with media connecting it with the larger race politics that permeate South African society. The discussion continued in both private and public domains during the following year. In July 2010, Vice-Chancellor Price and Professor Neville Alexander continued the debate on public television (ETV). In September 2010, another public debate on the campus yet again explored the merits and demerits of the University's current admissions policy and sparked further debate that played out in the media, with reports appearing in various newspapers (*Pretoria News, The Star, Cape Times, Sunday Times and New York Times*) and radio shows (e.g. 702). These debates fed directly into the development and reformation of the UCT's student admissions policy as framed by the discourses set up in the policy documents at both State and institutional level. The debate around UCT's admissions policy illuminates the discourses of race and of equality drawn upon and reproduced in panel discussions and those occurring in various newspapers, including the *Cape Times, Business Day and the Mail and Guardian*.

The Student Admissions Policy is one of two UCT policies relating to equity at student level, the other being the Student Equity Policy approved by Council in 2004. However, the discussion here focuses on the Student Admissions Policy. Describing equity measures at the student level, one of my respondents stated, "there were different points for Blacks, lower points, they come in with lower points ... there are points for whites and Indians, points for Coloureds and points for Africans..." (Participant U, lines 134-135). Interestingly, the Admissions Policy document itself does not spell out the categories to be used in the admission process for redress purposes, but rather states that "selection of applicants is based on Admissions Points" (UCT, 2012c:3). The racial categorisations enter the process once through institutional documents. It is in fact not until the Faculty admissions policy level that it is evident that the points system is to be applied differentially across racial groups. At Faculty level, it is made clear that the admissions points of designated groups (African, Coloured, Indian and Chinese) are lower than those of white applicants (UCT, 2011a). Also as already noted, in the Faculty of Commerce,

applicants from designated groups may enter Academic Development Programmes (ADP). This indicates the interlocking nature of institutional texts: the Admissions Policy text alone does not introduce race-based practices, with this happening through the connection and integration of various institutional texts at several levels.

The admissions policy debate has seen some important shifts in the tenor of discussion. As part of the policy review process, a panel debate was held on UCT's campus on 2 September 2010. The panellists included the Vice-Chancellor, Dr. Max Price; Director of Project for the Study of Alternative Education in South Africa (PRAESA), Professor Neville Alexander; Student Representative Council (SRC) President, Sizwe Mpofu-Walsh; Chair of Council, Archbishop Njongonkulu Ndugane; and Professor Benatar from UCT's Philosophy Department. The debate at this point can be crudely summarised as, can and should race be used as a proxy for disadvantage in UCT's admissions policy? The panellists were divided between, those who thought that race should continue (temporarily) to be used in the University's admissions policy, and those who argued that race should have no place in the admissions policy of a post-apartheid university. The main argument of proponents of using race categories was that social and economic inequality in South Africa is divided along racial lines and thus race serves as a good proxy for disadvantage, especially in the absence of any better alternative. Dr Price, for example, asserted that 90% of South Africa's poor are Black, and so, race is a good proxy for disadvantage. He also argued that redress is necessary and desired and was not the bone of contention amongst the panellists or even the public: "I think... it is common ground that affirmative action is a good thing and that we should be doing it. That the society is unequal, for various reasons; that some people have been born into circumstances which do not allow them to do as well at school as other people, and that to further compound and aggravate that inequality, that legacy of inequality, by saying that we will only look at your school results as the basis of admitting you into university is simply adding insult to injury. And therefore that we need a form of affirmative action that recognises disadvantage, makes allowance for that in some way in the admissions process, then adds intervention programmes, academic development, etcetera, to ensure that those people, although admitted with lower

marks, ultimately have a good success rate. I think that that's common ground and that I don't have to defend affirmative action" (Price in UCT 2010a:2). It was generally agreed that previously disadvantaged South Africans should be given special help to enter university, but what did cause conflict was how such disadvantage would be measured. For Archbishop Ndungane, the measure of disadvantage was race, asserting that "in terms of the context where we are, we have to recognise that people who are disadvantaged, most are people who are Black like me, who have got no access to resources and yet strive to want the best for their children. And for me the solution is one that we must stiffen our spines and march to Parliament, knock at the doors of government and say we want an education in this country that prepares for the future of our country where all our children would come to universities like this because of merit" (Ndungane in UCT 2010a:7).

The panellists who opposed using race in admissions policies did so on the basis that race is not the best nor the only proxy of economic disadvantage. For example, Professor Neville categorically disagreed with using racial classification because it can lead to socio-political contexts and events such as apartheid and the Rwandan genocide (Neville in UCT 2010a:28). In addition, the continued use of apartheid racial categories was seen as distasteful, divisive and potentially dangerous, with Professor Benatar, for instance, arguing that the continued use of an untransformed, flawed and arbitrary classification system was not the best way to transform the institution. This group are in effect arguing that the master's tools cannot be used to dismantle his house (Lorde, 1984). Leuscher points out here that, "throughout apartheid with its many forms of institutionalised racism, The University of Cape Town maintained an official colour-blindness, yet precisely when apartheid ended, race became institutionalised in the UCT governance rules" (Leuscher, 2009:423). It is this seeming paradox that troubled the proponents of a colour-blind admissions policy.

In the actual admissions policy document, applicants are divided into two categories, signified by biological racial markers: the redress categories and the open category. Those in the redress categories are: Black South African, Indian South African,

Coloured South African and Chinese South African, while the open category consists of white South Africans. International students of all races are not required to classify themselves. With reference to the uses of these categories, the University states that “we will use your indication as a member of a previously disadvantaged category for effecting redress because it remains the best, initial, broad-brush measure of past structural inequality” (UCT, 2012c:2). However, it must be noted that these are essentially the same categories that were used during apartheid to racially classify the country’s population.

Professors Benatar and Neville both categorically disagreed with the use of race categories in the transformation process, for two related reasons. The first is that race-thinking of this kind is reminiscent of apartheid policies and racial practices, and the second that it goes against the non-racial ideal espoused in the new constitution. In the panel debate, Prof Neville asserted, “if you ask people to tick boxes, whether they identify themselves or whether you identify them, it is this kind of race thinking that you are entrenching in the heads of people...” (Neville in UCT 2010a:19). Concerning the ethics of race-thinking, Taylor (2004) asks whether race-thinking necessarily leads to racism. For those who answer “yes”, as some of the panellists did, then race-thinking must be unethical and should have no place in a democratic and colour-neutral South Africa (Taylor, 2004). It is the ethical challenge of race thinking as articulated by Taylor (2004) that is echoed in the panel debate: “there is no difference between benign and malign racial classification” (Morrison, 1994:320) and the very use of race-thinking is problematic.

Taylor also proposes another challenge to race-thinking, which he calls the ‘conceptual challenge’, referring to the proposition that other “notions can adequately capture whatever aspects of the world the race concept might helpfully point us to” (Taylor, 2004:29). This was articulated by Professors Neville and Benatar, who argued there were other proxies for disadvantage. Neville argued that, “you don’t have to see these things in terms of colour... These are South Africans we are talking about. And I’m saying again that in one-and-a-half to two generations the entire situation will have changed. Why do you want to see it over-night?” (Neville

in UCT 2010a:12). And in proposing a transformation strategy that does not rely on race, Benatar suggested that, “one thing you can do is, not just purely at what school you matriculated from, but how many years you spent in a privileged school. Okay, so if you have people who’ve been 12 years in a privileged school then you say, okay, now you don’t count as disadvantaged. If you’ve been there for the last three years of your high-school then you do. So you refine the mechanisms, and there are of ways of doing that” (Benatar in UCT 2010a:17). In a similar vein, Loury suggests that “to abide by the colour-blindness constraint in employee or student selection does not rule out the pursuit of greater representation for disadvantaged groups. Groups’ representation goals can be sought tacitly under colour-blindness: selection can favour a targeted racial group by over-emphasising the non-racial factors that are relatively more likely to be found in members of that group” (Loury, 2010:328). Applying the conceptual challenge to race-thinking leads to the exploration of other measures and means of effecting redress and in particular focuses on structural measures of disadvantage that do not rely on the proxy of race.

The conceptual challenges to race-thinking lead to the important concept of non-racialism, and indeed these can be understood as philosophical opposites of each other. In South Africa, non-racialism as “an ideal of societal transformation refers to a process in which a commitment to the ending of racial discrimination is complemented by a concerted programme to provide wide-ranging redress for the disadvantages that the majority of South Africans suffered in the past” (Sharp, 1998:244). The history and influence of the South African discourse of non-racialism has meant that its shape and trajectory differs from other race-neutral approaches elsewhere in the world, such as the colour-blinkered discourse of the United States. One of the key defining features of non-racialism in South African comes from the Marxist roots that framed much of the resistance to apartheid: “within a Marxist framework, non-racialism was consistent not with the integrationist assumptions characteristics of a politics of race neutrality in the USA, but rather to empower a disenfranchised black majority” (Ansell, 2006:339). Yet, in both institutional and public life, it is not always this radical and transformative non-racialism that people support, but a more liberal and non-transformative understanding.

While the continued use of apartheid racial categories can be seen to further reify race, my own position on the conceptual challenges raised is that the category of race should continue to be used in UCT's admissions policy because using the categories is not as malign as Morrison argues. These categories can be used effectively as a tool for the purposes of redress. Substantive racial equality can be achieved only by deliberate and targeted strategies towards redress. During apartheid, it was such policies concerning white groups and their implementation that led to vast material inequality amongst the country's populations. It is true that the continued use of such categories in the public and in the institutional arenas, makes it difficult for people to view one another as more than the colours of their skins and continues the reification of race. The reality is, however, that South Africans do not yet live in a post-race context and race continues to shape the material realities of life for all of South Africa's populations. Erasmus argues pervasively that "simply eliminating the concept race from our vocabulary will not ensure social justice, nor will it contribute to the making of anti-racial subjects" (Erasmus, 2010:336). Also challenging the liberal non-racial discourse, Ansell proposes that "rather than being put in the service of an inclusive agenda to break down discriminatory barriers, as in the past, the colour-blind ideal now functions chiefly as a moral or utopian one but one which also practically aids whites ...in their denial of racial hierarchy and their refusal to acknowledge racial privilege" (Ansell, 2006:334). Holding to the more radical and transformative roots of non-racialist discourses in South Africa, Sharp suggests that "one may hope that South Africa will be able to sustain a commitment to transformational non-racialism, and that the ideal will not turn into a myth that masks the persistence of gross inequalities along racial lines" (Sharp, 1998:244)

Equity Discourses: Racial Inequality and Intersectionality

In *The Next 25 Years of Affirmative Action*, Du Toit identifies three ways of understanding equity in South Africa in relation to policy: 1) equity as redress, 2) equity as equality, and 3) equity as distributive fairness, explaining that, "in the first sense of redress, equity requires special benefits to those harmed by the apartheid system. In the second sense of equality, equity requires all social benefits to be

distributed equally across society. In the third sense of distributive fairness, equity requires that all be given equal opportunities of gaining access to societal benefits, but does not require equal distribution of these benefits” (Du Toit, 2010:100). These three conceptualisations of equity are not mutually exclusive, however, and all three are evident in institutional policies, discourses and the public debate regarding admissions and academic success at UCT.

In UCT’s admission policy, equity is understood as redress with clear attention paid to those who suffered under apartheid. In Extract 7, Participant T proposes that the policy was developed with the aim of redress and distinguishes between previously advantaged and previously disadvantaged people. This is evident in the Admission Policy, which states that the policy is about “access and redress...” (UCT, 2012b), and redress is also an ideal enshrined in the University’s Mission Statement: “... to be flexible on access, active in redress and rigorous in success” (UCT, 1996:1). This view of equity as redress was also echoed in the Great Debate. In defending the use of racial categories in the admissions policy, Vice-Chancellor Price expresses such a view: “society is unequal, for various reasons; some people have been born into circumstances which do not allow them to do as well at school as other people, and that to further compound and aggravate that inequality, that legacy of inequality, by saying that we will only look at your school results as the basis of admitting you into university is simply adding insult to injury. And therefore that we need a form of affirmative action that recognises disadvantage, makes allowance for that in some way in the admissions process, then adds intervention programmes, academic development, etcetera, to ensure that those people, although admitted with lower marks, ultimately have a good success rate” (Price in UCT 2010a:2).

The legacy that Dr Price is speaking of here concerns the systematic racial apartheid he wishes to rectify it through the use of affirmative action policies. Although the issue of fair and equal distribution underpins the discussions of social and economic transformation, in South Africa it is the struggle over redressing past injustices that gives the transformation agenda its true force. The principle of equity outlined in the White Paper on Higher Education Transformation (DoE, 1997a) points to the

importance of fair opportunities in both access and success. This is reflected in UCT's two-pronged approach to achieving equity: to diversify access, and to ensure academic success for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. The Higher Education Act (DoE, 1997b) and the White Paper (DoE, 1997a) clearly draw on all three understandings of equity raised by Du Toit (2010). And although the institutional level policies are framed by the national level ones which form the boss-texts, only one of the understandings of equity is drawn upon in the UCT admissions policy, that is, equity as redress.

South African policy-makers generally view higher education as “a key allocator of life chances, an important vehicle for achieving equity in the distribution of opportunity and achievement among South African citizens” (DoE, 1997a:1.3). I suggest that the problem is that the discourse of redress at State level is a necessarily moral one and may not easily fit into the increasingly efficiency-driven business model of the modern university. A moral discourse can find itself in a hostile environment in a modern university context, even though universities have traditionally believed themselves to be egalitarian and meritocratic spaces.

Concepts concerning social and distributive justice are useful in framing discussions of equity in universities. Distributive justice can be briefly defined as relating to justice or fairness in the distribution of goods or wealth. In this particular case, the goods in question are spaces in higher education institutions (access). In the early version of the UCT admissions policy, attention was drawn to the potential drawbacks of using race as one of the criteria for admission. The policy document states that the institution “acknowledge(s) academic merit as a main criterion for admission” and goes on to say, “we recognise the danger of perpetuating race as a criterion for admissions to higher education. We regard the categorisation of applicants by race as a necessary transitional mechanism for giving effect to the requirements of redress, whilst acknowledging that the use of race alone might serve to advantage middle class applicants and disadvantage applicants from poorer backgrounds, regardless of race” (UCT, 2008:1). The UCT admissions policy in its various incarnations, has articulated a commitment both to academic merit and to

redress, the latter being based on acknowledging past injustices. Although it is not necessarily always the case, the two approaches can be at odds, around issues concerning desert.

Lamont (1994) argues that who is deserving should be thought about as constituting a three-step relationship where A deserves X in virtue of f . The two approaches to thinking about how, who and what is deserving are articulated at UCT in the following:

1) Where academic merit is the main criterion for admissions, the position is formulated thus: a student (A) deserves university access (X) in virtue of academic merit (f).

2) Where redress is in the main criterion for admission, the position is formulated thus: previously disadvantaged student (A) deserves access (X) in respect of past and current unequal chances (f).

The access desired in both cases is university access, but the basis of what or whom is deserving differs. In the first instance, the basis is academic merit, and in the second this is past injustice and consequent unequal chances. The challenge at UCT lies in deciding how the group (A) is defined. As seen from the two key positions in the debate, both sides agree that there has been past injustice which requires redress. However, they disagree on how the group that has experienced the injustice should be defined. In some ways this disjuncture is between State demands and university requirements, which makes sense given their different mandates. The role of South African public higher education has been emphasised by the State as a key transformational tool in a way it was not conceived during apartheid. In the eyes of the State, universities are increasingly seen as vehicles for social mobility (Jansen, 2010). In addition, to their transformative potential, higher education is seen as being charged with developing a highly skilled workforce and producing new knowledge (DoE, 2001). However, universities see themselves as key sites for knowledge production and are essentially places that define themselves as meritocratic. The

State demands that Universities in South Africa be committed to redress, and that this should be based on rectifying previous injustices. For the universities, however, what and whom is deserving is largely based on academic merit. Not surprisingly tensions often arise. As discussed in this thesis and in this chapter in relation to intertextual hierarchy, the government's texts and by extension its discourses permeate the university and become rearticulated in various ways. However, this is not always straightforward and can be resisted because UCT finds itself having to balance its legal obligations to the State on one hand and its own institutional obligations on the other, as seen in clashes over the UCT admissions policy.

Two main oppositions to affirmative action persist at UCT. The first is that affirmative action is not colour neutral, because it intentionally invokes racial classification; and the second is that affirmative action is not based on merit (Morrison, 1994:314). Both objections were articulated in the panel debate as well as in subsequent dialogue in the media. The concern with racial classification is addressed above. Regarding the issue of merit, VC Price asserts, "though we use race in admissions... our students compete academically at the highest level on merit. There are no concessions. We graduate students on merit alone. The fact that students, some as disadvantaged as they are, come to UCT underprepared and then leave with a degree achieved on merit - even if it takes an extra year of study - means that we are getting there. We are transforming society and erasing stereotypes" (Price, 2010). Price added that, "our admissions policy is not ideal or perfect, but, at present, it is transforming our classes. Our students leave - having competed on merit - as graduates with equal opportunities going into the future" (Price, 2010). Dr Price's statements here address the argument that affirmative action is not based on merit by focusing on the outcome, that when UCT students graduate, regardless of how they enter the institution, they graduate solely on the basis of merit.

Many historically white and Black universities opposed State policies that instructed them whom and what to teach. The question of institutional autonomy has remained a contested area between South Africa's public universities and the State. Despite the meritocratic ideals of the South African university, this was not a reality during

apartheid. It is therefore strange to me why there is so much emphasis on merit regarding access now when, rather than being meritocratic organisations, during apartheid the universities were marred by the same racial discrimination that affected all other spheres of South African life.

Race is not the only source of inequality, of course, but it is clear from UCT'S admissions policy that the axis of inequality that takes taking clear precedence is racial inequality. Nowhere in the document is gender or disability mentioned, and race takes the whole stage. It is not just that race dominates the discourse of equity at UCT, but that gender in its admissions policy and debates concerning it has been entirely absent. However, gender and disability are not entirely absent from all policies relating to students, with both being mentioned in the Student Equity Policy. In addition, Participant U critiques the emphasis on race to the exclusion of other inequalities in admissions and comments that, "you know some white students experience the same thing ... in Cape Town... maybe there hasn't been research done on that kind of ... white student ... but if you come in from the rural areas as a white student .. the transformation seems to be only researched with Black people ...I'm not sure if it is an urban rural thing ... or Black/white, or is it a liberal culture .. conservative schooling.. you know the reasons have not all been explored .. but because we mainly articulate the experiences in a race vocabulary that is how experiences have been articulated, so maybe if you use other indicators, different vocabulary, language... process the experiences differently ... because university is different to school and everyone will experience an identity change and maybe at different levels .. I'm not saying there isn't discrimination, all that stuff that goes on, but it probably ... also there's the other stuff that is common to students and maybe gets expressed differently by Black students because the culture is so white and liberal... as they come in from a more collective community culture ... you know ... different worlds ... of course you can reflect on your own experience ... ” (Participant U, lines 156-168).

This comment challenges the over-determination of race in researching experiences of students in higher education. Participant U contends that there are several axes of

discrimination, that students are disadvantaged for several reasons and in which race may not be a primary cause, and proposes geography and a rural/urban divide as a possible contributing factor to marginalisation at the University. Her observation is unsurprising given the general pre-occupation with race both in the cultural imagination and in transformation policy. Unfortunately equity equals race in South Africa. Race dominates both the popular and the political consciousness on equity matters, at the expense of other axes of inequality, including gender.

This chapter has examined two key policy areas at UCT, employment equity policy and the student admissions policy. Regarding the admissions policy, race is dominant and provides the controlling discourse in the UCT transformation agenda. Gender is simply absent from the interview accounts which focused on employment equity and admission policies. In a minor way, gender is present, at least discursively, regarding the employment equity policy documents. Women and disabled people are not mentioned anywhere in the student admissions policy document, for whereas in the employment equity policy they form part of the designated group this is not so regarding the admissions policy. It follows, then, that the discussion becomes one of race and equity to the exclusion of other social factors.

In the 2009 and 2010 admissions cycles, 54% of the new undergraduate intakes were women and 46% were male... “the proportions of female offers (56% in each case) were greater than those within the whole applicant pool, suggesting that female applicants were slightly more successful than males in attracting academic offers” (UCT, 2010b:8). It is perhaps this perceived success in overcoming gender disparities that has led to the elision of gender in the student admission policy. But despite these promising figures, little attention is given to the experiences of female students of all racial backgrounds. A closer look at retention figures amongst students might show that both race and gender impact on success rates, but unfortunately information cross-tabulating race and gender at student level is unavailable. However, there is some research that suggests that gender and race both impact on the student experience, and Salo (2010) cites structural constraints (many of which are out of individual institutional control) as impeding the access and

retention of African women students in higher education. The over-emphasis on race, on one hand, and the figures displaying gender parity and thus presumed equality, on the other, occlude the gender inequality that persists in South Africa's higher education institutions. An intersectional approach to framing student equity I propose would result in a more nuanced understanding.

The absence of gender is not purely an organisational problem. Gender and the status of women is only touched upon once in the Council of Higher Education UCT institutional Audit (CHE, 2006) and not mentioned at all in the CHE UWC institutional Audit (CHE, 2008b), with race dominating the equity discourse at the expense of other inequalities. The ruling relations of the higher education system coupled with the social and political discourse of equity and redress act together to relegate gender equity to the margins. Gender, race, class and other social identities are co-constitutive. For example, female students can sometimes face different challenges from their male counterparts, and this is articulated and experienced differently across class and race groups. Research has shown, that the studies of Black female students are often disrupted when they have to become full-time caregivers for sick family members (Magano, 2011). Although at employment equity level the presence of gender is hinted at, this is absent in the admissions policy. However, students occupy multiple and intersecting social identities simultaneously and race does not involve just male students, but female ones whose life experiences may be very different.

The UCT admissions debate and indeed the policy document itself, collapses all social inequalities in South Africa into the single overarching social category of race. One can see why this might make sense, recognising the largely overlapping character of race and class in South Africa, which have been more or less reducible to each other in the historical context of the country, however this still leaves the problem of gender as a meaningful and separate social and analytical category. Where is gender in this debate?

My view of the importance of an intersectional approach is detailed in Chapter 2. Naples (2008) outlines four key ways of applying intersectionality theory in research: at the embodied and experiential analytical level, at the interactional framework, at the social or structural view, and in an epistemological approach. She describes the first three in the following terms: “an experiential or embodied approach emphasises the ways in which diverse social locations shape lived experience. A relational approach focuses on the construction of power and oppression through social interaction. Rather than locating an intersectional analysis in the embodied experiences of diverse social actors or in the intersection of systems of oppression, the third approach examines the social structural conditions that contribute to different forms of inequality” (Naples, 2008: 2). Fourthly, she conceives the epistemological approach as powerful in its ability to bring into view the multiple dimensions of intersectionality, which I think is a very powerful aspect of it. Naples draws on Dorothy Smith’s approach to intersectionality, which she notes “includes attention to historical, cultural, textual, discursive, institutional and other structural dimensions that contour the intersection of race, class, gender, sexuality, and national and religious identity, among other social phenomena” (Naples, 2008: 2). Clearly, it has great relevance for an institutional ethnography such as mine.

As discussed earlier, I have found Walby’s (2007) examination of intersectionality at a structural rather than embodied level helpful in recognising that multiple social relations occur in the same institutional domain, with race, class and gender existing as overlapping, non-saturating, non-nested systems of social relations. The work on intersectionality I draw most upon, however, is that of McCall (2005), and specifically from what she terms an inter-categorical approach to complexity. This involves the temporary adoption of the existing analytical categories of race and gender for the purpose of identifying inequalities amongst social groups, while avoiding the reification of these or any other categories. Race has come, in the history of South Africa, to be seen as in effect solely shaping the material realities of people’s lives. However, to collapse all social oppression into the single category of

race leads to a myopic view of the factors that shape the experiences and material realities of millions of people.

In Chapter 5 I introduced Acker's theory of gendered organisations, extending it here also to include race in an intersectional analysis. Universities are gendered and racialised entities, and in this chapter I have discussed various institutional, structural and cultural factors that impact on the formation and management of the actualities of race and gender equity at UCT regarding its employment equity and student admissions policies. Universities are often thought of as inherently democratic places and those who run and staff them rarely view them as fostering discrimination and conservatism. Morley, however, argues that equality discourses can be located within a "framework of discriminatory practices and prejudices, equal opportunities policies, whether liberal or radical in their conception, (that) remain ameliorative and thus anchored in superficial perspective of racism and sexism which neglects to address the structural and institutional determinants of social inequality" (Morley, 1997a:232), a statement borne out by my research.

This notion of 'superficiality' regarding to equity and equality was echoed in the interview with Participant T, who commented that "most universities are jealous of what they think are their achievements ...it would be unusual to find a university, even a fairly modest university, which isn't going to be in some ways a conservative space... Universities are not meant to be so conservative, not so self-preservationist. They are meant to be places that are hospitable to dissent, in every kind or way, they should be encouraging dissent, but unfortunately our universities are, virtually all around the world, of such a preservationist nature...are about keeping intact the privileges" (Participant T, lines 170-176). Participant T here firmly identifies universities and their structures as conservative spaces and indeed also asserts that "structures will tend by default to be conservative ...having difficulty being critical about themselves ..." (Participant T, lines 121-122). This structural conservatism is matched by conservatism at local levels too, and it leads to an overall institutional complicity with the status quo. I am writing here of individuals in their institutional capacities, rather than their personal one, and the conservative ideas held by someone

who wields significant power in an organisation are more pernicious than those held by someone who has little or no power within its decision-making bodies. Despite UCT's liberal approach to equity and equality, there remain such structural and cultural obstacles that render the policies and strategies adopted as in many ways void, because of structural conservatism.

The Vice-Chancellor of the University of the Free State, Jonathan Jansen has referred to institutional culture as the last frontier in transforming South African higher education (Jansen, 2004), the Soudien Report (DoE, 2008) has identified a plethora of institutional and structural barriers to institutional transformation. Indeed, as this the chapter has shown, resistance to transformation can be embedded in many aspects of the culture of a university. In particular, if universities are not recognised as profoundly gendered organisations and racialised spaces, forming complex and intersectionality organised regimes of inequality, then transformation cannot happen. The masculine-hegemonic culture and identity on which the universities are built can be challenged only by drawing attention to the very racial and gendered assumptions that underpin them and are essential to their workings. And this is not specific to the historically-white institutions.

The gender inequality observed at UKZN, discussed in the previous chapter and at UCT, discussed in this, is not unique to these institutions. Indeed, in a discussion on gender politics in African universities, generally Mama argues that "women's entry into higher educational institutions - as students and as employees - has remained slow and uneven, suggesting the need to look beyond the numbers. The overall pattern of exclusion and marginalization is true for both administrative and academic tracks but is at its most extreme for senior academic and research positions" (Mama, 2003:101). She concludes that African universities have a tendency to restore and/or reform, but fail to truly transform. This observation is certainly true for both UKZN and UCT, where there has been only marginal transformation along gender lines in the more senior positions of academic staff and university administration and this despite over a decade of equity policies. Racial equity has been similarly elusive (DoE, 2008; Cloete et al 2004; Bunting 2006b), for two key reasons. The first

concerns the short-comings of the conceptual framework of equity texts and consequently how it is measured, while the second concerns institutional structures and culture that are resistant to transformation, both discussed in this chapter.

The first reason among other things involves the over emphasis on race and denial of the inequalities in UCT's institutional equity policies. This is unsurprising given the preoccupation with race in the broader social and political context of the country as a whole. Universities are not bounded entities, they are porous, influencing and being influenced by broader society, its cultures and dominant discourses. Equity discourse in South Africa is generally dominated by race. Even in contexts where other bases of inequality are taken into account, race takes primacy and other inequalities treated merely as additions to it. For instance, the designated groups in the employment equity policy are "Black people, women and people with disabilities" (DoL, 1998: 3). This additive model is taken up at the institutional level as well, but at least gender enters the discourse around employment equity, which is absent in the Student Admission Policy. What makes the Student Admission Policy even more disturbing is that there has been no attempt to include other axes of inequality what-so-ever. Noting when and how systems of inequality have primacy at UCT is important to understanding why its equity measures have been limited, for they have ignored gender. Against this, conceptualising equity through the lens of the simultaneous and mutual reproduction of race, class and gender inequality as intersectionality related opens up a space in which the challenges currently face in South Africa's higher education system can be better framed.

The second reason concerns the structures of the institution and its inequality regimes, which, to reiterate, are composed by "loosely interrelated practices, processes, actions, and meanings that result in the maintain class, gender and racial inequalities within particular organisation" (Acker, 2006:443). The formal arrangements and structures of UCT can, as evidenced by Participant T and Participant U's accounts, lead to the exclusion and discrimination of certain groups of people. Examples of such institutional structures and processes include, but are not limited to the concentration of power at middle management, the white-male

domination in senior management, the absence of an intersectional approach in conceiving equity policies and measures. Inequality regimes are variant and fluid, and in a single organisation there can be some areas that are more equal than others. In Acker's research she found that "gender and gender inequality tend to disappear in organisations or are seen as something beside the point of the organisation" (Acker, 2006:452). But while gender equality does disappear at UCT, this is not the case in all spheres, being addressed in employment equity policy and other policies pertaining to staff equity, and some aspects of student equity.

Ruling Relations

This IE case study at UCT has been important in explicating how the ruling relations of the State and higher education institutions impinge on the realisation of equity there. Like all IE research, the UCT case study has used the experiences of locally-situated people as an entry point to investigate the extra-local relations of ruling there. One of the key aspects of how IE has shaped up in this context concerns the turn from focusing on mapping textual sequences of action in employment equity policies, to examining the dominant discourse in relation to the students admissions debate that was unfolding at the time of the research. One of the attractive features of IE is its flexibility in the research field, and in allowing people's accounts to orient the direction in which the research goes. In this case study, the people I interviewed pointed me to an important debate regarding equity at student level occurring at the time of my data collection, and re-directed the research took as a result.

I posed four questions at the start of the chapter pertaining to texts at UCT and I have addressed these throughout the chapter. I will summarise here my responses by way of conclusion, addressing them in pairs. The first two, questions are: what is the prescribed sequence of action of equity documents at UCT? and what is the actual sequence of action of equity documents at UCT? As discussed in previous chapters, State-level policy specifies the broad equity goals of the State and the responsibility of institutions to realise them. At an institutional level, these goals are put into practice in universities through mechanisms such as the establishment of transformation committees and the compilation of Equity Plans at Departmental and

Faculty level, in which there is usually a survey from which new targets and goals are set. In reality, there is some lethargy around the compilation of equity plans and reports, as seen in the account of Participant T who argues that “it is taken less seriously than the admissions policy and that is largely because of the ludicrousness of the report itself” (lines 35-36). While texts prescribed the practices and processes to be undertaken in striving towards the achievement of equity, in reality there is more latitude, managers are free to implement their own strategies for achieving equity in their Departments and Faculties, and thus do not strictly adhere to the prescribed sequences of actions.

The second two questions involve the standardisation of institutional actions and texts: Are there standardized, recognisable formats through which the institutional actions of UCT become visible? and what are the standardised text-based work processes involved in employment and admissions policies? The standardized formats in which institutional actions become visible were illustrated at UCT in Participant U’s account of the uniform text-based processes involved in employment equity policies, which can be seen most clearly in the appointment of academic staff. This involves a set of text-based processes which frame how and what gets accomplished, as seen in what Participant U described (lines 43-56).

Ultimately, the role of texts did not emerge as central to the everyday institutional and equity-work of the people I interviewed at UCT. Whereas in the UKZN case study, the people interviewed pointed me to specific texts they often came into contact with and which coordinated and shaped their activities, at UCT the respondents only spoke of macro, State-level policies as shaping how equity was managed. Interestingly, while the equity texts and policies and the actions they prescribe at UCT and UKZN are a basically identical, they did not emerge as key coordinators of people’s activities in the same way. Thus the role of equity texts was more prominent at UKZN than it was at UCT. At UCT, everyday organisational discourses and practices emerged as being slightly more important than texts in pointing to the ruling relations that coordinate and organise the management of equity in this university. The interviews revealed the role of dominant discourse in

organising and coordinating the management of equity at UCT in ways I found striking.

The textual analysis in conjunction with analysing the interview data I collected at UCT has allowed me to compare the prescribed sequences of actions as compared to the actual sequences of action, thereby revealing the disjunctures existing between the two. Although texts played less of an important role at UCT, the interview data, certainly demonstrates the importance of discourse as a ruling relation. My analysis of UCT texts focused on the dominant discourses that emerged in key policy documents. When considering the actual sequences of action, the accounts of the interviewees showed that there is sometimes a stumbling block at middle management level that stops policies from filtering down the institution effectively.

The UCT case study has examined the management of equity at staff and student levels. Two central issues regarding ruling relations emerged: firstly, regarding the existence of discourses that conflict with the achievement of racial and gender equity; and secondly, the role played by academic and institutional culture in this. There are two dominant discourses that impinge on the achievement of equity; one relates to the conflation of equity with racial equity and the other concerns the dominance of a discourse of meritocracy. In South Africa, equity discourses are generally dominated by race, and this results in the side-lining of gender and other inequalities that are identified in key State and institutional-level policies. This can be seen in the students admissions debate and policy discussed in this chapter, where race takes centre stage to the exclusion of gender.

In academic institutions, merit is often defined in very narrow terms. It is usually equated with proven academic attainment and success, and that is what gets rewarded. So, university admission and progression to the subsequent years (once students are admitted) hinges on a notion of being deserving that has as its basis the assumption of a level playing-field. This conflicts with the argument that equity should at least in part be based on past inequality and redress. At UCT, while there is recognition that not all students are equally positioned to meet the standards

demanded, there nevertheless remains a strong discourse of meritocracy that conflicts with ideas of redress. This demonstrates how institutional discursive practices impact on the management and achievement of equity at UCT in a very marked way.

Another important aspect of ruling relations at UCT concerns the conservative and hierarchical academic and institutional culture, which makes the institution resistant to change. Participant T characterises institutions with long histories such as UCT as “jealous places”, places that were essentially conservative and sought to maintain the status quo, with efforts to transform the institution having met with some resistance. Because of how power in the form of decision-making and the University control is organised, Participant U (lines 95-96) suggests that middle management can be an obstacle to transformation. The conservative culture overlaps with the structure of the institution and impinges on the achievement of racial and gender equity and their management.

While there were some similarities between UKZN and UCT (namely, the textual nature of academic staff appointments), different relations of ruling emerged from my analysis of equity matters in the two institutions. At UKZN, the ruling relations that exist are related to the new managerial culture in higher education management, the gendered nature of the organisations, and the character of State-driven policies for equity and redress. The management of equity in this university is characterised by disjunctures between the institutional level and the State level. However, at UCT my research has found discourses and an institutional structure and culture that together work to create a context that is ostensibly open to transformation but which, upon closer inspection, is riddled with obstacles which I have discussed in some detail.

Chapter 7

University of Pretoria: The Disembodied Student

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the social organisation of equity measures at the University of Pretoria and gives an account of the institution, especially how people there represent experiences using formal and informal interview data to create a picture of multiple institutional standpoints. These are juxtaposed with the institutional one as this is articulated in various texts including the vision and mission statements, and various transformation and equity documents. The aim is to explore how the formal institutional discourse relates to the socio-personal experiences of people ‘on the ground’.

Like all public universities in South Africa, the University of Pretoria is required by law to commit to institutional transformation and achieve equity at student, staff and institutional culture levels. As a result, there are various institutional policies and strategies at play. The university’s resulting transformation and strategic plan includes the following key aims:

- ensuring that the university's institutional culture instils in its members the appreciation of diversity necessary to make everyone feel welcome at the University of Pretoria;
- ensuring the best scholars and students from all communities in South Africa join the University;
- taking steps to achieve employment equity at the University;
- ensuring student admission to the University; and
- providing appropriate support to students and staff, particularly those from disadvantaged communities, in order to increase students’ academic success rates and staff retention.

(UP, 2007).

The University’s Strategic Plan on transformation notes that a focus on access alone is insufficient to achieve equity, arguing that attention must also be paid to the

success of and retention rates among students from historically disadvantaged groups as well as to the university's institutional culture. The following discussion draws on the experiences of equity of ten students at the University of Pretoria in the Sociology Department, some informal interviews with students and staff in the broader institution, as well as an analysis of key equity texts.

Cracks and Schisms: Institutional Talk Versus Lived Experiences

Both national higher education policies and the University's Strategic Plan outline the importance of ensuring equity in terms of both access and success of previously disadvantaged groups. However, despite having adequate policies in place, and an ostensible display of a commitment to equity, a gap remains between the intention of the policies, their level of success, and how the policies are experienced locally.

Extract 1

“My department, which is Sociology, it is not a macho department, it is a bit... feminised, our HOD is female and some of the leading people are also female. And we have more females at post-grad level. I've heard in Geology it is predominantly men, and the women there are not taken seriously as people who have an opinion to be reckoned with, they were seen as just an addition. They were seen as people to be helped, they are not seen as being completely qualified to deal with the toughness of that department. Besides, when they go to the mines when they do practicum, they always have to get helped. So, there is that perceived weakness, but that department is more physical, a more macho department” (Participant M, lines 3-12).

Here, Participant M notes the differences in gender equity and the social organisation of gender in different academic departments. The Sociology Department is described as being feminised and non-macho, whereas the Geology Department is described as being more gender prescriptive with women ‘just an addition’ with ‘perceived weakness’. The difference in academic disciplines has been articulated in cultural terms (Jones, 2011; Bercher & Trowler, 2001; Braxton and Hargens, 1996), where disciplines are envisaged as having their own distinctive cultural –and in this interview also gendered- traits.

Extract 2

“I don't really think that I have ever experienced gender inequity on campus directly, or indirectly for that matter so, I can say that there has never been an incident where... The more dominant voices in the white student politics are still predominantly male whereas with my experience of Black students politics there is more of a balance. I think in terms of leadership take SASCO [South African Student Congress] for example there's still lots more men in the organisation but there are also women in leadership in the Black student party. Whereas with the predominant white party there is a very strong male presence it's very “Boere... Afrikaaner” men, Afrikaans males, leaders... so that's the only place where I can fairly say I have experienced gender inequity” (Participant K, line 5-14).

Participant K, a female student said that she had never experienced gender discrimination at the institution. She did however suggest that gender inequality existed in the university more broadly. This includes in white student politics, where she argues a strong “Boere-Afrikaaner male” culture dominates. In the extract she compares the gender imbalance in white student politics with Black students politics where there are more women in leadership, thereby observing some significant differences within the institution, its structures and associations.

Despite noting the challenges faced in the achievement of gender equity, the students I interviewed without fail said that male and female students had equal access and equal chances of succeeding in the university. Regarding the matter of equality of opportunity, Participant K asserts, “... both male and female students have equal chances of succeeding once in the universities. There is a standard that applies to everyone” (Participant K, lines, 52-54). Participant N adds “male and female students have equal chances of succeeding in class, in politics, everywhere” (Participant N, lines 30-31). Yet another student commented that “both male and female students have equal chances of succeeding at the University” (Participant R, line 35). Overall, these students believed that both male and female students have equal chances of succeeding in the University. This was seen as being due both to institutional factors such as the “standard” that Participant K refers to above, as well as personal ability and initiative, which was deemed by one student as being the main determinant of success at the University rather than gender or race. These

views echo the meritocratic discourse that dominates higher education institutions and the sector as a whole. This meritocratic view assumes two things: that there is a level playing field before and when entering university, and that any changes in a persons academic performance are the result of personal skills and abilities. Therefore the lack of academic success amongst students is overwhelmingly blamed on individual failures (lack of focus, laziness, inability to work autonomously, etc), rather than structural factors. Despite the overall perception of equal opportunities for success, some students raised the existence of challenges and patches of inequity as noted in Extract 1 and Extract 2. Another respondent, Participant L, asserts that there are “equal chances but women are not moving into male-dominated spaces”, which echoes Participant M’s account of the male-dominated Geology Department and Participant K’s comments, about male dominance in white student politics. Overall, the students interviewed simultaneously held beliefs about overall gender equality at the institution while recognising that there were hindrances to its achievement. Instances such as these, where students’ experiences rub against the institutional order are a further example of fault-lines or disjunctures as discussed in the previous chapter.

The brief extracts above illustrate some of the disjunctures or tensions that exist between institutional discourse and students’ experiences. Smith (1990a, 1990b, 2005, 2006a) argues that when people give accounts of their lives and work, their talk is infused with institutional discourse, and she calls this institutional talk. The discourse of meritocracy and equal opportunity is an example of institutional discourse and is pervasive in how the University constructed and represented itself. It was also echoed in my respondents’ accounts, illustrating how embodied knowledge becomes intertwined with or even subsumed by the institutional order. The students struggled on one hand with the idea that people are expected to fulfil particular requirements in order to obtain certain rewards, and some of the institutional and departmental challenges that can frustrate that process on the other. It is important to note that the institutional discourses and the embodied experiences of the students were not uniformly or consistently divergent. At times the relationship between them might be thought of as exhibiting small cracks or fractures, while at other times the

tensions were more marked and characterised by breaks or schisms. Similar tensions between institutional knowledge and embodied knowledge arose in discussions on race too.

At the University of Pretoria, similarly to the UKZN case study discussed earlier, race was at the forefront of students' minds regarding factors that impact and shape their experiences, while gender was portrayed as being comparatively inconsequential. Focusing on their thoughts on staff equity, the following extract discusses some of the hindrances to the achievement of racial equity in academia.

Extract 3

“The problem is that there's not always the Black staff available to fill the positions either because the young people are not willing to work for the salaries that universities pay, because academia doesn't pay. I mean if I go back to academics now I wouldn't even be able to pay my rent so I go back on assistant lectureship on a 24-hour contract I'd be short on my rent every month. So that's part of the reason I decided to move out but not the whole reason. Now I work for a government agency promoting science and technology. So I don't know if it's a matter of bright young Black people not wanting to be in academia because opportunities out there is just so much more attractive and also because they're not being produced...They are not here yet. You don't have a lot of young Black people committed to the academic project like Neo (named changed), there are just so many chances for them out there and can drive a BMW and live in a huge house and they know in one year they can earn more than their parents in their whole higher life, and if they come from a previously disadvantaged background who wouldn't just grab the opportunity. So, I think that's one of the problems. They want to enact the policies but don't have young Black academics to do it, so what you get is to get young people who see academia as a transition phase, that's so as a matter of extra money so that they can become financially independent but it's just the step on the way somewhere else. Especially young Black people because of the older generation is a gap because the people that can put those positions there are so few of them that they're already grabbed up by these institutions sort very difficult to get Black staff on board” (Participant K, lines 271-293)

Extract 3 is similar to several other accounts across the case studies and interviews I carried out, where people attempt to explain the continued shortage of Black,

Coloured and Indian academic staff in South African universities. The University is described as desiring demographic transformation, illustrated in their policies, but failing in their endeavour because Black graduates are viewed as being enticed by the financial benefits of employment in non-academic sectors. While I can appreciate the validity of this assessment on the surface, the reality of South African higher education today is that many Black students will be first-time university graduates in their families and will in most cases after graduation have siblings and parents to support. Another respondent echoes this and comments that, “there is an attempt to get equity at staff level but it is hard to find Black people to replace the white people with. No young Black academics want to stay. It has to do with class and access to resources” (Participant L, lines 75).

As discussed in Chapter 5, this has become the dominant narrative to explain why there are still so few Black academic staff despite transformative policies. Others argue that the problem is that there are not always young Black people available because outside opportunities are more attractive to young Black academics. As a result, academia serves as a stopover for Black students before they get “snapped up by private institutions” (Participant L, line 81). The danger of this line of argumentation, however, is that the responsibility is shifted from the institutions or other broader structural factors and placed on individuals and their choices. Furthermore it implicitly criticises Black students and staff for being mercenary in leaving academia, while white students, when making the same choices are viewed as making sound financial decisions.. Participant K, who is a white student, explains that she has taken a job outside academia while completing her studies, but there is no grand racialised narrative that explains her choices: her choices as a white woman are not politicised in the same way. She frames her experiences as being about balancing cheque-books and priorities. These are choices that are based on income and class, while the conflation of race and class in discussing this issue masks the economic inequality that persists along racial lines in South Africa. Even where class is mentioned separately (Participant L above), including discourses of Black graduates making ‘sound financial decisions’ to support their families might appear more positive and altruistic than an outright materialism, but still the interplay of

race and class in such comments shifts inequality from the centre (the institution) to the periphery (wider social inequality affecting people outside the institution).

In the Pretorian interviews, some of the students raised concerns about the success of Black students at the University. Participant N, for instance, commented that, “white students are outperforming Black students... white students are getting distinctions. The cum laude students are white. Language might be the issue... the quality may differ in the classes offered. And English is a third or fourth language for some students even Afrikaans can be a struggle [because there are classes in English and Afrikaans]” (Participant N, lines 62-71). This concern over language and the differences in the quality between the English and Afrikaans classes was echoed by a Law student I met during my fieldwork, who said that the students in the Afrikaans-speaking classes were given “more assistance” than those in the English-speaking classes. Even with the presence of a Language Policy aimed at promoting equity, students still experience the environment as being inequitable. Another reason offered for Black students’ consistent relative under-performance was that lecturers were marking unfairly. Whether these accusations are true or not, it is important to note that the students making such comments blamed the institution for the perceived academic failing of Black students, not the students.

The perception of the degree to which equity had been achieved at the University also varied amongst informants. One student commented that “the government’s vision of equity is reflected at the University” (Participant L, lines 23-24), while another contended that, “the government is pushing the transformation but universities are still autonomous. The University has taken Black students so that they can get government funding. Some departments failed to make an effort in transformation altogether”... (Participant N, lines 43). Although he recognised the University’s strides towards transformation and equity, Participant N remained cynical about the institution’s motivation. Another respondent expressed doubt over the University’s commitment to equity regarding his concerns about employment practices, proposing that “third party employment agency are used as a way to dodge critiques about lack of transformation, and therefore relinquish responsibility and

accountability” (Participant M, lines 88-91). So, while some students saw the University as making considerable strides towards achieving greater equity, others were more cynical about the University’s commitment and motive.

Inequality amongst staff and senior leadership was raised as a concern amongst the students I interviewed when considering the institution’s culture and success in transformation. Participant Q, for instance, noted that “white people are still in positions of power, and there is lack of Black academic staff as a whole, but changes are visible” (Participant Q, lines 27-28). Other students echoed this concern over the lack of transformation in the University’s upper rungs, but focused on gender rather than race, commenting that “the senior positions at University tend to be mostly male...” (Participant P, lines 10). Participant M echoes this concern in noting that “men tend to be in more senior positions and the first female Vice Chancellor was elected in 2010” (Participant M, lines, 24). Thus the respondents saw the lack of transformation at management level both as symptomatic of racial and gender inequity at the University and as saying something about the institutional culture as a whole.

Attitudes towards and experiences of the University’s institutional culture varied across the respondents. Some students were positive in their responses, while others held more negative views. Participant O asserts, “Afrikaans culture is dominant here, but there are breaks, such as on international day, where people celebrate their cultural and national background” (Participant O, lines 33-36). Another respondent described the institutional culture as “hostile and centred around Afrikaans values and culture” (Participant S, line 19). The institutional culture at the University of Pretoria was generally seen by the respondents as synonymous with Afrikaans culture and experienced as hostile. One of the post-graduate students, Participant R, said that “although the overall culture of the University can be hostile and alienating, mentorship and support in the Department of Sociology has helped to change my experiences” (lines 45). Participant R, and the other respondents quoted from above importantly raise the tensions and disjunctures existing between the broader institutional culture and practices and those at faculty or departmental level, which I

will discuss later in this chapter. There were no absolute divisions of experience along racial, gender or cohort lines. In Participant Ms' experience, the University has an "environment (that) is conducive to learning" (Participant M, line 66). For this respondent, the University offered access to good resources, both academic and extra-curricular, in his experience this helped to allay his concerns about the racial tensions on campus. In addition, because he articulated his "priority" as his education rather than 'making friends', he felt able to distance himself from such tensions. For Participant M, the institutional climate of the University had elements of hostility which were neutralised by the quality of the education and resources he had access to while there. However, all of the comments about the institutional culture concerned experiences of alienation. Other students described the University in overtly positive terms, for instance, calling it a "comfortable, space where everyone can be heard" (Participant L, lines 69).

Sociology as Haven

In general, the students I interviewed expressed faith in the institution and the leadership, particularly the Head of Department, to resolve any conflict that arose in a way that was fair. Questions I posed regarding harassment policies led to interesting discussions that illuminated how the particular respondent felt about the University's sense of justice. While most of the students did not know the proper channels to follow when lodging a complaint or grievance, there was some sense that the University would resolve grievances of most kinds. For instance, Participant M recounted a story in which a male student who was caught exposing himself to a female residence was expelled from the University. For Participant M, this was an example of the University intervening in an appropriate manner in response to a harassment charge, which gave him confidence that other such problems would be addressed fairly, if they arose. Another respondent, Participant Q, believed the institutional response to racial harassment by a member of staff would result in job loss. Participant L also unequivocally believed that any grievances that might arise would be resolved fairly. However, in the case it seems that it was personal connections and history at the university which made her confident and better able to pursue any challenges met at the University, commenting that "in event of racial or

sexual harassment, I would expect things to be dealt with fairly... everybody knows me... I have been here for so long” (Participant L, line 23-26). Not all students, however, were uniformly optimistic about the motivations of the University.

Extract 4

“In my experience the University of Pretoria is very paranoid when it comes to their image and as soon as they find out that you're doing research on them they did not approve the proposal. As soon as they find out that a journalist is writing an article they are quick to hush things up and to put out the fires. I understand to a certain extent but I think it also bit unhealthy because you cannot pretend that things are always going right in your institution. So, if there was a big issue the University would go out of its way to hush the issue up and keep it out of the media and the courtrooms. So they would go to great lengths to protect themselves and their public image of the institution. Especially when it comes to racial issues the University's is very protective, they want to put an image up that everything is fine precisely because it's got such a reputation as being the white dominated machine that emerged out apartheid officials but they are trying so hard to move away from any negativity and so they are more sensitive about the past” (Participant K, lines 104-118).

Here, Participant K cynically suggests that the University would respond to charges of harassment of any nature, but that this would occur in order to protect the university's reputation rather than anything else. The University was thought to be protective about its reputation and that it would be very careful in how issues regarding harassment of any kind were handled, because losing a student was deemed to be less important than losing a member of staff. If the issue were explosive, the suggestion was, the University would go to great lengths to hush it up and protect its image, and would deal with it on a one to one basis and internally, as seen in the extract above.

In addition, some students did not believe that the university could or would address grievances fairly at all. Participant N, Participant P and Participant S were not sure this would be the case in the event of racial harassment. In the event of any grievances, Participant N did not believe that issues would be dealt with fairly because “Black faculty tend to be marginalised in committees. However, if the issue

was internal, the Department would deal with things fairly but not if it were outside the Department” (Participant N, lines 87-90). Here Participant N’s confidence lies in the Sociology Department, rather than the University as a whole, thus viewing the Department as a haven of sorts.

Many of my respondents asserted that the Sociology Head of Department had an open door policy, and so would be the go-to person in the event of any harassment or inequality problems. One student reported that “in the event of racial or sexual harassment, I would notify the Head of Department and maybe the police, especially if perpetrator was staff member” (Participant Q, lines 75-77). Participant L said that “If I was harassed by another student, I would go directly to the student, then to HOD if the issue was not solved. But if the perpetrator was a member of staff, it would be harder to deal with. But maybe I would speak to the person directly. If it was racial harassment by a student, I would kick the student out of the class and report him or her to the Head of Department. If I was racially discriminated by member of staff, I would go straight to the Head of Department and if the Head of Department was the one harassing me, then I’d go to more senior members like a Dean” (Participant L, line 92-104). In the event that grievances would escalate, this respondent expected that a fair resolution would occur within the Sociology Department.

Thus, the students had confidence in the Sociology Head of Department to address problems or grievances fairly, despite some concern about the institution’s willingness to do the same. As a frontline worker, the Head of Department, is well placed to effect change in her department and create a safe environment that espouses equality and deals with race relations and other issues extensively both inside and outside the academy. One respondent reported that “the sociology department makes an effort. There are a lot of Black teaching assistants even if it's because they need money. But the University does not have confidence in Black faculty. Some lecturers speak Afrikaans even if it's in a diverse classroom in which one is supposed to speak English. Black staff that is available is from outside South Africa” (Participant Q, lines 48-52). The Department was however experienced as a

sort of safe haven by many of the students, demonstrating the role of frontline workers in mitigating potential institutional troubles.

Broken Telephone

The University of Pretoria has four key equity and transformation policies: Language Policy, Racial Harassment Policy, Sexual Harassment Policy and the Employment Equity Policy. While they knew about the Employment Equity Policy and the Language Policy, the student respondents had no notion of the existence of the other two, while they were all aware of the State level equity policies and how these impinge upon the universities. One of my respondents commented, “I haven’t heard that sexual harassment is an issue, I’ve never heard it used on campus. What I know is that there was a case a month back of male exposing himself to a female residence was initially expelled, then after student protests (from the male res) then the verdict was reduced” (Participant M, lines 42-47). The key equity and transformation policies were available on the University website, but most of the respondents did not know about them. However, while the students did not know of the policies per se, some did note how the policies reflected an overarching principle or character of the university, for example Participant K on sexual harassment, discussed later. The students’ lack of knowledge about key equity policies says more about the institution as a whole than it does about the students as individuals.

Historically, the Afrikaans-medium universities “were run by executives and councils which gave strong support to the apartheid government” (Bunting, 2006b:40) and preserved the status quo. In addition, by 1990, these institutions “could be described as instrumentalist institutions which were governed in strongly authoritarian ways... open protests by students or staff over government policies and actions were not countenanced, and were swiftly crushed on these campuses. Objections to institutional policies and actions, especially from those not entrenched in the central power structures were also not accepted” (Bunting, 2006b:40-41). These sentiments were echoed by Jansen (2009) in his book on his experiences as the first Black Dean at the University of Pretoria. Jansen describes the University as being formal, hierarchical, and characterised by autocratic leadership with rigid

boundaries that were maintained between staff at different levels, as well as between staff and students. The barrier between staff and students is characteristic of conservative hierarchical institutions such as the Afrikaans-medium universities, as part of the social organisation of equity in the university more generally.

As an institution characterised by an authoritarian governance culture, it is not surprising that there is a gap in the information flow between the University of Pretoria administration and the student body, given the centralised nature of power and authority. None of the student respondents mentioned having come across equity texts and documents in their daily experiences as students, which is perhaps not unusual, but it does question how students become acquainted with the texts that come to shape their daily work-lives as students. In universities, it is staff and university administrators who are more intimately acquainted with institutional texts of all varieties in their daily work experiences. Students do not come into direct contact with the same institutional texts that administrative staff, academic staff and university management do. Of course there are some over-laps, for example essay extension forms are texts that both staff and students interact with and these visibly draw them into the same textually-mediated social relation. However, equity texts are documents that staff will be more familiar with than students, who do not have much contact with, but are none-the-less impacted by such documents. The students did not know of the policies in any formal way, and although they had little or no knowledge of the correct institutional and text-based procedures to follow if harassment occurred, they all reported that in such an event they would inform and consult their Head of Department. In this way, both academic and administrative staff can be seen as the front-line workers at universities, and students as people who form an important part of the social relations of the campus but not in a front-line capacity.

Much IE research occurs in research sites where the daily work lives of front-line workers and respondents are shaped one way and another by texts and documents, of various kinds. Research on equity in higher education also tends to focus on the role that front-line workers such as academic staff, as well as institutional culture, in

producing and reproducing inequitable local realities, while students are viewed as relatively passive. In universities that have managerial cultures, students are considered the client or customers, while the university represents the ruling apparatus, with the staff acting as front-line workers providing a link between the two. The construction of students as customers is a result of the consumerist turn in the higher education sector globally. At an essentially hierarchical and authoritative institution such as a university, students enjoy limited powers of decision-making and thus limited community membership in the larger institution (Leuscher-Mamashela, 2011). The problem with constructing students simply as clients is that this obscures their part in creating the social organisation of the university. The evidence from my research regarding student knowledge of equity policies does imply a kind of ‘passivity’ on their part, while in other ways students are active agents in creating the social relations and social organisation of the university, including at the University of Pretoria.

In instances where students do not have intimate knowledge of State-level policies, they rely on the broader socio-political discourse in the country. Thus the students I interviewed used a combination of embodied knowledge and textual knowledge to make sense of and understand equity measures both within and outwith the university. An example of this is how they experienced the University’s Language Policy. As a historically white and Afrikaans-medium institution, the adoption of a dual-language system articulated in the Language Policy marked an important cultural and political shift in the University. As such, the policy has been a key transformational tool. The Policy states that “tuition programmes can be presented either in Afrikaans or in English or in both these languages of tuition, provided that there is a demand for instruction in the language(s) concerned and that such programmes are academically and economically justifiable” (UP, 2010b). My interviewees differed in their perceptions of the implementation and reality of the Language Policy. While few felt that there was an even split in the classes available in English and Afrikaans, others thought that Afrikaans was more dominant. Participant Q, argued, for instance that “fewer courses are offered in Afrikaans”. Participant N asserts that, “Afrikaans is the main language, it takes up more space ...

and the university newspaper has more Afrikaans” (Participant N, lines 14-15). Another added, “the Language Policies are not fair. African languages should be included in tests. Tests should be offered in other native southern African languages” (Participant O, lines 20-21). Another respondent linked this to the broader culture of the institution when he relayed a story of having experienced multiple delays in his housing application, asserting that things are expedited when people speak Afrikaans rather than English (Participant M). The examples above exhibit some additional tensions and disjunctures that students experience between the institutional knowledge and their embodied knowledge of their own lives and the institution.

Research that explores documents and texts in institutions tends to focus on how texts enter into and shape institutional practices and processes. As such these texts are often known, one way or another, at the local level. Smith suggests that, “textually mediated forms of social organization involve their dependence upon, and exploitation of the textual capacity to crystallise and preserve a definite form of words detached from their local historicity” (Smith, 1990a:210). But what happens in instances where people in the local contexts are unaware of the policies that impact on them? The job of IE is to illuminate the textual and extra-local that shape and influence people’s experiences, and such unawareness is clearly part of this.

Information, what it constitutes, who has it and how it is disseminated, are important institutional elements in Tierney’s (1988) work on institutional culture in higher education. The knowledge of equity and transformation policies that affected them was virtually non-existent among the students I interviewed. This was the same for both junior and more senior students. How then does knowledge get transmitted to students, if not by direct textual means? Could it be through the institutional culture, the intangible values and belief of the institution? Or is it ‘through the blood’ as Jansen (2009) suggests? My research revealed that, while textual modes of information dissemination were present, through the student newspaper and the University website, for example, it was oral discourse that predominated as a means of transmitting information and knowledge to students at the University. For instance, while I was conducting my fieldwork, academic staff and students were

invited to a presentation that preceded discussions on whether the University of Pretoria would introduce “Bridging Programs”. This is an example of a formal means of oral communication. However, students also gained knowledge about institutional events, practices and processes through informal oral communication, as evidenced in Participant M’s account of “the flasher”, mentioned earlier in the chapter. Despite the students having little to no contact with policy texts themselves, some knowledge and information about these were transmitted through the institutional culture and its practices. Some of the respondents felt that the institution espoused ideals of equality and transformation through its daily practices and processes despite having no direct knowledge of the equity policies. For example a student commented, “I think there's a broader mindset that sexual harassment in general is unacceptable, I think that maybe because as sociology students these are the type of issues that are serious and that we consider so I don't think sexual harassment would ever be tolerated” (Participant K, lines 65-68). The institutional vision was communicated to her through the ‘mindset’ of what would be “tolerated” at the university and in the department. Thus issues around sexual harassment were an example of textually mediated social relations that students come to know about, not through their own contact with the policies, but rather through informal means of oral communication that drew them into the broader social relations and ruling relations of the institution and its department. Information dissemination within the University of Pretoria, based on the student experience, is fragmented, comprising of a mixture of textual and oral methods. There is seemingly an invisible wall between university administration and the student body. In the Sociology Department, the barrier student’s experiences with the University and its senior management was mitigated by having an engaged, transformative Head of Department.

That the day-to-day experiences of the students I interviewed did not put them in contact with policy texts, and that therefore they do not engage with these in any meaningful way, in part reflects the client-service-provider relationship that dominates the university, in which students are left out of the key decision-making or even the consultative aspects of the institution. It is also a result of the hierarchical culture of conservative institutions such as the University of Pretoria. This system of

management is a textual system where the institution takes primacy and students are reduced to objects or cogs in a machine. Interestingly, by comparison at UCT the students became aware of the University Admissions Policy through admissions documents and the publicised nature of the debate about this both in and out of campus, so the larger student body there became part of the debate and discussion, fostering a more collegial institutional culture. This discussion importantly points to the current understanding of the role and place of students in South African higher education. University management at present is accountable only to the State with regards to equity matters and not to students. This in part explains why students at the University of Pretoria did not know about many of the equity texts which impact their lives as students. It is not just that the student's do not know about the texts, it is also the everyday socialisation and their general disinterest in one another. Despite advocating equity in the institution as a whole, the students interviewed showed little interest in interacting across racial lines in their own personal lives. At least some of this disinterest in one another is due to the legacy of apartheid and the naturalisation of racial segregation in many areas of social and political life (Bonilla-Silva, 2003). The naturalisation of spatially organised racial division is still present in everyday life in South Africa generally, but it is still disappointing to find it quite so prevalent in the university system.

A Country Divided, a Campus Divided: The University as Microcosm of South Africa

Unsurprisingly the prime area of concern and interest for the people I interviewed was the interactions amongst students themselves. However, all the respondents raised the issue of superficial and sometimes strained racial relations between students on campus and in the residences. And although some of the respondents experienced the University's institutional culture as alienating and hostile, very few had personally experienced racial discrimination at the hands of the University.

Extract 5

“In my experience as a white student, I haven't felt like Black students or Black staff have made my studies any more complicated,

not from what I've perceived. There is still racism on campus, you cannot deny that, if you go to Hatfield Square you will find certain bars where there are just white people and if a Black person walks in there they will definitely look at them funny and make comments and some other people will even get up and chase people out. Whereas in Black clubs if you're a white person I don't think they would necessarily chase you out but he would stick out like a sore thumb, you'd be literally the elephant in room. So there is racial intermixing and some personal relationships between Black and white students and I think we are breaking the barriers but there are still ... people with a rigid mindset and people who are not willing to reach over the racial barrier that is so characteristic of South Africa. But at an institutional level I have never, not from lecturers and other students ever experienced that I was being affected in any way on the basis of race" (Participant K, lines 118-131).

In Extract 5, Participant K is quite adamant about never experiencing an institutional level of discrimination, while identifying the tensions and divisions between Black and white South Africans also raised by other interviewees, that students remain racially segregated in classes and in social spaces. The doings of students are caught up in the prevailing social relations in the broader South African context. Students are therefore drawn into the same social relations of racism and a racialising discourse that pits people of different racial groups against one another. Thus, despite progressive institutional policies, students encounter extra-local factors that shape their experiences in the local context of the university. Another respondent makes just this connection, commenting "things are easier if you're a student from another country. It is because apartheid has only just recently ended, the two groups have done well considering the history. Relating across the colour line remains a challenge... family socialisation can create friction between the races" (Participant P, lines 30-32). Participant P connects the current social organisation of race and the ensuing social relations to the structures of apartheid, with effects that reverberate today.

Extract 6

"It's like there are two separate worlds: whites sit on lawn and Blacks on bench. Students don't interact. Sports is used to keep some spaces white, and language as well. White people want to protect themselves, white people feel they have no place... It is the 'new

victimhood'. White students want to take the lead in class, it's hard to respond to it. Black people are seen as less competent, they are seen as the weaker ones and the exaggerated care is condescending". (Participant M, lines 48-53).

Extract 6 shows the pervasiveness of self-segregation at the University, which occurs off campus, and also in classes and in social scenarios such as sports events and in residences, which later Participant M argues are "...still segregated... The white ones are more expensive than the others" (Participant M, line 98). Moguerane's (2007) research on university housing at the University of Pretoria showed that a decade after apartheid had ended, some student housing was still segregated along racial lines.

In addition as Participant M noted, language continues to be an important organising force that divides students along racial and cultural lines. Commenting on race relations on campus, another participant argued that "things are fine until election time when you see some questionable posters. The campus gets divided. But it doesn't play itself out in classrooms" (Participant L, lines 103-104), while this student then went on to recount incidences when she had seen racist posters on campus from the more conservative Afrikaans student political parties. Another person I interviewed respondent commented that "there is a division between students in various spaces and there are only superficial interactions across race" (Participant O, lines 43-44). The superficiality of interactions across racial lines was echoed in several of the interviews without any explanation offered about the reasons behind it. It was something that both Black and white students noted and experienced but they showed little interest in interrogating or overcoming, it was taken for granted almost, which was reflected in how candidly and casually the students discussed race relations on campus and in residence. The essential and taken for granted nature of race in student relations in part mirrors the way in which race relations are framed in South Africa as a whole, although in broader society it is overtly framed as legacy of apartheid and its creation of endemic scars resulting in race relations that are riddled with mistrust even today. Only one student, Participant P explicitly commented on the legacy of apartheid as framing the social relations of race management on the University campus. For the other students, apartheid and its

legacy hovered in the background like a ghost when talking about race relations amongst them and at the University as a whole.

One of the people I interviewed suggested that “there is no transformation in the structures of student life. University structures contradict the non-racial mission and language of the university. In the campus newspaper there is one Black student and fourteen white students. And they cover ‘white events’, ‘white life’. Black people and “black life” are absent” (Participant M, lines 105). Another institutional structure that perpetuates racial segregation is Dayhouses. These are formalised societies or fraternities designed for students who are unable to be part of the university residence community. Dayhouses reproduce and further entrench the racialised ownership of geography on the campus and help reinforce separation. The result is that racial segregation is practiced in several aspects of student life, all of which barring the organisation of the residences involve self-segregation.

Commenting on the University’s associations and social events, one respondent said, “Rag parties are white. They play white music and are held at The Square (Hatfield Square). And white students stopped going to Spring Bash because there were too many Black people. White students now have their own spring party at the same time at the Square (an area of the University town that is predominantly occupied by white students). The Black Spring Bash plays House music now and is entirely Black” (Participant M, lines 105-108). While one might be tempted to underplay the role of social events and associations such as Rag and the Spring Bash, they are important socialisation tools at the University and an important part of the social calendar. They are long-standing traditions at the university, and with the integration of universities they have become a site of cultural contestation, often articulated in terms of tastes in music.

Although ostensibly a small part of student life, the Spring Bash and Rag parties are an important tradition in the University and an annual event through which a particular institutional and cultural identity is enacted, which explains why they have become a contested terrain as the university has been undergoing demographic

transformation. When the 2011 Spring Bash was cancelled, a student was quoted as saying “the cancellation of Spring Day is symbolic of the cancellation of Afrikaans at UP” (Strydom in Skosana, 2011). The use of parallel student associations and events is not a new way of addressing institutional transformation, and is certainly not unique to the University of Pretoria. Black student associations sprang up on campus Black student numbers increased on white campuses and people found themselves alienated from the existing structures. However, these new institutions and associations, while useful in helping Black students to carve out a place for themselves in the institution, nonetheless entrench racial divisions, making them even more difficult to transgress.

Tierney’s (1988) attention to the socialisation process in his framing of organisational culture comes to mind here. This draws attention to questions regarding how new members become socialised. How is this articulated? And what needs to be known to survive/excel in this organisation? Socialisation at the University of Pretoria occurs through everyday interactions in residences, in Dayhouses and through cultural events. Space remains divided along racial lines, through the choice of language used, and the social and cultural activities that student engage in. For instance, Black students are unlikely to join activities where Afrikaans is the main language of communication. Similarly, choice in the type of sport being played also splits students along racial lines. As a consequence, the processes of socialisation at the University help to facilitate tensions and divisions amongst students along racial lines. There are also divisions along gender lines in the residences and the Dayhouses, in ways which are typical of many universities in South Africa, although this was not raised as an issue in the interviews.

The de facto segregation that occurs at the University of Pretoria and other campuses, including UCT (see Steyn & van Zyl, 2001), is reproduced by the students themselves in their constructions of race and difference. However, this does not occur in a vacuum. Essed’s work on everyday racism is useful here. Essed proposes that “as a concept everyday racism has been useful in showing that systemic racism is reproduced largely through routine and taken-for-granted practices and procedures

in everyday life.” (Essed, 2001:1). Everyday racism does not see racism as perpetrated by pathological individuals in isolated instances, nor does it understand racism as solely located in isolated systems and institution. Rather, everyday racism consists of the “...familiar, routine situations that are repeatedly experienced in daily life.” (Mabokela and King, 2001:97). It is these daily interactions within a larger institutional context that I am interested in: the mundane, taken-for granted, day-to-day ways in which students reinforce racialisation and racism. These include where students chose to sit in the classroom and outside, and what social events they participate in, as discussed above. An example of everyday racism amongst students was the naturalisation of racial division and a general disinterest in bridging the gap, and “a prevalent form of everyday racism is contact avoidance” (Essed, 2001:2). Everyday racism is distinct from institutional racism in that it focuses on the micro-level interactions and doings regarding how people become socialised into certain systems of oppression, which they then maintain and reproduce, consciously or otherwise, when drawing on racist discourses in everyday life. It is important to note that these discourses of race that result in racialism and racism also exist in broader South African society and form part of the embodied knowledge of students as they navigate the university, including at the University of Pretoria.

The accounts of student experiences given to me in these Pretoria interviews differed in a discernable way between the South African and non-South African students. The non-South African students had an outsider-within view (hooks, 1984) of the social relations prevailing at the University of Pretoria, both within and outside the classroom. Participant P, for instance, noted that he had a different relationship with white South African’s because there was no suspicion between them that resulted from their shared apartheid histories. So, although he was Black, he was viewed as being different from Black South Africans, and thus had a qualitatively different relationship with white South African students. One of my South African undergraduate respondents, Participant S was very young towards the very end of apartheid and was been raised in the “New South Africa”. However, she still noted and experienced tensions on the Pretoria campus, which she experienced and articulated as racial. She explained that while she had not had any overtly racist

experiences on campus, she nevertheless felt that there was a barrier between herself and the white students she encountered. Thus, despite occupying different standpoints, students were nonetheless drawn into the same social relations.

Extract 7

“Even though gender and race are such a sensitive topics, people are so quick to play the race card... and there is still a perception that white people are racist and that there is no such thing as a Black racist. If the person was Black, I think I'd be more scared to say something to that person but, more inclined to retract a bit before saying something or confronting that person directly than I would be on the basis to gender, simply because there is likelihood that that person could turn it around and say that I'm being racist towards him or her” (Participant K, 335-341).

Extract 7 indicates how a student's racial identity can play a role in how they navigate and experience racial matters. Interestingly, the race of a perpetrator and a victim will make a difference in the course of action pursued. The respondent, who was a white woman, commented that she was more inclined to retract and be slow to address matters if she felt discriminated against on the basis of race, as compared to her responses if this were done on the basis of gender. This concern of course only makes sense in a context in which white people have been found guilty as a group of institutional racism and are thus sensitive to and worried about such accusations, which is obviously the case in South Africa. Consequently, the dominant extra-local discourse of white racism and Black victimisation impacts on how white students attempt to resolve racial tensions on this campus.

The male respondents interviewed seemed less concerned with sexual harassment by female perpetrators. However, one student made some interesting distinctions. For example, if a fellow male student harassed him, then he would threaten violence before reporting the perpetrator, but if the student was a woman, then he would speak to her directly with no further implications. This was different again, for if the same student was harassed by members of staff, he stated that a male staff member would be reported and active steps taken, whilst a female member of staff would be confronted with a verbal threat to report her to the head of department.

What the various extracts discussed thus far suggest is that the dominant extra-local discourses of racism, gender and sexism inform how students in sociology at the University of Pretoria engaged with each other and how they address the challenges that they encounter. This is important, because it points to the extra-local factors that impinge upon and complicate the intentions of the textual practices engaged in as part of equity management at an institutional level. The consequence is that, students in their local actualities at the University of Pretoria encounter and have to balance the institutional textual realities, and the extra-local and somewhat competing discourses of racism and sexism, as well as their own embodied knowledge and realities.

The Disembodied Student

Extract 8

“In practice there is racial equity and the same with gender. If the standard is ABC you're expected to deliver ABC to pass, regardless of the background you come from. The problem is that there are still many Black students who come from disadvantaged backgrounds in terms of economics, in terms of family structures, in terms of support structures and in terms of educational history. So, you still have students who come from rural areas, who come from schools where they did not learn to read and write properly especially in English, they do not know to express themselves, do not know how to deal with the demands of the tertiary environment because the leap is so big for them from high schools that are more disadvantaged to university” (Participant K, lines 122-131).

In Extract 8, Participant K articulates the tension between what is constructed and widely accepted as a meritocratic institution, the actualities of students' experiences, and the extra-local realities. Meritocracy has been defined as a “social system where individual talent and effort, rather than ascriptive traits, determine individuals' placements in a social hierarchy ... [and the] two defining features of meritocratic systems are competition and equal equality of opportunity” (Alon & Tienda, 2007:489). Participant K in the above extract recognises the dominant trope of meritocracy, which she herself believes in, but juxtaposes it with the actualities of some students' lives, describing some of the challenges that poor students experience in their lives at University. She tells the story of one student who was squatting on

the University campus because he lived too far for the commute to be practical and could not afford to officially live in a University residence. The notion of universities being meritocracies is a pervasive, one as discussed in Chapter 7. Interestingly, Participant K, despite being aware of the financial challenges faced by some students, still separates this from her view of the University as an essentially equal and meritocratic place. Somehow, having universal academic standards or a competitive system becomes equated to equity across the board, and in some ways this takes precedence. In other words, meritocracy becomes reduced to competition, while equal opportunity elements are marginalised.

Another important issue raised in Extract 8 is the gap that exists in the education system between standards in schools and in universities, and in particular the highly variable quality of high school teaching. Participant K, for instance, comments, “the majority of these students come from extremely poor conditions and they are Black and they are or also the students but do not have access to great education, they went to high schools with teachers that were not committed or trained adequately or did not have the sources to develop them, so it’s unfortunate...” (Participant K, lines 161-172). This is supported in the observation from Participant L that “it’s too easy to become a teacher in South Africa. The quality of teachers is slack. An attempt has been made to close the gap between secondary school and universities and the University must refuse to lower standards but learners must be assisted” (Participant L, lines 102-105). These comments from the students interviewed point to the wide socio-economic inequality that pervades the country and its cyclical reinforcement. Teachers who are underpaid, typically from public schools in disadvantaged areas, are more likely to go on strike. This coupled with the already limited financial and material resources of such schools, leaves students from poorer communities at a further disadvantage academically, which manifests itself in the difficulties they experience in gaining university access and their struggles to succeed once there.

The discussion above highlights the disjuncture between the everyday experiences students and requirements, of the ruling relations of higher education institutions. Similar disjunctures were noted and discussed regarding the Kwa-Zulu Natal case

study, where the State's push for equality was sometimes at odds with the University's drive towards efficiency and academic competitiveness. Class and income was identified as another key determiner of student's success and this too is echoed in the interviews with students at the University of Pretoria.

Extract 9

There are still students from very poor backgrounds who have eight people living in one small house who never have any privacy, who never have any time to study because there is never any peace and quiet. And you can stay in the University library until it closes but then how do you get home? Do you walk in the street and feel unsafe because usually, they usually live in the city centre or Sunny Side where it's more dangerous, so really what level of equality is there? I know one student at least that didn't even have anywhere to stay and he went to the bathroom on the sports grounds and would sleep in the bathrooms or empty classrooms at night and get up very early in the morning to go to the sports grounds and take a shower and leave their stuff hidden somewhere... I mean how equal can you really get? I'm not saying this is the majority but it's certainly a reality. I know there are Black students that come from privileged backgrounds and there are different dynamics around that. But I still think, not just as an institution but as a country, we've still got a long way to go to narrow the gap to give students more student opportunities. Not even academically but in other ways. Another thing is that if you don't have money for accommodation, you don't have money for food and you don't have money for transport how will you have money to buy a textbook that costs R750? I mean that's more than that person can dream of, I mean when your parent uses the only money they have to send you to buy your bus tickets to come to Pretoria they cannot give you anything else especially if you are in the Humanities, because there are more scholarships for science and funding available than in the humanities and social sciences your chances of getting funding especially at undergraduate level or any financial support is very limited and if you don't even know where to start to begin to look it's difficult. So I think they have a long way to go like I said this is not really an institutional issue only but a broader structural problem" (Participant K, lines 131-156).

Participant K here raises the role of economic inequality as a hindrance to students achieving equality of performance, progress and outcome. Beginning with the local and lived experience described by Participant K, economic and material constraints are shown to shape students' lives. The challenges are structural and on a bigger

scale than the University and what happens in it. However, Extract 9 illuminates the University's failure to take into full consideration the material realities of its students. Framing the university space and experience as neutral and accessible to all leads to structural inequalities remaining hidden and by extension being reproduced in the University. While the University of Pretoria, like others in South Africa, addresses socio-economic inequality in so far as providing financial aid and locating campuses in economically-deprived communities such as Mamelodi (to save students from having to commute and reside on campus), these efforts are limited in their impact.

The extra-local realities of the marked class differences existing in South Africa impinge on the experiences of students in the University, as illustrated in the extracts above. The role that class plays in shaping educational outcomes proliferates in primary and secondary schools, although it is often ignored as a factor in higher education research (but see Galindo-Rueda & Vignoles, 2002). However, while it is true that the racialised class structure of South Africa is changing, the majority of the poor are still Black (Nattrass & Seekings, 2001), and this impacts on higher education preparedness and the challenges faced once in the institution.

The current equity policies focus on access and success of disadvantaged groups, with the challenge being how students are conceptualised as a whole. In Chapter 5 I discussed ways in which people were marginalised in the university workplace and focused on Acker's (1990) interesting ideas about the 'disembodied worker'. As discussed, the 'disembodied worker' is based on the concept of 'a job', which in abstract terms is filled by a worker who only exists for the work involved, with none of the individual particularities or realities of people's lives taken into consideration. 'The job' is the work and nothing else. According to Acker, this disembodied and universal worker is in fact implicitly a male worker with no domestic or other responsibilities, resulting in the double marginalisation of women in the workplace. The emerging patterns of student inequality are reproduced over time and increasingly display a form of universalising similar to Acker's concept. The abstract 'student' that reappears in the above accounts by the people I interviewed and in the

University's documentation and policy statement is at odds with the concrete students in the University's classrooms, residences and so on. The universal and abstract student, which in line with Acker's terminology can be called a 'disembodied student', is at the heart of meritocratic assumptions about academic equality. Like Acker's 'disembodied worker', the 'disembodied student' shares a narrow yet universalised relationship with equality, one which implies a complete commitment to 'the job' or 'the studies'.

There is, however, an important distinction between Acker's 'disembodied worker' and the 'disembodied student' regarding their respective relationships to inequality. The 'disembodied worker' is characterised by the ability to make a time commitment in exchange for economic benefits (higher salaries and pay per time spent). The 'disembodied student', however, exchanges *both time and economic commitments* for intellectual qualifications. This double commitment might seem insubstantial has two consequences for those that do not conform to the abstract 'disembodied student'. Firstly, in order to make the economic commitment (e.g. rent, commute, textbooks, etc.) the student must have access to external funds or must invest time elsewhere and become a 'disembodied worker' as well as a 'disembodied student'. Secondly, the gains at stake for the student, namely qualifications, is less abstract than money, and more easily attributed to personal merit. That is, a failure to attain a high grade is more intuitively attributable to the individual compared to the failure to achieve equal pay. This double commitment also helps explain why student inequality might manifest itself more strongly along class and racial lines, given the additional role played by financial means, which are not only a consequence, but also a prerequisite. The 'disembodied student' in this research, then, refers to the idealised and normalised student body that is middle-class, Afrikaans speaking, lives in University housing, and has financial and emotional support from family members, permitting both a time and money commitment.

In the same way that Acker (1990) argues that organisations are defined in abstract and gender-neutral terms without addressing the embodied and gendered nature of their actual workers, the University of Pretoria, like others, does not recognise the

'disembodied student' to be actually male, middle-class and white. Little consideration is made for students' outside lives, because this is ignored as not relevant to its workings. Historically the ideal student was white, male and Afrikaans, but the actual student body has changed in the last decades with the influx of female, English-speaking students and Black. The result of this is that Black and poor students have come to represent troubled and problematised bodies at the university, rendering them even more marginal, with white female students in an intermediate position. Such views are exemplified in the one of the respondents accounts, from Participant M: "...some students are spatially located and groomed to go to UP, for example those from Pretoria Boys High School and Pretoria Girls High School. This gives white students an advantage. Black students are not properly prepared for Uni, for example, they don't have basic computer literacy. Family support is lacking for Black students. They retain home networks and thus cannot fully immerse in campus life. University is an extension of home culture for white students. Ownership and belonging still white. Racial tension is latent at UP" (Participant M, lines 152).

This chapter has identified a number of institutional and structural barriers to equity at the University of Pretoria and shown that there is a clear disjuncture between the abstract 'disembodied student' and the concrete reality of students and their lives as students see this. This clearly problematizes the key assumptions of meritocracy, as noted above. There are discursive and individual impediments to equity in the institution, and these are now focused on in respect of the university's organisation of ruling relations.

Ruling Relations

Despite the institution's demographic shifts, great challenges remain for the University of Pretoria. Its conservative and racist history could lead to the view that it has struggled with the achievement of certain aspects of equity goals, as identified in its Institutional Audit (2008), because of institutional resistance or preservationist attitudes held by its white Afrikaner top and senior management. My research however, suggests that the reason that the University has struggled with some of its

equity goals is due to a combination of issues, some of which are not grounded in the institution itself.

Certainly gaps still exist in student success rates along racial lines, as discussed earlier, and the University's Audit Report comments that this speaks "not only to the degree of preparedness of students for study at university but also the institution's ability to provide an educational experience that facilitates and supports success in both curricular and extra-curricular aspects" (UP Audit Report, 2008: 5). Class too shapes student experiences in the university in significant ways. Those coming from under-privileged backgrounds struggle to gain access to the University and, once in, often have a lot of catching up to do academically and culturally, while also frequently facing financial difficulties around affording or rather not affording fees, accommodation and even books. The socio-economic inequality that prevails in the South African education system as a whole makes it difficult to realise the goal of wider access to higher education. This is a challenge that obviously exists outside of individual universities, but it also draws them into such ruling relations, while their organisation in the university helps perpetuate the racialised character of higher education. Other factors also impact on the student experience at University, including pregnancy, and also HIV and other illnesses. All these extra-local factors have a marked impact on students' lives and everyday actualities and consequently on the achievement of racial and gender equity.

The ruling relations of higher education are organised in a way that allows for racism and sexism in universities to persist. The strict division existing between the abstract disembodied character of the institution, and the complexly grounded nature of the personal lives of students, maintains and reinforces a boundary that allows the university to function on the basic premise that the students they deal with are tacitly white, middle-class and male. The accommodations made, to ameliorate this, such as building satellite campuses in under-privileged communities, and in having parallel social events for Black students, frames these students as problematic and 'other', and are marginal concessions that result in little more than reinforcing a sense of 'apartness', something deeply ironic in the South African context.

In addition, my research also shows that students themselves play a role in the social organisation of equity on the University campus, in particular in reproducing racist discourses and behaviours. Essed's (1991) concept of everyday racism has been important in understanding and framing the attitudes and actions of students at the University of Pretoria. The power of the concept of everyday racism lies in its recognition of the mundane and everyday nature of racism and its reproduction. In largely mundane ways, students at Pretoria uphold a regime that reproduces racial discrimination and segregation both within and outside the university, in particular through maintaining racialised social groupings. The work of academic staff and administrators is organised in such a way that it fails to disrupt this regime, with this requiring the kind of purposeful and deliberate action that has been put into operation by the Head of the Sociology Department.

In this chapter, I have argued that the embodied knowledge of students becomes subordinated to the textual and discursive levels of how a university as an institution actually works at a grounded level. Student experiences and realities become subsumed in institutional realities and discourses, resulting in a rupture between the institutional and the embodied experiences of students. This is perhaps best illustrated in the tension that exists between the perception of meritocracy, versus the social and economic realities of students and their lives. The institutional realities and demands conflict with the everyday, every-night actualities of a large number of the students. The lives of students are not limited to what they do inside the classroom or to activities involving curricular-based work. Their everyday work as students is broader and involves the negotiation of institutional and personal realities, which are all too often at odds with each other, as indicated in the interviews with the Sociology students discussed in this chapter.

This case study has examined how race and gender equity are managed from the perspective of students in the Sociology Department at the University of Pretoria. The department was selected because of its particular history and previous close connection with the apartheid government. As discussed Chapter 3, some of the University of Pretoria's Sociology professors, including Geoffrey Cronje and N.J

Rhodie (Burawoy, 2004) not only helped to formulate apartheid policies by providing their ideological basis, but also thereafter served as advisors for the government. Thus as a department it provides an interesting site of investigation as a historically ultra conservative part of the University. In addition, it was attractive as a case study because students of Sociology already engage with concepts such as race, gender and equity and are able to provide important insights into how those were organised in the department and University, as extracts from the interview show.

One of the distinctive aspects of IE is its use of texts in mapping the ruling relations of a context. Unlike the situations discussed in other chapters, texts play less of a central role in the analysis of the management of race and gender and equity at the University of Pretoria. This chapter has not worked as closely with written texts but rather, it is grounded in the experiences of the students, whose everyday/everynight work I have shown does not include an intimate engagement with institutional texts, unlike that of academic and administrative staff members. Indeed, students rarely come across such texts. The texts discussed and analysed in the UKZN and UCT studies emerged as part of the daily work of the academic staff and university administrators, and through them the textual nature of the organisation of equity in the institutions is illuminated. While the Pretorian students did not come into contact with institutional texts in their daily work, the textual realities are nevertheless embedded in their accounts. Through my analysis of these accounts, the textual nature of the organisation and management of equity at the University is revealed. Consequently, while my institutional ethnography of the University of Pretoria was not grounded in texts and documents it importantly shows the ways in which the textual nature of an institution is apparent without focusing on the texts themselves. While the UKZN and UCT case studies more closely resemble other institutional ethnographies in their exploration and discussion of the textual nature of equity management at those institutions, this particular case study shows how the extra-local relations of ruling at universities are reproduced through actions and discourses that may not be directly tied to specific texts and documents but are none the less fully implicated in accounts of the institution and how students experience it.

Chapter 8

Disjunctures and Ruling Relations

Introduction

In the late 1980s and early 1990s leading up to the transition from apartheid to a democratic State and then afterwards, widespread transformation became central to the government agenda. During this time, South African higher education was re-imagined and envisaged as a tool for social justice and key site of social and economic transformation, in contrast to being an apparatus to foster apartheid ideals of white supremacy. There have been some successes and some failures. Academic and State-funded research has argued that equity continues to elude the South African higher education sector despite over a decade and a half of policy reforms and targeted transformation efforts (Bunting 1994; Cloete et al, 2004; Cloete & Moja, 2005; and Mabokela, 2000). Relatedly, the Soudien Report (DoE, 2008) identified institutional culture and the prevalence of racism as hindrances to equity, despite the adoption of equity and transformation policies across the sector. For instance, the most recent Employment Equity Report at the University of Pretoria (UP, 2010a) showed that top, senior and middle management positions remain dominated by white men, occupying 50%, 68% and 53% of the posts respectively. Rather than attempting to measure or uncover instances of inequity, thereby reproducing other research, my research, grounded in an IE approach, has investigated how race and gender equity have come to be organised in the way they are in three South African universities. Smith's (1990a, 1990b, 2005, 2006a, 2006b) IE offers a powerful alternative to mainstream sociology, as a method of inquiry that does not begin with *a priori* theory, but with the lived experiences of people in their local actualities, moving from there to explicate the extra-local relations of ruling. The ontology of the social provides a theoretical framework that defines the objective of IE. It is premised on an ontology that understands the social world as always happening, always coming into being, through the concertedness of people's

everyday and everynight doings. The analytical goal or objective of IE, then, is to discover what has happened and what is happening in a given social context and how this conjoins the local and the extra-local in particular by textual means.

In line with other institutional ethnographers, in my research organisations are not separated from the doings of the people that inhabit and compose them and make them work. It sees the distinction between “the institutional” and “the individual” as complicated and blurred. It has also drawn on Czarniawska’s (1992) work, which also advocates the ethnographic study of complex organisations and similarly recognises that the entity we call an organisation is constituted by the actions of the people within and which constitute it. I see it as fully consonant with IE.

Framed by IE thus broadly conceived, my research is consequently concerned to “reveal the ideological and social processes that produce experiences of subordination” (DeVault & McCoy, 2006:19). As a result, the focus is on how race and gender equity come to be organised in the way they are in the three South African universities forming my case studies. The research is exploratory, but it also contributes to both theoretical and methodological scholarship by highlighting different ways in which the social world can be understood and the ways in which people’s doings can be tied into broader institutional and extra-local happenings and relations. In addition, there are practical implications for the way in which equity policies are implemented and managed, and not just in South Africa alone but more widely.

The research I carried out has utilised interviews, documentary analysis and observations with my IE framework. The interview and other data has not been analysed as an end in itself; institutional ethnographers begin their inquiry in the local experiences of people and move from there to explicate the extra-local ruling relations, and this is what my research has done. Thus the interviews and other inquiries have been used as entry points to show the social relations and social organisation of race and gender equity in the universities examined, to explore what

they each show regarding the extra-local factors that impact on the workings of equity and people's experiences and understandings of this.

One of the defining features of IE is how it conceives of texts and their role in the social world, and as such texts of various kinds have been central to my analysis, as playing a standardising and mediating role in institutional realities. Texts have been understood and analysed as dynamic, fluid and not inert. They are part and parcel of the social relations of the institutions investigated and they inform and guide those relations and processes we call institutional. In many ways universities are similar to other institutions as far as the crucial role of texts as coordinators of the social goes. The same basic mechanism, the replicability of the organising power of texts, is also a constituent of that organisational entity called a university. The regulatory aspects of texts set up the basis of organisational relations and as Smith argues, "there are regulatory texts that set up the frames that are particularly important in the organisation of frontline work that transposes actualities into institutional texts that become the realities enabling institutional action" (Smith, 2005:209). This is most certainly so regarding my three case studies.

The equity policies of UKZN, UCT and the University of Pretoria were each developed as a result of the State mandate to strive towards greater equity in the country's institutions covered by the White Paper (DoE, 1997a) and the National Plan for Higher Education (DoE, 2001). The goals outlined in these documents were then rearticulated at the university level and consequently adopted institutionally. However, this was not without its problems, and challenges and conflicts arose in the universities, as discussed earlier in this thesis. Ball argues that "policies from above are not the only constraints and influences upon institutional practice" (Ball, 1993:15). Some of these constraints include structural and managerial ones, something I shall return to later. However, these State policies are not always easily reconcilable with the institutional realities. Ball (1993) asserts that the nature of localised responses to policy is necessarily *ad hoc* or even shambolic, and proposes making a distinction between the generalised and specific effects of policy, arguing that the two should not be conflated. My own view is that the generalised effects of

the racial and equity policies at State and institutional levels have created a legal and moral space through which equity has been framed as an imperative and institutionalised, while the specific effects are less cohesive and differ from institution to institution, although some commonalities exist.

The three case studies, read together, provide a glimpse into the processes and practices that have led to inequity in some different South African higher education institutions. They point to objectified forms of consciousness and organisation that rely on and create textual realities that in some cases are divergent from the embodied knowledge and experiences of the people in them. The management of equity in South African institutions is as a result characterised by disjunctures and competing interests, not necessarily by the poor implementation that other commentators have suggested (Sayed & Jansen, 2001). The discourses of race and gender that continue to dominate South African society also play an important role in informing how equity matters are managed and experienced at the local level. The local practices and realities of individual universities have to be understood as being framed and influenced by the ruling relations of higher education and the State.

Disjunctures: The State, Universities and Ruling Relations

The role of higher education in South Africa has shifted in the post-apartheid era, with emphasis now on its function as a key driver in economic and social transformation. This shift has been articulated in the White Paper (DoE, 1997a), in the focus on equity, redress and on producing students who will meet South Africa's labour and industry demands. In addition, the emphasis on universities and their involvement in community engagement illustrates the social development push and results in yet another stakeholder in the higher education enterprise, the State (Kruss, 2012). The Ministry of Education in 2001 summarised the role of higher education thus: "higher education, and public higher education especially, has immense potential to contribute to the consolidation of democracy and social justice, and the growth and development of the economy... these contributions are complementary. The enhancement of democracy lays the basis for greater participation in economic

and social life more generally. Higher levels of employment and work contribute to political and social stability and the capacity of citizens to exercise and enforce democratic rights and participate effectively in decision-making. The overall well-being of nations is vitally dependent on the contribution of higher education to the social, cultural, political and economic development of its citizens” (CHE 2000: 25).

The South African macro economic policy GEAR (Growth Employment and Redistribution) is grounded in neo-liberal ideals of “liberalisation, privatisation, deregulation and the curbing public expenditure” (Bolsman & Uys, 2001:173). This, coupled with global higher education trends, has impacted on the role of universities in South Africa. As a result of these two forces, “the university is moving away from an academic or ‘collegial’ style of governance to a corporate ‘managerial’ style where the major goals are accountability and efficiency” (Bolsmans & Uys, 2001:174). Therefore, the goals of transformation, equity and redress are occurring against the backdrop of the increased marketization of higher education globally. Thaver and Mahick argue that “one consequence of the restructuring of universities under the aegis of the globally dominant neo-liberal economic ideology is that any ostensible commitment to achieving greater equality in terms of gender, race or class is sidelined or eclipsed by an even stronger commitment to market values” (Thaver & Mahick, 2008:363). Bolsman and Uys (2001) argue, however, that the marketization of higher education can lead to institutional transformation and their research concerning the former Rand Afrikaans University (now University of Johannesburg) show how its transformation came about as a result of marketplace pressures. The resultant impact of increased marketization and commercialisation in South African higher education, discussed in Chapter 5, has led to a conflict of interest with other goals. For instance, at UKZN some staff perceived and experienced the new managerial approach as directly opposing equity measures. The shift to greater commercialisation in the sector has been described as “significant in terms not only of how they refocus research and teaching efforts, but also of how they change the cultural life of the university...” (Lynch, 2010:55). While my discussion here has focused on the marketization of higher education other global discourse pertaining to education impact local settings. The links between global

policies and discourse and local practices are not unique to the South African context. Examining inequality in literacy, Hamilton & Pitt argue that “local policies in many, countries are increasingly framed by the ideologies of a dominant global order that promote particular understandings about the nature of literacy and society” (Hamilton & Pitt, 2011:596). The same can be argued about the relationship between global and local discourses of equity and diversity. In her work on the impact of educational programmes on teacher’s everyday work practices in England, Hamilton argues, that “the national system has strong links to global process” and concludes that “the global is instantiated in the local” (Hamilton, 2009:222). Smith argues that universities are “embedded in and rely on the ruling relations. No institutions, no large-scale organisations stand outside laws, government, financial organisation, professional and academic discourses, of the natural sciences, managerial discourses, and on and on” (Smith, 2005:206). These ruling relations are made visible in the examination of local practices and processes found in the accounts and experiences of locally situated people.

The marketization and consequent consumerist turn in the higher education sector, illustrated in the new managerialist approach and the construction of students as clients and customers, is in direct opposition to the more popular approach to South African education, which views the sector as a tool of transformation that underpins the push for transformation and redress. As a result, there are two competing forces, and the confluence of these has led to inconsistency in the steps taken to achieve racial and gender equity in South African higher education.

Although the issues I have discussed above are global in nature (Cooper, 2006), and in some ways not unique to South Africa, nonetheless they affect the local South African context differently from elsewhere, because of its apartheid history and the challenges of redress it faces. For instance, the simultaneous pursuit of efficiency at the same time as equity and redress may not be an obstacle in countries where there is no history of formal institutionalised racism and sexism. The marketising of higher education is not benign, although as Lynch points out, “in theory, the focus on performativity is genderless; it is presented as rational, efficient, accountable and

giving value for money” (Lynch, 2010:55). This gender-neutrality, however, masks consequential masculinist assumptions that negatively impact on women in these institutions. The ruling relations of the global academic shift towards commercialisation dovetail with the ruling relations of the State and hamper the management of equity in local higher education institutions. The ruling relations of the State, articulated in the education sector as a whole, also poses a challenge to the management of equity in higher education institutions.

Major structural inequalities remain in the education sector in South Africa. Also the challenges faced in high schools are imbricated with those of the higher education institutions. In the interview and other data discussed in the thesis, the gap between secondary school and university emerged as a key site for challenges to equity in all three case studies. The high attrition rate of previously disadvantaged students has been attributed to poor university preparation, while the university itself is revealed as a major site for reconfirming such inequalities in my research. Although significant improvements have been made regarding access, success rates remain fractured along racial lines. The dual equity goals defined in the White Paper (DoE, 1997a), concerning greater access and success, are still not being fully realised. However, the gap between high school and university preparedness is neither new nor locally specific (Duggan, 2009).

Smith (2003) argues that this is a global challenge, but it is exacerbated in South Africa by the massive socio-economic inequality that exists. The South African schooling system continues to be characterised by inequality along geographical and racial lines. Challenges of equity in university access and success occur against this backdrop. Many of the country’s universities have adopted “bridging” courses and extended programmes of study in order to mitigate the inequality regarding their first year entrants while simultaneously working toward greater representation and equity more broadly. These strategies have also been used in other parts of the world, including some Scottish universities where access to higher education programmes exist to help students from under-represented communities with Maths and Science subjects (Smith, 2003). The extra-local factors which face the secondary education

sector impede the degree of success that universities are able to achieve in realising the equity goals that they have set out for themselves and those mandated by the State. The demands and requirements made via the ruling relations, embodied in the State, either conflict or are incommensurable with the realities of the country.

Systems of Oppression, Equity Policy and Inequality Regimes

Currently, the South African equity policy discourse conceptualises systems of oppression and privilege by using an “additive model” that articulates a hierarchy of oppression and discrimination. This approach has been criticised by those suggesting that oppression should be understood instead as constituted by interlocking inequalities (Essed 1991, 2001; Collins 1990, 2000; Davis 2008; Nash, 2008; McCall; 2005). The concept of gendered racism is one I have found useful in identifying the intersection between racism and sexism at both individual and structural levels.

Essed suggests that, in the allocation of resources, “women of color... are deemed most suitable for jobs in the lowest stratum of the labour market, an area already segmented unequally along gender lines” (Essed, 2001:2). This is certainly true in South Africa. Black women in South Africa have been historically relegated to lower levels jobs, particularly domestic work. Black women in South Africa have historically been excluded from much of the labour market, barring the domestic work sector, and a degree of exclusion remains today. Research on the experiences of Black women in South African higher education (Mabokela, 2003) has found evidence of considerable discrimination and marginalization, due to the intersection of race and gender privilege. White women have enjoyed less privilege than white men, and like Black women, although to a lesser degree, have been disproportionately located in jobs that involve care-work and motherhood (particularly, Afrikaner women). In the three higher education institutions examined in this thesis, out of the “designated groups”, Black men were over-represented, followed by white women. The gendered privilege of Black men went largely unnoticed in my interviews, primarily because the transformation mandate has been fulfilled because they are members of the “designated groups”. Black men have been

more favoured, reflecting the considerable male privilege that remains in universities. Although on paper white women are also identified as an affirmative action “designated group”, race takes primacy in popular and institutional discourse. In this model of equity, then, white people are seen as at the bottom of the hierarchy of oppression and at the top of the hierarchy of privilege. But of course an approach to oppression in which all white people are deemed as being universally privileged masks the complexities that arise from intersectional identities.

To illustrate the importance of an intersectional approach to conceptualising identities and axes of oppression, the experiences of white, homosexual men or white disabled men during and after the apartheid era can be usefully contemplated, for they were not privileged in the same way as white, heterosexual, able-bodied men. The trouble with the current equity policies, including the employment equity policy, is that they lack nuance and complexity. While disabled people are part of the “designated groups” who are targeted in employment, white men are not. However, people do not exist as fractured beings along clear-cut racial, class or gender lines, but have their embodied existence across these identities. Thus race and gender modulate and inform one another (Alyward, 2010), and “systemic racism and sexism interact synergistically with systematic oppressions in government...[and society at all]” (McGibbon and McPherson, 2011:72). In addition, my research has found that class also plays an important role in how students’ experience higher education, so that, building on Acker’s (1990) work, universities are shown to be both gender and class stratified, and clearly, “everyday racism operates through and interferes with gender and other systems of oppression” (Essed, 2001:1).

Despite the dominance of the “additive-model” discourse regarding oppression in institutions, there are sometimes gaps created that can lead to its reframing. An example concerns the admissions debates at UCT discussed in Chapter 7, where the relative privilege of Black middle-class students was raised. An intersectional approach to conceptualising oppression and privileged would lead to a more nuanced set of equity policies by illuminating such complexities. Here I agree with Essed that “in everyday experiences distinctions between the institutional and interactional,

between ideology and discourse, between private and public spheres merge and form a complex of social relations and situations” (Essed, 2001:2).

Despite the challenges discussed above, the examination across the chapters in this thesis of various policy documents and strategic plans has made clear that the universities in question are committed to transforming. Much work and resources (both human and financial) has gone into the production of these documents and the working practices they have established. Yet challenges remain with the management of equity, and these are not purely a matter of poor implementation. A plethora of factors impact on the degree to which universities are able to institutionalise and embody equity, and I have called these inequality regimes, borrowing Acker’s (1990) phrase.

Although in this thesis I discuss inequality regimes primarily regarding the UCT case study, all organisations have inequality regimes, and this is borne out my case studies. Inequality regimes are the loosely connected practices and processes which maintain inequalities in organisations and the reproduction of these inequalities is textually informed. Examples of such inequality regimes pointed out by my research concern the over-emphasis on efficiency in recruitment and hiring; the gender, race and class stratified nature of organisations; and institutional cultures. I now discuss these in turn.

Following the apartheid era, “the most obvious goal for the democratic government in relation to higher education [was] the achievement of equity. At the same time, however, the need for South Africa to join a rapidly globalising economy after years of isolation has placed great emphasis on production of a skilled workforce” (Boughey, 2003:66). Both equity and efficiency were outlined as goals in the White Paper (DoE, 1997a) and National Plan for Higher Education (DoE, 2001) and this was also evident in the institutional practices of UKZN, as evidenced by its selection and recruitment policies and guidelines.

As discussed in Chapter 5, the recruitment and hiring of staff from previously disadvantaged groups was made difficult because of the strict criteria demanded of job candidates, criteria which were often not met by previously disadvantaged group candidates. In Acker's (2006) work, inequity was reproduced through hiring practices, even in instances where affirmative action policies were in place, because white interviewers viewed white males as the best candidates. However, in my research inequity was reproduced by means of institutional demands rather than individual decision-makers in the hiring process. These institutional demands, made in the name of achieving greater efficiency through hiring prolific publishers and consequently people with PhDs, made it difficult to realise the redress goals of the institution, and in so doing reproduced inequity at staff level.

In addition, the State itself has competing and conflicting goals, as exemplified in the White Paper (DoE, 1997a), which emphasises both the need for equity and transformation and for greater efficiency of the sector and its institutions. The simultaneity of a demand for equity and efficiency has resulted in a push and pull dynamic that results in neither being fully realised. The tension between equity and efficiency was echoed at UKZN in the messages communicated and in attempting to balance the two goals simultaneously equity suffered. The problem with a focus on efficiency is not only that it is prioritised over equity in organisations, it can also mask and even reproduce inequity.

The stratified nature of organisations has gender and class as well as race dimensions to it. In South Africa, at student level there have been great strides in achieving equity in university access as gauged by head-counts. However, there has been notably less progress in achieving gender equity at staff levels. In the UKZN and UCT case studies, I argued that the reason for this was the strongly gendered nature of those institutions. When examining the micro-politics, which Morley (2006:543) describes as focusing "on the ways in which power is relayed in everyday practices", involved here, my research has shown that, while a surface-level attention to gender equity was institutionalised through equity policies, nonetheless the institutional structures and practices that marginalised women persisted. While not reporting

overt or direct discrimination, female respondents across the case studies did not feel that they were benefiting from the equity policies as a recognised designated group.

Acker's (1990) work on the idea and actuality of the disembodied worker has provided an important tool for conceptualising some of the more entrenched and subtle ways in which women become marginalised in universities. The concept illuminates the gendered nature of universities as organisations and helps to demonstrate that, despite their projection of gender-neutrality, they remain masculine in some critical respects and their ideal worker is a male worker. The combination of this projection of neutrality with being strongly gendered in practice encourages blaming personal capacity and traits for some people's inability to succeed. Morley refers to situations where the individual is blamed rather than the structural elements as constituting a "theory of disadvantage, rather than a theory of power and privilege" (Morley, 2006:545). In some instances both theories of disadvantage and those of power and privilege are drawn on. An example of this in my research concerns a female academic staff member at UKZN, who felt the pressure to take up a more senior management position but was unable to respond because the demands of the job meant that she would be unable to fulfil her commitments as a mother. Another more junior member of staff at UKZN, also expressed difficulty in balancing the pressure to publish, her administrative duties and parenting. The participants were experiencing a structural constraint or what Grummel et al (2009) refer to as the "care-ceiling", with the construction and projection of universities as gender-neutral masking entrenched gender inequality and working practices that favour men.

Gender inequality in higher education is obviously not unique to the South African context, with research conducted in many parts of the world reporting similar trends (Acker, 1990; Deem, 2003; Bonner, 2006; Grummel et al, 2009; Jacobs, 1996; Morley 1997b, 2006). The ruling relations of global higher education, and global academic culture with its hidden, yet entrenched gender inequality, impact on and help shape how equity is managed locally in South African universities. But these ruling relations also mirror those existing in broader society. In South Africa, as in

many other countries, care-work remains a primarily female responsibility and so it disproportionately affects women regarding their workplace behaviours and aspirations. Thus even with the socio-political advances that have led to increased numbers of women in the full-time labour market, the burden of care remains primarily located on the shoulders of women and perpetuates as well as reflects a larger inequality regime.

The University of Pretoria case study investigated the experiences of students, and found that at the university level students were constructed and positioned in a particular way that helped to perpetuate inequity. While Acker's (1990) work uses the "disembodied worker" concept of workers, my research has used it of students. The "disembodied student" constructs a student who is nominally without race, class or gender, while in fact "the student" here is constructed implicitly as a white, middle-class person. The result is the marginalisation and problematisation of people who do not fit this default identity. By conceiving of students as disembodied, the racial and gendered culture that exists normalises whiteness and middle-classness and by so doing reproduces privilege and discrimination, while also hiding them from view.

This was not so in all the case studies. For instance, at UCT the embodied and racialised experiences of students were part and parcel of how they were thought about, as witnessed by its Admissions Policy. The Policy deliberately sets out to admit students from disadvantaged backgrounds, and in so doing UCT partially disrupts the normalisation of students as white and middle class. Of course, the recruitment of previously disadvantaged students alone does not eradicate the normalisation of whiteness and middle-classness, but it does create an environment in which the institutional culture is confronted with people with different embodied experiences and who it must engage with.

Institutional cultures or institutional climates are identified in the White Paper (DoE, 1997a) as an important area for transformation. Institutional culture certainly played a significant role in shaping how the three universities organised and managed equity

in my research. The research did not set out to measure or investigate institutional culture, but is an important part of the backdrop to my analysis. Tierney (1988) has identified some key of institutional culture, and his emphasis on leadership and management, information, and socialisation are also factors which impact on equity in each of my three case studies.

All South African universities are legally obliged to abide by the Employment Equity Act 1997, and are also charged with developing their own institutional level policies and strategies. Institutional leadership plays a major role in how successful that endeavour will be. The leadership approaches discerned in each of the three case studies I carried out certainly reveal ways in which the leadership and governance structures of universities can affect the degree to which equity achieved. At UKZN, when equity was pushed at State level, the Vice-Chancellor (Mogoba) took up the call and drove policies to forward equity and efficiency simultaneously. The result of the merger and the efforts of senior management and other key players ultimately created a context where most members of staff felt like equal members of the University community, except some of the white male members of staff I interviewed. At UCT, in the last few years, top management, including Vice-Chancellors (VC) and some Deputy Vice-Chancellors (DVC) were appointed to be key transformation drivers. Previous VCs such as Mamphela Rampela and Njabulo Ndebele and DVC Marti Hall were appointed with a transformation portfolio in mind, while the current VC, Max Price, was also appointed with the same mandate.

In the Universities of Pretoria and UCT, my research indicates that, while these universities are at basis hierarchical and top-down in nature, nevertheless middle management leaders play a vital role in the daily management of equity. Despite being led from the top, Heads of Departments and Deans were able to promote and also to frustrate equity goals. The Head of the Sociology Department at Pretoria was a key driver of transformation despite being in a university that struggled to institutionalise equity. While ostensibly committed to equity and transformation, as illustrated by its equity policies, the institution as a whole could not be described as being equitable. At UCT, while the Dean of the academic department I interviewed

had introduced extra incentives to his staff for helping to institutionalise equity, other Deans and Heads of Department were seen as frustrating the transformation process. This points to the fact that top or senior management alone cannot be the driver of equity and transformation in universities, and this deeply relies on middle managers to wholeheartedly implement and institutionalise it.

The kind and the flows of institutional information also influenced the management of equity in the universities. At the University of Pretoria, students had very little knowledge of the equity policies that impacted on them. The students did however have nominal access to key equity policies via the University website, so this knowledge was not being actively kept from them. This points to the formal nature of information at the University, as it relies on written texts. Along with these textual and formal modes, there were also more informal, verbal ways, importantly including information exchanges through word of mouth. At UCT, there were more instances of formal verbal communication, seen through the on and off-campus debates on the Admissions Policy, with the University at large being invited to participate in discussions and debates regarding important initiatives, which aided in creating a more equitable and communicative environment in an otherwise hierarchical institution.

The socialisation process at UKZN amongst staff and the University of Pretoria among students in both cases influenced the impact of equity management initiatives. At UKZN, the goals of a single and equal institution were initially challenged by the staff's continued alignment along the lines of their older (pre-merger) racially divided institutions. However, after some time, the staff identified and socialised as members of a single unit. At the University of Pretoria, although it did not undergo a merger, there has been a marked change in the demographics of the student body since 1994. Through the institution's structures and calendar of events, students have nonetheless organised themselves along racial lines despite over a decade and a half of *de jure* integration. The accounts of the students at the University of Pretoria describe what they experienced as a racially-divided campus, illustrating to a large degree failure of equity management at the University. Its student interactions and

engagements are characterised by what Essed (1991) terms everyday racism, which I discuss in more detail below.

Extra-local discourses of race and gender also impact how students related to one another. At the University of Pretoria, discourses of race and gender shapes students' personal engagements with each other, and race continues to be an important organising tool in student identity and resultant affiliations. The dominant notions of race were rigid and essentialist and also, importantly, constructed as relational opposites. The discourses of race that the students draw on and reproduce cannot be understood as isolated; indeed ,they reflect a more dominant discourse of race found in the social and political fabric of South Africa. Pattman suggests that “in the Rainbow Nation discourse racial identities are relatively fixed, essential and independent of each other” (Pattman, 2007: 480). Drawing from the larger South African racialising and sometimes racist discourses, the students reproduce racial regimes and hierarchies, despite the existence of overall progressive policies. It is important of course to remember that the current social organisation of race in South Africa results from a history characterised by oppression, violence and mistrust, with this the backdrop against which social practices occurs. The historical context of South Africa creates a space in which race remains the primary defining social characteristic in interactions.

The superficial and casual interactions between Black and white students at the University of Pretoria are echoed Walker's (2005) research on another historically white Afrikaans-medium university, the former Rand Afrikaans University (RAU), now University of Johannesburg. However, these superficial and sometime strained race relations amongst students are not limited to Afrikaans-medium institutions alone. UCT, an institution with a more liberal history, has faced similar challenges as seen in the research findings of Erasmus and de Wet (2003) and Steyn and van Zyl (2001) concerning race and institutional culture at UCT. Race and resultant racial divisions are produced daily on the university campus through the languages students speak, whom they sit with in class, where they sit outside the classroom, what sports

they play and where they chose to live. The Soudien Report (DoE, 2008) research found that this was characteristic of many of the country's universities.

Through the accounts of students, at the University of Pretoria, in Chapter 7, I found gaps between their institutional talk, and their own embodied experiences. In the UCT case study too, concerning my analysis of its Student Admissions Policy as articulated through the on-campus panel debates, the documentary/textual reality of the institution came up against the lived experiences of locally-situated people. The admissions debates, however, took equity management out of the discursive, textual realm and into the lived and material. However, it is the accounts of some of the white male non-managerial academic staff at UKZN which provide the biggest fracturing between institutional discourse and embodied experience, with these white male respondents feeling marginalised because of their gender and race. But perhaps these were always going to be the challenges of redress, for it is impossible that those who were advantaged would continue to be so while simultaneously opportunities were created for those who were previously disadvantaged.

Thus the textual or documentary realities of the institutions I have researched were divergent from those of some of the respondents. Documentary reality refers to the "effective reality of the institution in terms of what can be taken up or treated as real in subsequent workings of the organisation" (Eastwood, 2006:186). Institutional discourses, then, are not all-powerful and Eastwood suggests that "...rather than view institutional discourses as prescribing actions, we might see them as providing terms under which that people do become institutionally accountable" (Eastwood, 2005:113). In this thesis institutional talk and discourses were disrupted by various occurrences including, for example, the review processes and broader debates of the Student Admissions Debate, which created gaps in the dominant discourse within which changes rooted in local experience could take place.

Conclusion

This thesis has explored how race and gender equity came to be organised the way they are in three South African universities. Whereas much of the research in this field focuses on measuring equity in institutions or across the sector, through using an IE approach I have investigated the local and extra-local practices, processes and discourses that give rise to more and to less equitable institutional spaces.

My research has found that the management of equity in the South African higher education institutions I have investigated is characterised primarily by disjunctures, by lines of fault existing between State level transformation goals, institutional needs and local institutional goals, and global academic trends. The tension between State level and institutional level goals and needs has led to the diminished impact of equity policies in the universities concerned. And global higher education trends have worked to reproduce and reinforce local patterns of inequality by emphasising efficiency and more corporate approaches to university management. Other key findings concern the inequality regimes in the three case studies. These regimes are not fixed, they are fluid and changing, and interestingly they are also “linked to inequality in the surrounding society, its politics, history and culture” (Acker, 2006: 443). This is particularly evident in the discourses of race and gender that dominate at UCT and the University of Pretoria, and is particularly interesting regarding the UCT Admissions Debates, where the inequality regimes, were disrupted even if momentarily. The fluidity of inequality regimes however, also means that seemingly benign practices and processes can become co-opted in ways of working that perpetuate inequity, so vigilance is important.

Acker (2006) argues that hierarchies are gendered and racialised “by nature”, particularly at the top, and that efforts to change inequality regimes are extremely difficult and often fail. In the discussion above, I have identified several key areas that have been a hindrance to the management of equity in the three universities forming my case studies. The principal reason for difficulty in effecting change which some researchers have identified is that “owners and managerial class interests and the power those interests can mobilise usually outweigh the class, gender, and

race interests of those who suffer inequality... ; even where no obvious economic interest are threatened by changes, men managers and lower-level employees often insist on maintain the organising patterns that perpetuate inequalities” (Acker, 2006:455; see also Mama 2003, Mabokela 2003; Morley 2006). However, my research suggests that the structures and practices of the institutions play a key role in the outcome of equity management initiatives. Many of the respondents, both at top management and at middle-management levels, bought into the idea of institutional transformation even if they differed in how it should take place. I did find, as discussed above, that middle-managers played an important role in promoting and managing equity, thereby significantly influencing their level of success. However, not all of the challenges facing equity management in the three universities I investigated emanated from the institutions themselves. A variety of extra-local factors also impinged on the management of equity locally, as shown in my discussion of the disjunctures between the ruling relations of the State and higher education institutions.

In all three of the universities researched, the institutional discourse formally espoused equity. While great strides have been made in increasing the number of previously disadvantaged people in higher education, as I have shown focusing on access and head-counts alone elides the challenges that remain concerning the quality of these students’ experiences. The Soudien Report (DoE, 2008) found that racism both individual and systemic, was pervasive in South African higher education, while I am interested in how and why it remains ubiquitous. Commenting on the events at the University of the Free State that lead to the commissioning of the Report, in a later article Soudien (2010) presents two positions regarding who was to blame for the incident. The first puts the responsibility in the hands of the institution at large, as it was complicit in the actions of the students concerned; and the second holds that the four men concerned should be individually held responsible and accountable for their actions. This is the core issue I have struggled with in my investigation of race and gender equity in South African higher education: where does the onus of responsibility for transformation lie? The State level policies certainly place it at the institutional level, but what role do individuals in their

particular organisational locations then play? Soudien ultimately concludes, as I do, that it is the symbiotic relationship between the institution and the individual that gives rise to a specific climate at a particular university. Therefore I conclude that responsibility lies between institutional and individual practices and processes and this is where the answers to equity successes and failures can be found.

My research, carrying out three connected studies, concludes that the ruling relations of the State, academic culture and the dominant discourses of race, gender and equity all shape and impact on the degree to which the pursuit for greater equity is realised. These forces occur simultaneously, and often in opposition, resulting in the limited impact of equity policies both at State and institutional levels. Indeed, when one considers the disjunctures between the State's priority regarding redress, the New Managerialist approach dominating universities; the reliance on compliant and enthusiastic middle and upper management, and the persistence of notions of white supremacy, female subordination and a very narrow definition of meritocracy, it is unsurprising that the equity policies devised at State level and rearticulated at institutional level might come up against some powerful obstacles.

Well-intentioned equity policies can become weakened or vitiated as they move through the institutional processes from development to implementation, and sub-cultures within the institution play a part in this.

Institutional Ethnography Broadly Conceived

Dorothy Smith's IE frames this research, broadly conceived, as IE does not rest on a dogma or orthodoxy but is a method of inquiry and orientation to research and not prescriptive. Smith comments that while having "definite principles of procedure, [it] also [has] many ways on realising them in practice" (Smith, 2006b:1). At the same time there are some basic tenets of IE with which are important to discuss in relation to my research. In summary my application of IE differs in a few respects from Smith's work and her own application of IE, and it more closely resembles how it has been put into practice by a wide groups of researchers who have drawn on her thinking but adapted as local circumstances have suggested is appropriate. IE was

developed as a critique of mainstream Sociology, which Smith emphasised, was an apparatus of ruling. She was also critical of its reliance on theory, arguing that *a priori* theory serves only to constrict and confine what is known and knowable by subordinating people's lived experiences.

Instead, IE proposes that sociology begin with people's experiences. People are experts in their own lives, and through their accounts the social world can be discovered, indeed people's experiences form the ground zero of analysis. However, the social world cannot be entirely understood by remaining at the local level. The local context gives access to the extra-local process and practices that coordinate the doing of people locally. IE also recognises the social world as always happening, unfolding through the everyday and everynight doings of locally-situated people. This epistemological and ontological shift is central to IE and its practice for IE is committed to discovering how things come to be organised as they are, and "institutional ethnographers are primarily concerned with exploring and describing the various social and institutional forces that shape, limit and otherwise organize people's actual, everyday/night worlds." (Mykhalovskiy & McCoy, 2002: 19).

My research has taken as its departure point the events at the University of the Free State discussed earlier in the thesis and the report that was commissioned as a result. The combination of the impact of this with my own experience in a historically white South African university as a student meant that I had tentatively begun to identify the research I was interested in investigating problematic before beginning 'the research' in a formal sense. Several of Smith's followers and colleagues (e.g Turner, 2006; G.W Smith, 2006; and Diamond, 2006) also began their research from the standpoint of their own location as front-line workers, and therefore immersed in these sites daily. Smith emphasises that a research problematic can usefully be identified by and emerges from a locally situated researcher and from the experiences of interviewees, often in combination.

In some ways, then, the starting point of my research was more bounded than for a 'classic' institutional ethnography, but retains the more reflexive elements of the

approach. Additionally, while slightly narrowed in its inception, as it progressed, the research I have engaged in has retained the openness and freedom of direction that is characteristic of IE. Having identified that race and gender equity were endemic in some of South Africa's most prominent universities, I was curious about *how* and *why* inequity issues continue to plague these institutions. I sought a methodological approach that was able to consider both micro and macro processes and contexts, and so one that would "begin from the everyday and aim to investigate policies and social practices in institutional contexts" (Taber, 2010). The resulting research I have investigated and analysed the experiences of staff and students to explicate the prevailing extra-local ruling relations that shape how equity comes to be organised the way it is in three universities. The data collection methods I have used include interviews, documentary analysis and observation, all of which are widely used in IE research. However, although these are commonly used in qualitative research, their application in an IE approach differs from their use in mainstream social sciences. For instance, the conventional use of interviews is to identify the individual experiences of the informants, in IE research they are seen as an entry point to the social relations of the setting and to further identify the problematic for investigation; and as a consequence the researcher should be attentive to how participants reference texts and textually-mediated relations. Texts too are viewed in a different way from in other methodological and theoretical approaches. In an IE framework, texts are seen as constituents of social relations and are consequently not viewed inert but active. As a result, texts are not examined for their content but for how they shape and coordinate social relations. Similarly in relation to observation, the objective is to identify how things are connected, how texts, people and actions inter-relate. Overall, an IE investigation involves the social mapping of rules, discourses and governance, which is what the three case studies carried out provide.

Another way in which my research is more bounded than Smith's work and more like that of other IE investigators is in its understanding of organisations. In principle in IE research, "the term does not designate a bounded organizational space as might be suggested by doing a 'hospital' or 'school' ethnography. Rather, it refers to a complex of ruling relations- the multiple activities of individuals, organizations,

professional associations, agencies and the discourses they produce and circulate—that are organized around a particular function such as healthcare or education” (Mykhalovskiy & McCoy, 2002: 19). Here, my version of IE differs from Smith’s in that she proposes that IE “is not about studying institutions as such” (Smith, 2006b:2), whereas my research has certainly been interested in higher education institutions as organisations.

My research explores equity *in organisations*, however, the organisational level is not where my research remains. Smith argues that sociological theory and approaches to an organisation subordinates and renders invisible the people whose local doings constitute it. Indeed, organisations cannot exist without the presence of living active subjects, and thus the organisation itself cannot be taken for granted (Smith, 2001:160). In addition to Smith’s thinking here, I have also drawn on Czarniawska’s (2004) work on complex organisations, her cultural approach complements that of IE. This combination has allowed me to carry out my case studies and analyse the resulting data whilst staying true to the epistemological and ontological tenets of IE. The distinction often made in organisational research between “the individual” and “the institution” is critiqued by both Smith and Czarniawska for reifying organisations. In keeping with this, I have conceived organisations as grounded in people’s actions and experiences, and centred Smith’s highlighting of the importance of documents and texts of various kinds in their structures and practices.

Smith argues that “somehow the objectified and trans-local character of the ruling relations is accomplished in the local actualities of people’s work and work settings” (Smith, 2001:162), and this can be discovered through the analysis of how texts shape local organisational actualities. For Smith, the social world is characterised by textually-mediated social relations. Thus texts play a central role in discovering the social world. However, while texts play an important role in IE research, researchers vary in the emphasis they place on them. For some, like Wilson and Pence (2006), whose research is grounded in the experiences of the participants and texts enter as they emerge in their accounts, it is sequences of institutional textually-mediated

action are their focus. For others, such as Turner (2006), texts play an absolutely central role in the analysis of everyday institutional work processes. My research is similar to other IE researchers with regard to giving important attention to texts and discourses, but while texts and documents were examined in all three case studies, they did not emerge as uniformly important or constitutive.

In my research, the role of texts as coordinators of social relations is most apparent in the UKZN case study, whereas those of UCT and the University of Pretoria focus on the institutional and extra-local discourses that shape these local contexts. Texts certainly emerged as constituents of social processes, and they were not examined for content alone but for how they influence social relations at the universities investigated. In some interviews, what was said pointed to various texts and documents that organised the management of equity in the universities, while in others there was little or no mention of written texts but nonetheless textual processes and discourses were alluded to. However, one of the most interesting methodological findings concern the pervasiveness of textually-mediated relations even in contexts where people have no apparent contact with texts or documents. In all three case studies there were examples of how texts and textual realities clash with the lived experiences of my respondents. While much of what people said exhibited aspects institutional talk, (i.e. instances in which the institutional order was apparent) there were moments when these conflicted with their own experiences. One of the most striking of these disjunctures was between the repeated view amongst respondents that gender inequity was taken less seriously than racial equity, although the institutional texts and policies profess otherwise.

Adopting an IE approach to the investigation of race and gender equity management in South African higher education has revealed that the local activities of my respondents are coordinated with those of others and tied into the prevailing extra-local relations of ruling. It has also found that the local practices and processes of equity management are deeply tied into discourses, institutional cultures and political constraints outside the local context of the universities investigated. Following in the tradition of IE research, my thesis offers a critique of the ruling relations that

objectify people's lives. I conclude from my findings that the complex management of equity in these universities is coordinated by institutional and State policies, as well as dominant discourses or race, gender and redress. IE provided a useful framework for investigating the everyday local practices, linking them to the extra-local relations of ruling that coordinate them, and analysing the 'how' of how ruling relations are enacted.

The object of this research was not to generate data enabling three institutions to be compared but rather to highlight the various ways in which the ruling relations of organisational policy, organisational and academic culture, discourse and the State, impact on the social organisation of equity in the universities investigated. The three case studies in this research are, then, not strictly speaking comparable, but they do fit together and as a result they illuminate different ways in which the ruling relations come to impinge on local practices of equity and impact on differently located sets of people.

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