

**SUPPORT STAFF STRUGGLE: THE UNIONIZATION OF STAFF AT
MCMASTER**

SUPPORT STAFF STRUGGLE- THE UNIONIZATION OF
THE MCMASTER UNIVERSITY STAFF ASSOCIATION

By

WESLEY MORGAN, B.A.

A Thesis

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree

Master of Arts

McMaster University

© Copyright by Wesley Morgan, September 2004

MASTER OF ARTS (2004)

McMaster University

(Sociology)

Hamilton, Ontario

TITLE: Support Staff Struggle: The Unionization of the McMaster
University Staff Association

AUTHOR: Wesley Morgan, B.A. (University of Calgary)

SUPERVISOR: Professor Robert Storey

NUMBER OF PAGES: vi, 154

ABSTRACT:

This study focuses on the successful organization of the McMaster University Staff Association (MUSA), in relation to the changing labour processes of staff. Particular emphasis falls upon the norms, commitments, and allegiances generated in the everyday activities of worklife (i.e. the labour process). The first two chapters are oriented towards a more specialist sociological audience. In the first chapter I outline the theory which will inform the study, a dialectical materialist labour process analysis. In the second chapter I review the sociological literatures relevant to support staff and MUSA as well as the methodology used in carrying out the study.

In the following chapters I develop a rich descriptive account of the evolution of MUSA. In particular, I highlight that, while there were contradictions already implicit in staff labour processes before neo-liberalism, it was only when neo-liberal policies were implemented that these contradictions became problematic for staff. The key contradictions in the labour process were underpinned by class and gender inequality and centered around a tension between the more collegial forms of informal organization at McMaster and the more hierarchical formal organization of the University. As the labour process became more problematic, staff organized, voted to certify MUSA as a trade union, and went out on a five-week strike for their first contract. In both the nature of the grievances that staff highlighted, and in organization of MUSA and the strike, we can find strong influence exerted by the norms, commitments, and allegiances generated in the labour processes of staff. In turn, as staff have organized, the labour process itself has been affected. I end the thesis by considering MUSA's future and the attempts by the administration to respond to staff concerns and grievances, both of which will shape the on-going labour processes of staff.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge MUSA and the support staff at McMaster, I hope that my analysis rings true. If the staff do not work, neither can the university. In particular I would like to thank the participants in this research, for sharing their lives with me. For their insight, advice, and critiques I thank my academic advisor, Dr. Robert Storey, as well as the members of my committee, Dr. Pamela Sugiman and Dr. Peter Archibald. In ways that few of us generally think about, I also owe a dept of gratitude to the clerical workers in the Department of Sociology, Corinne Jehle, Olga Cannon, and Jackie Tucker. Finally, I would like to thank Kristine Hirschhorn, for putting up with me and reading my work.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | PAGE # |
|---|---------------|
| CHAPTER 1 | 7 |
| Introduction | 7 |
| The Labour Process in Theoretical Perspective | 9 |
| Conclusion | 18 |
| CHAPTER 2- LITERATURE REVIEW | 20 |
| Clerical Workers | 20 |
| Laboratory Technicians | 28 |
| Collective Organization | 29 |
| Support Staff Organizing at Universities | 34 |
| The University Setting | 36 |
| Methodology | 38 |
| Conclusion | 44 |
| CHAPTER 3- MOTHER MCMASTER AND THE UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY | 47 |
| The University Community | 48 |
| The Work Family | 55 |
| What They Do | 60 |
| Fiefdoms | 62 |
| Isolated Problems | 64 |
| The Logic of the Material Social Process: Race, Class, and Gender | 65 |
| Conclusion | 73 |
| CHAPTER 4- THE COMING OF NEO-LIBERALISM | 76 |
| Neo-liberalism- A Quick and Dirty Sketch | 76 |
| An Uneven Burden | 79 |
| Technological Change | 86 |
| End of Faculty/Staff Linking | 87 |
| Conclusion | 90 |
| CHAPTER 5- OF SOCKS AND BARBEQUES: ADDING INSULT TO INJURY | 92 |
| Why OPSEU Failed | 92 |
| MUSA Gets In | 94 |
| I Joined Because I Was Anti-Union... | 96 |
| On "Gossip" and Informal Social Networks | 98 |
| Tokenism | 100 |

| | |
|---|----------------|
| Poor Research Ethics | 101 |
| Escalation, from Certification to the Strike | 102 |
| Not Just Money | 104 |
| Surely That's Enough | 106 |
| The Exception Proves the Rule | 107 |
| Conclusion | 108 |
| CHAPTER 6- THE STRIKE | 110 |
| Sensitivity to the McMaster Situation | 116 |
| Coming Back | 118 |
| Conclusion | 120 |
| CHAPTER 7- LOOKING FORWARD | 122 |
| The Mirror of Management? | 122 |
| Democratic Culture | 131 |
| Working at McMaster | 133 |
| Jointness | 134 |
| An Intractable Conflict? | 136 |
| Conclusion | 137 |
| APPENDICES | |
| Methodology | 139 |
| A Brief Chronology of Bargaining | 140 |
| Outstanding Issues, Compiled on April 5, 2001 | 142 |
| REFERENCES | 143 |

Introduction

This study focuses on the successful organization of the McMaster University Staff Association (MUSA). Largely female clerical workers, this group comprises the largest percentage of non-academic support staff at McMaster University. I look at the evolution of MUSA from a staff association to a trade union, with a strike representing a key episode in that transition.

This study offers an account of the changing character and direction of MUSA, in relation to the labour processes experienced by research participants. Rather than focusing on the “grammar” of how MUSA changed, I focus on the content. While an account more grounded in social movements theory might engage in a discussion of how those active in MUSA tried to frame the issues, I emphasize the substantive content of these issues, the underlying concerns that give a particular framing of an issue resonance. Similarly, in achieving mobilizations, coalitions between various groupings and factions are often central. What groups are being bridged? Who are these groups, and why did they form? In the case of MUSA, preliminary discussions suggested that groupings roughly followed organizational divisions at McMaster, such as departmental lines. As such, it seems that these groups arose more or less directly out of the labour process that structured work. Hence, rather than focusing on a social movements reading of the changing face of MUSA, I use a labour process approach. I employ a conception of “labour process” writ large, inclusive of not only the technical tasks involved in work, but more broadly inclusive of the issues, relationships, and institutional locations associated with work.

Workers respond in a number of ways to labour process¹, and my emphasis falls upon what led to this specific, collective response by the non-academic support staff of McMaster. This study emphasizes the experiences of work life— i.e., issues and concerns that were most salient, and how these led to a

¹ A brief note the use of the terms “labour processes”, “labour process”, and “labour process at McMaster”. The question, ultimately, is one of generality. When I am referring to the more specific dimensions of the labour process as experienced by members of MUSA, I use processes, as there are clearly differences between research workers and clerical workers in the substantive tasks that they do. However, where I use labour process as singular I am referring to the more abstract dimensions of the labour process that are shared, in particular, a specific position in a paternalistic system of patronage that makes these workers invisible, subordinate, informal, dependent, etc.

To muddy the waters further, I do talk about the broader labour process at McMaster, which is more inclusive still. Here it refers not to a specific position, but to the broader complex of practices and processes, at all levels of administration, faculty, and staff, that create the specific structure of activity at McMaster as a whole, which structures the activities of individuals within this broad complex.

collective response. Why did support staff at McMaster organize in *now* over *these* issues rather than *then* over *other* issues? What was it about the old way of negotiating their work lives that became problematic, and motivated the emergence of a collective response to create a new set of negotiations over work? As a case study, this type of in-depth descriptive work is valuable for developing an understanding of work in an area of the economy that is under-studied, and also to understand organization among groups of workers who are often seen as difficult to organize.

Analyses of work life have been primarily oriented around what have been termed “3M workers”— male workers performing manual labour in manufacturing industries (Thompson, 1989: 184). The varied forms of emotional labour that are tied up in support work create a distinct labour process experience for many public sector workers. For staff at McMaster, the sets of social relations which defined their labour process created a logic of contradiction and struggle that was distinct but related to the logic of struggle generated in the labour processes of workers in manufacturing.

Specifically, a study of the changing organization of MUSA provides a case study of how the labour processes of public sector workers have been impacted and changed by neo-liberalism. Neo-liberal changes have altered the labour processes of MUSA members in a way that has cut against their conception and expectations of work and service. In doing so, neo-liberalism has problematized underlying contradictions in the organization of work, generating social struggle. A case study of the changes in the labour processes of staff at McMaster shows how the logic of public sector service work exists in contradiction to a market-oriented logic. A lack of attention to the labour processes of service workers in the public sector comes at the expense of understanding the dynamics of contradiction and struggle in “late(r) post-capitalist” society. This is nothing but the most recent form of capitalism, an economic system premised upon market dependence and social domination in the form of wage labour. Unlike the industrial working class, which is shrinking as a percentage of the overall labour force in Canada, and which has been disciplined by the effects of globalization and technological change (see Moody, 1997: 180-197; Luxton and Corman, 2001: 14- 18; Jackson and Schetagne, 2003: 11- 17), public sector service workers have become increasingly militant in recent years. It is significant that it was public sector service workers, not industrial workers, who brought British Columbia to the brink of a general strike in 2004, and not industrial workers.

In the first two chapters I set up the study by reviewing the relevant areas of academic literature. In the remainder of this chapter I outline the theoretical framework for this study. In particular, I develop a positive critique of labour process theory, by outlining a dialectical materialist perspective. In the subsequent chapters I analyze the changing labour process at McMaster and the unionization of MUSA.

The Labour Process In Theoretical Perspective

In labour process theory one can find a synthesis of the most significant contributions that Marxist thinking has made to the sociology of work. Harry Braverman's book *Labour and Monopoly Capital* sparked a series of debates and empirical research projects that have shaped discussions relating to the organization and dynamics of the workplace in capitalism (Burawoy, 1979; Burawoy, 1985; Bradley, 1989; Thompson, 1989; Wardell et al., 1999; Smith, 1994). As Vicki Smith wrote on the twentieth anniversary of Braverman's work, [B]y locating management strategies within the unique exigencies of monopoly capitalism, *Labour and Monopoly Capital* thus called to task the ahistorical accounts of sociologists and human relations researchers, making a compelling case for historically specific explanations of control strategies in the workplace (1994: 405).

However, the main argument in *Labour and Monopoly Capital* was that the dynamism of capitalist competition creates the necessity for management to de-skill and routinize job tasks to reduce the discretionary power of workers. In turn, this tends to drive down wages, autonomy, and homogenize the working class by eliminating the elevated position of craft workers. Ironically, Braverman's key contribution arose not from his substantive argument as much as the silences, exclusions, and contradictions in his work, that have created debates centering on "the labour process". From these debates, an emphasis on integrating rigorous theoretical and empirical inquiry has developed, in the process making a lasting contribution to the way we understand work in capitalist society.

As debates surrounding the labour process have progressed, Smith suggests that we find the labour process recast as "dynamic, contingent, shaped by varied historical, social, and cultural circumstances, rather than as a static, predetermined, or inevitable outcome dictated by capitalists" (1994: 407; see also Thompson, 1989: 77-78; Wardell, 1999: 5). Perhaps one of the strongest formulations of labour process theory can be found in the work of Michael Burawoy (1979; 1985). In *Manufacturing Consent* (1979), Burawoy uses ethnographic data to demonstrate how patterns of resistance and consent are generated in the daily interactions and tasks which are part of the process of labouring. For Burawoy,

...the labour process is nothing but the 'human relations' into which workers and managers enter as they transform raw materials with particular technical instruments of production (1979: 139).

While this may be a useful point of departure, in reference to the labour processes experienced by staff at McMaster University, we find that such a definition places too great an emphasis on '3M' workers (Thompson, 1989: 5; see page 6). For the purpose of developing a labour process analysis to understand changes at McMaster, we can find a more fitting definition in Wardell, who argues that "...simple physical activity does not define a labour process as much as the social and political-economic relations that control the activities of those involved" (1999: 14).

By focusing more centrally on the way in which the experience of work is constructed, in the sets of social relations that each worker enters into in the course of working, we gain a valuable insight into the dynamics of capitalist workplaces. In particular, we can begin to understand the “negotiation of meaning” in the workplace. These “negotiations” take place within an interactional context dominated by the structured power of management². Through the processes and relationships engendered in the workplace, such an analysis highlights the emergence of patterns of conflict and consent in the course of daily interaction, that is to say, the constitution of social life in the workplace. Here we take the workplace as a key site of broader material social processes which constitute the social totality (Burawoy, 1985: 68; Thompson, 1989: 200, 237; Wardell, 1999: 9).

This marks a major advance in social theory, as these studies have adopted a sensitive empirical methodology informed by a rigorous theoretical analysis. Too often abstractions in social theory have not been dialectical, because abstractions have been *conceptualized* in a manner that has not been grounded in the day-to-day lives of real, breathing people. While Hegel was engaging with these issues two centuries ago, in laying out a scientific dialectical method, he warned against such a divergence of the micro and macro levels. Hegel charged that macro theory in particular ran the danger of, “forever surveying the whole and standing above the particular existence of which it is speaking, i.e., *it does not see it at all* [my emphasis]” (1977: 32). Because of this, “social forces’ tend to be thought of in a manner that grant them an almost metaphysical status, independent of individuals interacting in patterned ways at particular historical moments. By focusing on the workplace as a key site of broader social processes, we can see the complex interrelations which define the lives of individuals within institutions, pushing us towards a more dialectical understanding of social life in general. As is consistent with the dialectical method that Hegel formulated, by grounding theory in actual daily interactions in the workplace, labour process theory has made, “room for the earnestness of life in its concrete richness; this leads the way to an experience of the real issue” (Hegel, 1977: 3).

The labour process, and economic determination

As this cycle of theory and research has proceeded, some of the basic tenants of Marxism have been revealed as one-sided and contradictory in their own right. In particular, the determinative power of economics has been called into question, in the first place or otherwise. Perhaps most often cast in terms of “determination in the last instance”, Engels offers a classic exposition of this view. Engels wrote that,

² In each workplace, managers have a number of mechanisms of dominating interaction. Perhaps the starkest example of these is the exercise of the power to hire, fire, and discipline, as these can allow managers to force workers out of the interactional context altogether.

[T]here is an interaction of all these elements in which, amid all the endless host of accidents (that is, of things and events, whose inner connection is so remote or so impossible of proof that we can regard it as non-existent, as negligible) the economic movement finally asserts itself as necessary. (Marx and Engels, 1978: 760)

However, Engels also suggested that economic determination is in fact in the *first* instance, when he argued that,

...we all laid, and *were bound* to lay, the main emphasis, in the first place, on the *derivation* of political, juridical, and other ideological notions, from basic economic facts. (Marx and Engels, 1978: 766)

To dialectically supersede economic determinism is not to abandon materialist analysis, nor is it to make economics anything less than indispensable as a dimension of social life. Rather, it is to preserve the moment of truth which we can find in Marxist thinking, in a less one-sided, more complete social theory. The element of untruth which is tied up in economic determination, in the first and last instance, is that it creates a self-validating theory. By beginning the analysis from an economic standpoint, Marxist theory has often been able to capture much of the dynamism that drives social life, by demonstrating the complex and dialectical ways in which economics have structured other dimensions of social life, such as politics or gender (see Sargent, 1981, Marable, 2000). The problem is this: having started inquiry looking for economic determination, and ended the inquiry once this was found, what other conclusion could have arisen but that economics were determinate? That is to say, economic determinism is an artificial analytical product that has simply isolated the economic moments of the broader social process, at the expense of a dialectical understanding of the whole material social process (see also Williams, 1977: 85-87; Hegel, 1977: 8-9).

Once we begin to interrogate either the first or the last instance, economic determination itself dissolves into other dimensions of social life (see Burawoy, 1985: 24-25, 39, 254; Thompson, 1989: 149; Smith and Thompson, 1999: 222). In the very first instance, Ellen Meiksins Wood argues that capitalism as a productive force emerged only *as a result* of changes in the system of property relations, that is to say, political-legal changes determined economic change (2002: 3, 100, 143-144). Moreover, in the workplace itself, Burawoy argues that, "the productive process must itself be seen as an inseparable combination of its economic, political, and ideological aspects" (1985: 24-25; see also Meiksins Wood, 1995: 41).

At its worst, Marxism has lapsed into a functionalist mode of logic to fill in the contradictions (Burawoy, 1985: 58-59, 62). Thus in Burawoy's writing we find that patterns of consent are "manufactured" by managers (1979), rather than emerging in an interactive context riven by contradictions. Likewise, in Marx we can find the remarkable claim that, to provide the foundation for the division of labour, "the common interest assumes an independent form as the *state*, which is divorced from the real individual and collective interests" (Marx, 1998: 52). This

is a direct reversal of the actual historical determination of the division of labour by the processes of the state itself (law), which Meiksons Wood bases in empirical research rather than theoretical derivation. In Marx we find a future "mode of production" calling forth changes from the chronologically prior structure of property!

Overdetermination

Theoretical fragmentation has ensued as the contradictions within the unitary economistic versions of Marxism have become increasingly untenable (see Bradley, 1989: 23). To cope with the contradictions which have surfaced in Marxism, we find the notion of "overdetermination" emerging.

"Overdetermination" is a term that indicates a Marxist acknowledgement of the other "autonomous forces", outside of the economic, that determine social life (Williams, 1977: 88-89). It lines up very closely with intersectionality theory, as both perspectives accept a similar notion of relatively autonomous "forces" or "oppressions", which intersect to form a single experience of oppression (see Sugiman, 1992; hooks, 1981, 1984, 1988; Spelman, 1988; Creese and Stasiulis, 1996; Glenn, 1996). While they have been crucial correctives to economism, these approaches are not without their moments of contradiction. The contradiction lies in the fact that such a conception is primarily a *negative* moment, which has arisen in opposition to Marxist economism. While both overdetermination and intersectionality perspectives have recognized that material social processes are not reducible to economics, they have yet to create a new synthesis, an integrated account of the material social process. This integration has begun to happen, driven primarily by the connection of theoretical concepts to real, historically specific empirical cases. Here these autonomous forces intersect to form a single, unitary material social process, that of daily life.

Material social processes and dialectical materialism

As Raymond Williams suggested in the late 1970s, analysis should not end with "overdetermination" (1979: 83- 89). To construct a genuinely dialectical materialist social theory, overdetermination marks the point of departure for the study of material social processes. As Williams argues in regard to the notion of overdetermination,

[A]s a form of analysis this is often effective, but in its isolation of structure it can shift attention from the real location of all practice and practical consciousness: 'the practical activity... the practical process of development of men (sic)' (1977: 88).

In this light, our understanding of "autonomous social forces" can reveal itself to be an idealist abstraction away from material social processes. As Hegel suggested, social forces have no existence outside of material social processes, they

...do not exist as extremes which retain for themselves something fixed and substantial, transmitting to one another in their middle term and in

their contact a merely external property; on the contrary, what they are, they are, only in this middle term and in this contact [i.e. in the social processes of daily life] (1977: 85)(see also 166, 174).

At its core, dialectics emphasizes the importance of understanding elements of the social world as they are embedded in, and defined by, complex and many-stranded ties to other social elements. This allows us a vantage point into the complex effects of social change, as different social elements change in relation to each other, and thus create further changes in what they are and how they relate to each other³. In a broader materialist dialectic, we have to understand the dynamics of this single unitary social totality of relation and interrelation, by discerning the moments that compose the broader movement. The unitary material social process is only life as it is lived in a single, physically objective material reality, as Hegel stated, “so are the organic moments alike *indivisible in their real content* [my emphasis]” (163; see also 166). However, identifying the dimensions of this process (i.e. political, economic, kinship, social) is crucial to developing a more thorough understanding of the mechanisms and processes which constitute material social life, as a totality of relations. Perhaps this is phrased most forcefully by Williams, who states that,

[D]etermination of this whole kind— is in the whole social process itself and nowhere else... Any abstraction of determinism, based on the isolation of autonomous categories... is a mystification of the specific and always related determinants which are the real social process- an active and conscious as well as, by default, a passive and objectified historical experience” (1977: 88).

The missing subject- reintegrating Hegel

While labour process theory, in conjunction with intersectionality theory, have brought us to the point of making this next theoretical synthesis, we find that a major theoretical gap remains. Thompson casts this in terms of “the ‘missing subject’; or the absence of a theory of subjectivity...” (1989: 177, 249). While both intersectionality and labour process theory now recognize the importance of subjectivity, it remains something of a residual category. This lack of a sufficient account of agency can be linked to Marx’s attempt to generate a more objective account of social life, which created what has often slipped into a “brutal” or “crude” materialism (see Marx, 1998: 49). In fact, Williams suggests that Marxist materialism has often been *idealist* in that it has accepted the division of the ideal from the material, giving primacy to the “material” instead of the “ideal”. This creates,

³ Dialectics is more commonly reduced to “thesis-antithesis-synthesis”. Hegel comments that “the *triadic form*”, understood in these terms, “is reduced to a lifeless schema, a mere shadow... scientific organization is degraded into a table of terms” (1977: 29).

the reproduction, in an altered form, of the separation of 'culture' from material social life, which had been the dominant tendency in idealist cultural thought. Thus the full possibilities of the concept of culture as a constitutive social process, creating specific and different 'ways of life', which could have been remarkably deepened by the emphasis on a material social process, were for a long time missed... (Williams, 1977: 19) (see also 62, 80-81; Bakunin, 1970: 40-49, 68-69; Hegel, 1977: 5, 139).

In contrast, at the ontological core of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* is the development of social thought and understanding. The *Phenomenology* develops an understanding of historical development as it is forged by individuals, who are forced to come to terms with phenomena in the course of their real, lived histories in a social world (Hegel: 15, 21). This describes life in a world where, "[C]onsciousness knows and comprehends only what falls within its experience" (21). Here we understand experience as a, "dialectical movement which consciousness exercises on itself and which affects both its knowledge and its object" (55). That is to say, in experience we engage both the external world and ourselves as active agents. As we live in the world, we can only engage with it insofar as we understand it. The sensation of hunger is one that is compelling, but for it to compel action, the subject who experiences it must apply an understanding of why that sensation arose and how one can satisfy it. Understanding qualifies and alters our engagement with a reality that is prior, external, and indifferent to the fact of our subjectivity (see Hegel: 176, 178). We as human beings live, and Marx would remind us, produce, according to our understanding and consciousness. But the problem lies in the fact that this practical consciousness that informs, directs, and transforms our engagement with our world is generally only formed as a means satisfying specific problems in our lives.

Problems arise in the form of anomalies that are not resolvable in the terms of our partial frameworks for understanding and action. In other words, irresolvable anomalies reveal flaws, or contradictions. Thus, the force that drives thought forward is contradiction, as paradigms of thought are contradicted in empirical engagement (see also Kuhn, 1962). On the level of ideas, contradiction can emerge from within a system of ideas, in the relation of ideas to actual lived experience, or between sets of ideas. In the social process itself, contradictions can also exist, as the many co-existing and interpenetrating social elements in the dialectic of history can generate dynamics that are incompatible or opposed. Idealism seeks to impose ideas upon the real movements of history, whereas scientific-dialectical thought seeks to grasp the real movement of history in the material social process itself. Specifically, grasping this movement and experience relies upon the development of ideas (i.e. science). Dialectics itself can only exist as a process because this process of contradiction and learning (i.e. overcoming contradictions) can only end when no contradictions remain, when

there are no more questions or situations that defy the solutions that we already have.

Thus Hegel argued that teleology exists *only* at “the point where knowledge no longer needs to go beyond itself, where knowledge finds itself, where Notion corresponds to object and object to Notion” (51). That is to say that the search for knowledge can only theoretically end when all things are known in their full complexity, when we can fully understand the social totality from the perspective of all of its parts, and each and every part in relation to the social totality as a whole. Reading Hegel as either metaphysically idealist or teleological is a gross misunderstanding of the text, as his dialectic developed a remarkably thorough account of the complex development of ideas *within* a material social context (see 1977: 3, 78, 178; Maker, 1998: 1- 28). It is in this vein that Hegel declared near the end of *Phenomenology* that,

free existence appearing in the form of contingency, is History; but regarded from the side of their [philosophically] comprehended organization, it is the Science of Knowing in the sphere of appearance (493).

The search for knowledge, and the process of overcoming contradictions, can never end, since the complexity of the world is infinite. We must therefore understand Absolute Knowledge only as a *religious* possibility. Nevertheless, by critically, rigorously, and systematically engaging the material world, we can begin to understand it, however incompletely. Our knowledge will likely never be perfect, but it is *perfectible*. Constructing a new dialectical materialism involves critically analyzing social interaction, and the ways in which these interactions build into broader “experiences” of the social world. This means developing an analytical sensitivity to the various dimensions of social life, and how real, concrete interactions are shaped by class, gender, and race.

GH Mead: Hegelian subjectivity in a social scientific framework

While *Phenomenology* focused on the nature of consciousness and knowledge, Hegel explicitly stated that consciousness develops only in a material context, where an object (i.e. as an element of material reality) “is, regardless of whether it is known or not; and it remains, even it is not known, whereas there is no knowledge if the object is not there” (1977: 59). Thus it only seems natural that in Hegel we find the roots of a dialectical materialist perspective. While the roots of such a conception lie in Hegel, it is through the work of George Herbert Mead that we find the development of a Hegelian understanding of subjectivity and self-consciousness in an explicitly social scientific context (see Hegel: 14, 21, 127-128, 156- 185). In Mead we find an emphasis upon the complex ways in which individual and collectivity, as well as subject and object, interpenetrate in material social processes (Mead, 1964: 275, 312- 315). Mead focuses upon the ways in which we define and understand our world through our experiences in a day-to-day reality, as we recursively form our interpretive frameworks from these experiences. Interpretation occurs not only through the interaction of individuals

and their social environment. The way that these objective occurrences congeal into a broader experience in the memory is itself mediated by processes of interpretation.

Subjectivity and domination

However, at the same time as objective reality is *only* perceived through the lens of interpretive processes and socially constructed meanings, these interpretive processes are formed only in objective interactions⁴ (Mead, 1964: 276). As such, objective realities do not intrude occasionally, but rather, they are *inextricably* woven into subjective experience, as experiences can only form in material interaction. This point is made quite starkly by Mead, who stated that, "meaning in the light of this recognition has its reference not to agglomerations of states of subjective consciousness, but to objects in a socially conditioned experience" (1964: 112).

By understanding interaction and interpretation in relation to on-going material social processes, dialectical materialism draws our attention to the fact that culture is created as people interact. Such an understanding of subjectivity directs us away from looking for economic antagonism in the labour process as such. Instead we have to focus on the ways in which people's lives and interpretive processes are formed in objective social interactions in a material social world. As complex as it is, we are now shifted to an analysis of power and domination. In such a dialectic, economics is highlighted as a key nexus of power in capitalism, as a *subcategory* of domination.

Dialectics understands the social totality (as a whole) not as an abstract entity, but as a collectivity formed by a number of people engaging in a number of interactions. Power and domination come to the center of analysis because social power is a determinant and a property of social interaction. By definition, a person with power is one who can effectively control interactions, and perhaps even other people, in the interactional context. Domination is a relational concept, in which one social actor exercises control over the action(s) of other social actor(s) through the use of sanctions and rewards. It is significant because it controls how people live their lives and interact with others, that is to say, their activity in the world.

In relation to domination, while in Marx one can find a concern for self-realization and freedom, Hegel and Mead actually give us a concrete grounding to these concerns, in their accounts of what it means to be human. Focusing on the nature of consciousness, what is key for Mead is our ability to realize ourselves as both *knower* and *known* at the same time (284, 312-314; see also Hegel, 156-185). We have the capacity to perceive ourselves as others might, and on that basis,

⁴ This means nothing more than people physically interact in material social reality. Just as easily as interacting subjects can perceive each other, and their interactions, through sensory perception (i.e. sight, sound, touch, etc), third parties could just as easily observe these objective interactions.

make judgments about ourselves and learn from our mistakes. As self-conscious beings, people are constantly evaluating, re-evaluating and changing themselves. As such, the self is dynamic and constantly realizing itself by growing and changing.

Because these mental processes are themselves tied to a person's engagement with the material world, this mental dynamism requires engagement in an objective social environment. Social domination effectively subverts the capability of a human being to be self-determining or autonomous. As such, it is not just the case that a person who is dominated loses control over their specific interactions with the dominating party, but that the capacity of the dominated to exercise their human capacities is undermined. It is in this context that Mead commented, "no man (sic) is free who has not the means of expressing himself (sic)" (1964: 158). Consciousness must be able to engage with reality in social action to *make* itself, and be made. As Hegel put it, the "actuality [of the subject] is self-movement" (1977: 13). Later, Hegel continues, "[T]his *in-itself* has to express itself outwardly" (15) because,

[C]onsciousness, on its part, *likewise* makes its appearance as an actuality... That relation to actuality is the *changing* of it or *working on it*, the being-for-self which belongs to the *individual* consciousness as such... In the first relationship it was merely the notion of an actual consciousness, or the inner feeling or heart which is not yet actual in action and enjoyment. Returned from external activity, however, consciousness has *experienced* itself as actual and effective... (133-135)(see also 2, 122, 130, 185, 191, 193).

While choices are always made in the context of constraints, autonomous self-expression in material life is a compulsion that exists within all "selves", who are nonetheless socially constructed. It is self evident that other selves influence our activity and form a constraint upon our activities. However, to equate influence with compulsion is to create a "night in which all cows are black", by obscuring a crucial distinction, even if it is difficult to find the exact boundary between these concepts. Influence cannot be equated with domination for the simple reason that influence does not interfere with the capacity of an actor to act, but rather, involves a voluntary qualification of social action by the actor. Rather than disrupting the process of self-activity, influence operates through the acknowledgement of the rights of other selves, not to dictate to the actor, but as another point of reference in the dialectic of self-activity of actors.

As an engaged scholar, the force of influence is both normatively preferable as well as more effective than compulsion or domination. There are a few different ways to understand this, not least of which is the obstinate resistance that one finds running alongside compulsion in workplaces which labour process theorists have observed (see Burawoy, 1979; 1985). Perhaps most helpful is to focus on the manner in which influence creates a mechanism by which individuals, with a variety of perspectives shaped by their unique experiences in the material social process, can mediate their wills without negating them. Indeed,

each individual makes themselves through the constitutive processes of the material social process, i.e. learning in interaction with others. As Mead emphasizes, the creative individual can only arise in interaction with other individuals, through the internalization of these interactions in the form of interpretive processes (Mead, 1964: 97). Influence can be understood as constitutive of the individual self, adding more points of reference, and thus deepening and reinforcing the capacity of individuals to make themselves in activity. Domination, on the other hand, interferes with the capacity of actors to make themselves, because it does not add considerations to the interpretive process so much as discount the interpretive process of the subordinate individual, by compelling action without reference to the individual's interpretive process (i.e. will). It in this vein that Seeman, Seeman, and Budros (1988) found that powerlessness,

appears with considerable consistency as a significant variable... particularly for drinking problems... Work variables—especially job latitude, but also the unemployment record—are not related consistently and directly to drinking. Even so, they are pertinent in an interactive way with powerlessness (196; see also 186, 189, 190, 197).

In the case of domination in organizations, cooperative social action is compelled not by discursive processes of interaction and persuasion, but by the exercise of force or compulsion through the use of sanctions and rewards. Nonetheless, it is crucial that we attend to the ways in which influence and domination interpenetrate and co-exist in tension with one another, as contradictory moments within material social processes. Even though material social processes are riven by contradictions, these tensions can be quite stable, since contradictions only rise to the level of consciousness when they manifest themselves as disruptive, within the context of social interaction.

CONCLUSION

The points of departure for the basic theoretical framework which will structure this study can be found in intersectionality theory and labour process theory. Both bodies of theory have created rigorous and robust research and analysis, drawing historical specificities into relation with theoretical generalities. However, neither of these perspectives is without their contradictions. In particular, notions of economic determination and overdetermination have proven to be problematic, as has “the missing subject”, in research that has often been fixated on the objective dimensions of social processes. Drawing upon Meadian conceptions of subjectivity, which focus on how individuals are created in concrete, historically specific interactions and Hegelian dialectics, as well as labour process and intersectionality theory, we arrive at a new synthesis. This synthesis is a *dialectical materialism* that takes constitutive material social processes as the focus of inquiry, with a particular emphasis upon patterns of domination (i.e. race, class, gender). A genuinely dialectical materialism engages in this enquiry in a manner that investigates the complex patterns of relation,

interrelation, and contradiction that mark material social processes at all levels of analysis. Having laid out the basic theoretical orientation of this study, we now turn to a review of the academic literatures that pertain to the labour process at McMaster.

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEWS

While the first chapter reviews the theoretical perspective that will be used in understanding the changing labour process at McMaster, in this chapter I review the substantive academic literature which is relevant to support staff at a Canadian university. I begin by looking at the literature on clerical workers, as well as related literature on emotional labour, support work, and service work. I also consider the experiences of research staff, as they are related to the problems faced by support staff in general. I then look at collective organization and the Canadian labour movement, particularly in relation to predominantly female groups of workers in the public sector. After discussing the changing university setting itself, I end the chapter by reviewing the methodology of my study.

Clerical Workers

Skill

The majority of workers in MUSA are clerical workers. It is no secret that clerical work has been systematically undervalued and devalued for quite some time. Mills is one of many thinkers who have argued that this devaluation is related to a de-skilling of clerical work (see also Braverman, 1975: 304- 315; Glenn and Feldberg, 1977: 52- 64; Rinehart, 2001: 77- 81). Writing in the 1950s, C.W. Mills provided what is perhaps the classic exposition of this view,

The new office is rationalized: machines are used, employees become office attendants; the work, as in the factory, is collective, not individualized; it is standardized to the point of interchangeable, quickly replaceable clerks; it is specialized to the point of automatization. The employee group is transformed into a uniform mass in a soundless place, and the day itself is regulated by an impersonal time schedule. Seeing the big stretch of office space, with rows of identical desks, one is reminded of Herman Melville's description of a nineteenth-century factory...(2002: 209).

This is argued to be a paradigmatic case of work in modern capitalism. In this account, clerical workers have seen an erosion of "skill" in their work, and as a logical consequence, their status and income have been diminished.

There is no doubt that clerical work has undergone a transformation in which the status and income of clerical workers has fallen, and the face of clerical work has changed with new technologies. Moreover, there is no doubt that clerical workers are marginalized in the office division of labour, and assigned the tasks that are the least valued. Clerical workers, for example, are given the responsibility of document production, but not authorship, which is more highly valued. In the broadest of strokes, the organization of the modern office involves a separation of managerial tasks from clerical ones, and a designation of these latter tasks as "women's work", presumably low skilled (Wilson, 2001: 465).

However, it is argued that the devaluation of clerical work is related less to the performance of specific tasks than as a function of social power dynamics. The devaluation of clerical work, it is suggested, is linked less to actual deficiencies in “skill”, and more to the feminization of clerical work and the spread of the skills associated with clerical work. One group of clericals reported that:

“[W]e have men at the company whose titles are ‘technician’ ...they do many other similar duties as we ‘secretarial-stenographers’ and are at LEAST five grades HIGHER!” (Goldberg, 1983: 68).

Perhaps more convincing is the fact that there was a time when both shorthand and typing were regarded, and rewarded, as skilled occupations (Wilson, 2001: 473). The devaluation of these skills occurred hand in hand with the re-construction of both of these as feminine, with the attendant assumptions that women were not breadwinners, and thus, did not deserve wages on par with those of men (Wilson, 2001: 475). As Attewell forcefully argues,

...the de-skilling position is built in part upon a conceptual misidentification by which shifts in income, mobility, gender, and prestige are read as implying shifts in skill... This obscures the possibility that contemporary women white-collar workers are as skilled as their male Victorian predecessors, but that their contributions are devalued- monetarily, and in status, and in terms of their *perceived* (but not actual) skill- because the incumbents are women, and because the skills have become plentiful. Thus an analysis based on de-skilling draws one away from alternative analyses based on market forces and sex segregation (1989: 358).

This quite clearly highlights gender as a key dimension of the labour process (see also Pringle, 1988: 174). The issue is less one of technical skill, but rather, the social valuation of groups of workers and the work that these workers do. In this view, pay and status are less a function of what is done on the job⁵, and more a reflection of social power struggles. Such a perspective focuses more on how groups of workers are able to mobilize what resources are at their disposal to demand more money and respect. Men, as a group, are able to draw on social ideologies such as that of the male breadwinner, generally giving them a social advantage in this struggle.

Often, of course, collective organization of one sort or another is more efficacious than individualized strategies of getting more pay and prestige. This applies not only to unskilled and semi-skilled groups of workers, but also to professionals. The very process of professionalization is one that involves the creation of collective organization to regulate the occupation, and control any number of facets of the labour process (see Friedson, 1970). In particular, control is exercised over how many people are allowed to practice that occupation. Lawyers, for example, have bar associations, and physicians have medical

⁵ However, it is important to note that what occurs on the job is not irrelevant.

colleges. Of course, in the economy in general, the most common form of collective organization is the trade union, partially because trade unions, unlike professional associations, act to broaden rather than restrict their numbers.

In the literature on clerical work, it seems that clericals are “de-skilled” because their work is rendered invisible. This in part due to the fact that much of their skill falls outside of the formal organization, and because their work is gender-typed. Not unlike the false stereotype of the housewife who is perceived to watch soap operas all day and munch on bon-bons, the issue is less one of skill and work and more one of invisibility and marginalization. This same comparison is taken up by Wichroski, who argues that:

The role of the secretary is as ambiguous as that of the housewife. Much of her role goes unnamed and uncategorized, a problem that is exacerbated by the difficulty of superimposing an economic model onto work tasks that are not considered labour (1994: 34).

Emotional labour

Problems of invisibility and marginalization are more generally true of service work (Rollins, 1996: 224; Eaton, 1996: 297- 298). Because of requirements of emotional labour, I suggest that clerical labour is usefully understood as a specific type of service work. In the workplace, emotional labour involves “the manipulation of feeling in the self in order to meet the demands of the situation” (Wichroski, 1994: 34; see also Hochschild, 1983: 7).

Emotional labour is one of the defining characteristics of service work that sharply sets it apart from manufacturing work (MacDonald and Sirianni, 1996: 3). In writing about service industries, MacDonald and Sirianni suggest that, “personal interaction is a primary component of all service occupations” (1996: 3-4). Unlike in manufacturing, service work requires, at the very least, a relatively genuine appearance of engagement with the individuals that the service worker interacts with. This is because service workers have to establish relationships of care to do their jobs. Unlike work in manufacturing, relationships of care are central to working in the service sector, which involves a different orientation to working. The management of various caring relationships at work requires a great deal of emotional labour on the part of service workers. This emotional labour draws the worker into their work on an affective level,

...because the quality of the interaction is frequently part of the service being delivered, there are no clear boundaries between the worker, the work process, and the product in interactive service work (Leidner, 1996: 30).

Dimensions of emotional labour

To further interrogate the concept of emotional labour, Wichroski suggests that we divide emotional labour into three forms- political, latent, and social support (1994: 36).

Political

The political dimensions of emotional labour often involve acting as a buffer in social interactions in and around the workplace. This is particularly the case with those social situations that involve political maneuvering of one sort or another (Wichroski, 1994: 36). In this capacity, for example, it is usually clericals who are assigned to act as office gatekeepers, holding responsibility for answering phones, and, if necessary, “covering for the boss” (36). In emotionally volatile situations, it is the expected role of the clerical to buffer and diffuse the tension. In this capacity, they are often forced to act as the office scapegoat. As one paralegal confides,

I keep my mouth shut. I try to, you know, just apologize... I always say I'm an 'I'm sorry' person in that I want to take the blame. And I think that's a paralegal's job is to take the blame for a lot of things, you know. But, just to stay calm—and apologize—whether I feel like it's my fault or not. Anything to just defuse the whole thing (Lively, 2000: 44).

In these kinds of situations, subordinate parties, particularly if they are women, are more subject to the displaced feelings of others. They have, as Hochschild writes, a weaker “status shield” (Hochschild, 1983: 163). Hochschild continues:

Under the governance of socially organized fear, there is both the downward tendency of negative feelings and the upward tendency of positive ones... *When deflected*, anger and resentment tend to get deflected down... Those near the bottom on power hierarchies tend to bear a disproportionate amount of displaced anger... In a sense they become the *complaint clerks of society* (2003: 85).

I find it more than merely a coincidence that Hochschild picks the term “clerk” to describe those who have to absorb hostility from others. There is a tacit expectation that clerical workers will buffer their supervisors from hostility. In a now infamous training session at Harvard University:

...a trainer told workers who were upset by angry students' rebukes to ‘think of yourself as a trash can. Take everyone's little bits of anger all day, put it inside you, and at the end of the day, just pour it in the dumpster on your way out the door’” (Eaton, 1996: 296).

Latent

Clerical workers are also expected to buffer their departments from their own organizations. It is this set of activities that Wichroski designates as the second major dimension of clerical work, “latent emotional labour”. The formal bureaucratic structure of most organizations only accounts for a part of the day-to-day activity of clerical workers, and it is the job of the secretary to make that bureaucracy work (Evans, 1987: 64), to “redesign... the organization to account for discrepancies in the formal structure” (68). It is the job of the clericals to do the “hustling”, that is to say, bypass bureaucratic structures to maximize efficiency, through informal arrangements with other clerical workers in the

organization, and more generally, to manage bureaucratic complexities (Wichroski, 1994: 37, 39; Ames, 1996: 45). It is partially because of this “buffering” that the work of secretaries becomes visible mainly when they fail. It is this very devaluation that leads one clerical worker, active in a women’s office workers’ organization, to declare that the label “clerk” is demeaning (Goldberg, 1983: 56). Another clerical worker suggests that:

A global thing about clerical jobs is there are a million details with no training. You can’t train a clerk to cover all the details that are not written down anywhere, and can’t be written down anywhere (Gwartney-Gibbs and Lach, 1994: 618).

In reference to the latent dimensions of emotional labour, Pringle suggests that making the skills associated with clerical work visible means emphasizing communications and administration—the clerk’s job is to facilitate communication both inter and intra-organizationally (1988: 22, see also 24). Wichroski adds to this by focusing on “this element of humanness- of empathy, support, logical problem solving, and kinship-like goal attainment...” (1994: 34). However, these very elements of clerical work, which support the achievements of others, are what Ivan Ilich refers to as “shadow labour”— it may not count as labour, but this “shadow labour” is crucial to the execution of organizational tasks (cited in Hochschild, 1983: 167). Part of the successful execution of this labour is that it is able to “erase any evidence of effort”, thus perpetuating its invisibility (167).

An important aspect of latent emotional labour tied up in clerical work involves making cases fit into the rules, through an in-depth knowledge of procedures and routines that are sensible (i.e. that make sense, or are acceptable) from the point of view of the organization (Attewell, 1989: 383). However, because these skills operate largely outside of the formal structure of the organization and rely upon tacit knowledge, they are invisible to it. In particular, because work is done through mobilizing informal networks between clericals in the various departments of the organization, this work is rendered invisible from the perspective of the organization.

While clerical workers are marginalized in formal terms, they can often exercise substantial power in informal work relations. In the latent dimensions of the labour process, clerical workers often find themselves in situations where “participation in decisions frequently occur[s] in the context of particular ongoing personal work relationships” (Eaton, 1996: 295). For clerical workers, workplace relationships are highly salient to getting work done, whether these relationships are with customers, clients, co-workers or supervisors. Negotiating these relationships often require highly individualized and informal arrangements (Eaton, 1996: 295; Cobble, 1996: 338). It is no coincidence that a study of clerical workers in universities found that they were perceived as more powerful in larger universities, because of their familiarity with the bureaucracy and administrative complexity (Yenerall, Colignon, and Casey, 1994: 171).

Support

In relation to clerical work in particular, it is important to emphasize that this emotional labour and caring activity is not just restricted to interactions with the public. Rather, emotional labour *primarily* occurs within given work units, between clerical workers and their supervisors and co-workers, although patterns of emotional labour are quite distinct in relation to these respective groupings (Evans, 1987: 66; Wichroski, 1994: 37).

In much of the literature on clerical work, a great deal of emphasis falls upon the emotion management which is expected of clerical workers vis a vis their supervisors. In relation to their supervisors, clerical workers are expected to engage in what might be termed “care-taking” activities, and behave as the “office wife” or “office mother” (Evans, 1987: 62; Wichroski, 1994: 38; see also Lively, 2000: 48). The clerical worker enters into relations which privilege her supervisor, who, in turn, can treat the clerical worker as interruptible, since her role is to respond first of all to the needs of the “Other” she is caring for.

As suggested earlier, in relation to the political dimensions of emotional labour, lower-status participants in asymmetrical patterns of emotional labour bear a greater burden for managing their own emotions as well as the emotions of those in dominant positions (Hochschild, 2003: 56; Lively, 2000: 34). This is largely because higher status actors, almost by definition, “have a stronger claim to rewards, including emotional rewards” (Hochschild, 1983: 84).

These issues are particularly clear in episodes of workplace conflict and verbal abuse. In a study of emotion management among paralegals in a law firm, it is reported that they are expected “to absorb attorney anger and rudeness without retaliation (Lively, 2000: 44; see Gwartney-Gibbs, 1994: 619, 632; Eaton, 1996: 296). This is often framed in terms of “professionalism”, the expectation that clerical workers will both suppress their own emotions if they interfere with the work relationship, and manage the emotions of others. In particular, this holds true in relation to what Lively refers to as “the crying taboo”, an issue that was raised on an unsolicited basis in 43% of the interviews she conducted with paralegals (2000: 39). One study suggests that in situations where the support aspects of emotional labour fail, the most common response to these kinds of “personality conflicts” is exit in the form of lateral transfers. The asymmetry in power is evident, as the clerical worker is expected to leave if the conflict appears unresolvable (Gwartney-Gibbs and Lack, 1994: 634).

In relation to their co-workers, such as other clericals, patterns of social support are quite different. Lively describes patterns of social support amongst peers as involving “reciprocal emotion management” (Lively, 2000). Clerical workers tend to form horizontal networks not only to bypass bureaucratic channels, but also as a strategy to cope with the demands of emotional labour (Lively, 2000: 50). In a study of occupational stress among clerical workers, Morris and Long suggest that emotional support from co-workers has been found to be associated with less stress and lower levels of depression (2002: 398). It is in this context, of reciprocal emotion management, that Pringle devotes an entire

chapter of her book on secretaries to “bitching”. Here, “bitching” is understood as a coping strategy of lower status participants to their powerlessness and difficulty in asserting themselves directly (1988: 248-249). Put another way, it is an expression of passivity and resentment that naturally arises in the course of asymmetrical patterns of emotional labour and invisibility.

Gendered invisibility and respect

As problematic as it is, it seems that women are more likely to embrace the caring demands of service work, and invest more in the intrinsic values of emotional labour, “because these demands generally fit their notion of gender-appropriate behaviour” (MacDonald and Sirianni, 1996: 15). Wharton, in a study of the consequences of emotional labour, notes that women are much more likely to be engaged in emotional labour, to a degree which is statistically significant (1996: 101). Wharton suggests that the lack of recognition of emotional work occurs because this work relies upon a set of skills that are commonly associated with femininity. In other words, the “caring, supporting, nurturing” dimensions of emotional labour often involve activities that are similar to the domestic and emotional labour which women are expected to do in the home (White, 1988:80-83, 85; Briskin and McDermott, 1993: 8; Kurtz, 2002: 15- 16).

It is in this context that Pringle suggests that the relationship between clerical workers and their supervisors is constructed in a quasi-familial manner. These quasi-familial relationships involve a high degree of intimacy and day-to-day familiarity, such that it generates strong emotions of loyalty, commitment, and dependency (1988: 26, 50, 87). There is a distinctly patriarchal twist upon this, as in these quasi-familial work relations clerical workers often fill the role of “office wife”. In the role of “office wife”, clerical workers are expected to engage in emotion management by virtue of their gender and subordinate status (Gwartney-Gibbs and Lack, 1994: 624). It is in this capacity that supervisors often demand various personal services from clerical workers, such as balancing checkbooks, writing Christmas cards, collecting drycleaning, and making coffee (Evans, 1987: 66; Pringle, 1988: 26; Wichroski, 1994: 38).

This gendered invisibility makes respect an issue that seems to hold a great deal of centrality for clerical workers. It is no coincidence that, in preliminary discussions regarding MUSA, one of the themes that came up repeatedly was respect. The centrality of non-economic issues such as respect are often tied up closely with more economic demands such as wages, which tends to obscure these non-economic issues. However, wages are an issue often associated with judgements of value, particularly in the workplace, because remuneration literally and figuratively carries currency. Clerical workers want more than token recognition, such as an annual secretary appreciation day. As the colloquial expression states, they want their bosses to put their money where their mouths are. One clerical states that “clerical workers are overworked, underpaid, and not appreciated. When a job is well done *maybe* [my emphasis] you’ll get a thanks...”

(Balshem, 1988: 366). These issues are aptly summed up by another clerical worker, who comments that:

I think respect is the main one. If people would respect women's work, naturally your wages are going to go up. I think that's the problem with low wages. Women's work is looked down upon. It's not really considered important, and you're not going to be paid wages for something that's considered trivial (Goldberg, 1983: 72).

Organizing Clerical Workers

Dealing with and performing caring activities for co-workers, supervisors, and the public can create a different set of identifications by service workers, which in turn, can precipitate the creation of different sets of appeals than in the manufacturing context. This has been demonstrated quite clearly in the formation of the Harvard Union Of Clerical and Technical Workers (HUCTW). In organizing, HUCTW found the more traditional "anti-boss" trade union message unhelpful, instead coming up with the slogan that "It's not anti-Harvard to be pro-union".

As I will discuss in more detail later, organized labour's future relevance relies upon its ability to move away from a model of militancy and activity focused on the issues of workers in the male-dominated manufacturing sector of the economy, toward a model of militancy that is focused on the issues of other groups of workers, particularly those in service-based occupations which are female-dominated. Part of the union movement's future relevance relies upon it recognizing itself as a gendered institution, organized around a predominantly male workforce. As such, it has to shift to become an institution that is concerned with other groups of workers (Cobble, 1996: 336).

While I will touch upon the literature of organizing predominately clerical groups of non-academic support staff at Universities later, it seems appropriate here to discuss a study focusing on organizing clerical workers, since organizing is one major way in which clerical workers can address and manage (i.e. resist) workplace asymmetries. Hurd and McElwain's study, based upon interviews with organizers who have been active among clerical workers, suggests that clerical workers take much longer to organize for three main reasons. To begin with, as one might expect from a group of workers who find personal relations so central to the labour process, organizing clerical workers apparently requires a more highly personalized approach. Making these personal contacts requires a rather large organizing committee, often 10% or more of the proposed unit (Hurd and McElwain, 1988: 361, 362), and a great deal of time. Organizing tends to happen in small lunch meetings, as lunch meetings both maintain a personal feel and do not disrupt domestic responsibilities as meetings after work might (361).

Secondly, building confidence is apparently more important than in other campaigns, because clerical workers are so accustomed to subordination in the labour process. Thirdly, clericals generally have little prior experience with unions and generally "view them as institutions dominated by angry groups of

male employees" (362). The biggest barrier to organizing is fear, particularly the fear of disrupting workplace relationships, either with co-workers or management (362). This is hardly a surprising finding, particularly when one considers how firmly clerical workers are embedded in, and rely upon, networks of highly personalized relationships. Familiarity with unions and unionism tends to reduce these fears, as they are often based on misunderstandings of how unions operate (362).

Laboratory Technicians

One of the other major groups of workers in MUSA are laboratory technicians. While I have not been able to find a comparable volume of literature, one study, conducted by Barley and Bechky (1994), suggests a number of parallels with the labour process of clerical workers. To begin, like clerical workers, one of the major issues which confronts lab technicians is invisibility. Like clerical workers, they support the work which others take credit for. By performing the experiments that the scientist is then able to claim as their own, the work of the lab technician is rendered invisible. This is much like the secretary, whose work in producing documents is rendered invisible by the supervisor who claims authorship (Barley and Bechky, 1994: 119).

Secondly, it is the lab technicians who act as a buffer between the scientist and the empirical world, managing the trouble and uncertainty which arises in the course of doing so. As Barley and Bechky suggest, "their role centered on managing irregularities, ambivalences, uncertainties, and other forms of trouble that plagued even the most well-practiced procedures" (115). While this work is invisible to the formal organization, the tacit knowledge that laboratory technicians employ, generated through informal processes and networks, is indispensable to conducting experiments in the empirical world of the laboratory (114, 115, 116, 118). Like clerical workers, informal knowledge and networks are crucial to the success of the laboratory, but all of this crucial labour is rendered invisible by the fact that it is informal and tacit rather than formal.

Similarly, although with what are likely very different patterns of emotional labour and expectations, laboratory technicians often work in the context of highly individualized relationships with scientists, which often have overtly paternalistic overtones. As one laboratory technician put it:

There is nothing sadder than techs in their 50s whose professors retire. They are totally dependent on the good graces of the department to get a new job and have to start from ground zero with someone new. (120-121)

Also central to the laboratory technician is the equation of pay with a concrete expression of respect and appreciation. While they seem to have the distinct advantage that the scientists they work with often acknowledge their technical superiority and ability, Barley and Bechky report that "...all informants expressed dissatisfaction with pay, promotion, and other university policies that they interpreted as a lack of appreciation for their contributions" (120).

Collective Organization

As mentioned earlier, there are any number of ways that working people can respond to their labour processes. To understand the emergence of MUSA as an organization, we should first understand why workers organize, particularly in trade unions. At the most abstract and perhaps crudely economic level, in the employment relationship as we know it the interests of managers and workers are diametrically opposed in at least one key respect— managers are driven to reduce the costs associated with doing business, such as wages and materials (see Hyman 1975: 19- 20). In private workplaces these costs cut into profits, the central purpose for conducting business in a capitalist society. In the public sector, on the other hand, wages cut into the finite funding which is available to managers. Workers, however, have a clear interest in seeking fairly remunerated work, which is costly to management. As such, the level of remuneration given to workers, such as wages, depends upon a power struggle between management and labour. Because management has the ability to hire and fire, it has a great deal of power over the individual worker. However, when workers organize collectively, they are able to increase their power in relation to management. For example, while firing or censuring a single worker is well within management's authority, trying to take action against all of their workers is another issue— without workers, how would the work get done? In the context of what might be called traditional trade unionism, the power gained by collective organization has been used to engage in bargaining over issues such as wages and benefits.

Of course, we should be mindful of the fact that to be effective, workers' organizations such as unions have to be sensitive to their context and work issues. For public sector unions to be effective, the traditional private sector union approach of stopping production is not necessarily as appropriate as political mobilization (Johnston, 1994: 40). This is because, in the private sector, employers rely upon having a product or service to sell in the marketplace. By disrupting the ability of the employer to do so, workers can place pressure on the employer to grant concessions. In the public sector, on the other hand, the employer— the State, or a department of the State— relies upon taxation for their operating budgets, making them resistant to the same kind of pressure tactics. For public sector workers, disrupting their employer's access to markets is largely irrelevant. However, political mobilizations can be more effective in the public sector, since government organizations rely upon political decisions— on issues such as funding priorities— to decide where resources are allocated. I should note here that one of the reasons that MUSA makes a valuable case study relates to the fact that universities offer a rather unique middle ground, in that they have an arm's length relationship with the State. Because of their unique position between the private and public sector, universities pose a number of interesting dilemmas for unions active in this sector. Should they be seen as quasi-private or quasi-public institutions? This is a discussion that I will take up in the next section.

Canadian trade unionism- a historical perspective

Regardless of the specificities of their brand of unionism and union activity, the central point is that all workers can accomplish more when they organize collectively than on their own⁶. As I suggested earlier, status and wages are related less to technical tasks themselves, and more to social power struggles. By forming unions, workers in Canada have had a certain degree of success in securing work that is better remunerated, as well as gaining more benefits, and better health and safety in the workplace. This is particularly true in the manufacturing sector of the economy, where trade unions have traditionally been strongest. Surges of militancy during the World War II and the post- World War II period, particularly in the manufacturing sectors, helped workers wrest concessions from Canadian employers and the State. These concessions helped to create a class compromise which gave workers new levels of prosperity and security (Brym, 1989: 89; Heron, 1996: xviii, 70-71, 71-72, 75-76, 78-80, 89; Palmer, 1992: 169-170, 275-276, 278-279, 284; Panitch and Swartz, 1993: 8- 14; Roberts and Bullen, 1994: 383, 385- 388). In exchange for recognition of basic union rights, Canadian employers and the State were able to limit the union movement, effectively marginalizing more radical elements, as well as establishing a bureaucratic framework that simultaneously permitted and limited trade union activity (Panitch and Swartz, 1993: 12-14). For example, political strikes, sympathy strikes, general strikes, and wildcat strikes were all made illegal at the same time as a legalistic and highly bureaucratic framework for unionism and bargaining was created. The types of issues that the union movement was to engage with, and the ways in which it operated, were structured by a compromise to limit rank and file militancy and upheaval.

The issue today, however, is that the class compromise that was worked out in the post-WWII period has been breaking down. There are a number of reasons for this, not least of which are assaults by both employers and the State on union rights (Panitch and Swartz, 1993). To a great extent, the concessions given to unions in the post-war compromise were to gain the cooperation of unions in a regulated system of labour relations. However, with the onset of stagflation⁷ in the 1970s the former strategy of giving concessions to labour, to ensure that production would continue uninterrupted, was no longer as attractive (Panitch and Swartz. 1993: 21-24).

As this post-war compromise has broken down and labour has come under

⁶ As a basic principle, if one holds all other factors constant, I would suggest that virtually any social grouping is more effective if it is organized. This arises from the elementary fact that individuals can combine their power with others in organizations. Without organization, individuals are able to draw solely upon their own personal power. As Malatesta suggests, "what really takes away liberty and makes initiative impossible is the isolation which renders one powerless" (1965: 87; see also 83- 84; 85- 87).

⁷ Stagflation coupled with inflation

attack, the economy has shifted away from manufacturing and towards service. Unions have had to face both a changing relationship with employers and the State, and changes in the economy and labour market. As this shift has occurred, unions have struggled, in most cases unsuccessfully, to keep up. This is particularly clear in the USA, where union density in 1999 fell to 44% of what it was in 1956 (Rose and Chaison, 2001: 37). It should be noted, however, that in absolute numbers American unions have seen their memberships grow from 16 446 000 members in 1956 to 16 476 000 in 1999. In Canada, unions have been much more successful, expanding their memberships from 1980- 1999, from 3 397 000 to 4 010 000 members. However, these gains have generally failed to keep up with employment growth (Rose and Chaison, 2001: 36; Akyeampong, 2003: 1; Jackson and Schetagne, 2003: 14), although union density has remained around 30-35% (Rose and Chaison, 2001: 36).

In the most pointed form it has been suggested that the labour movement has to change in response to changes in the post-war compromise, and to changes in the world of work, or become irrelevant. Perhaps most importantly, the labour movement has to appeal to and organize workers who have traditionally been thought of as “unorganizable”. The groups of workers who are generally referred to as “unorganizable” include service workers, particularly in the private sector, workers in small and medium size enterprises, and, more generally, workers in areas of the labour force that are expanding at above average rates. In particular, these are knowledge workers in the private sector and contingent workers (Rose and Chaison, 2001: 39). The main issue with the designation of “unorganizable” is that the problem appears to be less that these groups of workers cannot be organized as that they *have not* been organized (Cobble, 1996: 337; Jackson and Schetagne, 2003: 10). A recent survey of Canadian unions shows that, rather than organizing, they have made protecting the current level of wages and benefits of their members’ a priority. Where they have been organizing, most Canadian unions have placed higher priority on their traditional jurisdictions rather than areas of growth (Kumar, Murray, and Schetagne cited in Rose and Chaison, 2001: 40). Most of the labour movement does not seem to have made the task of organizing the unorganized a priority, particularly those groups of workers who have been thought of as difficult to organize.

Women and trade unions

That service workers have traditionally been a low priority for the labour movement is related to the fact that service work has tended to be predominantly female. For a number of reasons, occupations which are predominately female have been marginalized in our economy. These patterns of marginalization of women in the workforce are generally obscured by the fact that they operate through mechanisms of exclusion and segregation more than through more overt forms of discrimination. Rather than a man and a woman in a workplace doing the same work under the same job title but receiving different treatment, men and women are streamed into different jobs. Women are marginalized because the

jobs that they have access to have fewer prospects for advancement and lower wages.

In part, the marginalization of women has occurred because, like most of society, much of the labour movement subscribed to the ideology of the "family wage" in the past. "Family wage" ideology was used quite effectively to marginalize the work of women, who were generally regarded as dependents. As I discussed earlier, this pattern is quite clear in the case of clerical workers. It was largely assumed that women's wages were not the primary, or even a necessary, source of household income. The focus rather, was on fighting for gains for male workers. The assumption was that "working men deserved to occupy a privileged position in industry, and that they should maintain an exclusively male union and workplace" (Sugiman, 1994: 27; see also Hartmann, 1976: 156- 159). Beyond ideology, labour also had practical reasons for adopting a "family wage" strategy in trying to secure a living wage for working men. By appealing to the notion of a family wage, the labour movement was adopting an approach which would be recognized by hegemonic forces in society, which includes employers, and the State, as well as public opinion more generally. The fact that women were treated as second class workers by the labour movement made them useful to employers as a source of cheap and expendable labour (Sugiman, 1994: 28). This set up a situation where male workers came to view women as a threat to their position, further marginalizing women and their work.

Women's marginalization in the world of work has also occurred in part because of overt sexism in the labour movement. In particular, it has been assumed that women "are naturally timid, and unwilling to fight and have no place in the rough arena of union struggle" (Smith cited in Forrest, 1993: 329; Sugiman, 1994: 28- 35; Kurtz, 2001: 2; Munro, 1999: 17- 18). For the most part, the labour movement was not really very interested in organizing women workers, and when it was, the women were often treated as peripheral to the men in their unions (Sugiman, 1994: 35- 41; Briskin, 1993: 89- 108; Cuneo, 1993: 109- 138; Frager, 1983: 44- 64). This is, for example, reflected in bargaining priorities and strategies, with "women's bargaining issues", such as equal pay for work of equal value, maternity leave, family leave, and child care/parental leave (Adams and Griffin, 1983: 193- 195) often treated as secondary concerns.

Issues related to women's marginalization in the labour market and the labour movement are particularly relevant in a study of MUSA, whose membership is predominantly female. The mere existence of MUSA and the fact that it engaged in strike action for its first contract contradicts the more overtly sexist assumptions that women are not able to handle the world of union militancy. Moreover, it gives us the opportunity to see how women have been able to engage with trade unionism. For example, has MUSA altered the trade union model to suit its needs? How has a small union such as MUSA been able to address some of the specific issues of its largely female membership?

On “masculinist biases”

Issues related to the marginalization of women in the labour movement should be regarded as key to the future of the labour movement. A recent report put out by the Canadian Labour Congress suggests that “[U]nion density has held up much better among women than among men” (Jackson and Schetagne, 2003: 8). However, even with the feminization of the labour movement, one study of a female-dominated white-collar union suggested that “[T]he gendered nature of traditional approaches, however, which were developed through decades of male union culture, often unintentionally privileged male members” (Creese, 1995: 155). These practices are generally taken to be gender-neutral, because they can claim gender blindness. This very blindness obscures the fact that women enter unions on different terms than men (Briskin, 1999: 82). Women hold different workplace locations, they have to shoulder the bulk of household and family responsibilities as well as their work responsibilities (see Cornfield et al, 1990), and they face different and unequal exposure to violence and sexual harassment. Part of the solution must be to systematically *gender* the discourse in trade unions, to deal with these “masculinist biases” (Briskin, 2002: 34; Briskin, 1999: 83; Creese, 1995: 163-164), to understand the ways in which many union practices are far from gender neutral and begin to build a more inclusive union movement.

The importance of gendering union discourse is particularly significant because it seems that feminist ideology is quite closely related to support for militancy and unionism (Gray, 1989). Researchers have suggested that workers who question power relations in the workplace are more sympathetic to collective organization, which, in turn, can shift power relations at work. As Reeves and Darville suggest, women who are more sympathetic to feminist perspectives are generally more critical of power relations at work more generally (1986: 118).

The Canadian labour movement has begun the process of addressing these issues. To address the invisibility and marginalization of women in official union positions, affirmative action policies have been introduced (Briskin, 1999: 75). However, the problem with strategies of affirmative action is that they fail to address the underlying systemic issues, leading Briskin to call for a focus on participation rather than representation (1999: 76). The focus in this kind of a strategy is not on developing a few leaders, but rather on developing leadership more broadly and cultivating participatory structures. While issues related to bargaining have been problematic, Briskin suggests that the bargaining agenda has been broadened quite successfully to include concerns that were generally marginalized in the past (Briskin, 2002: 33; 1999: 82- 84). As well, there has been a growth of what Briskin terms “separate organizing”, which can take forms such as women’s committees and conferences (1999: 79- 82). For these to be successful, they need to be able to balance their autonomy as well as their integration into broader union structures. Finally, Briskin discusses the necessity of building coalitions and alliances across both unions and social movements, an issue that is particularly acute for public sector unions, as discussed earlier.

Support Staff Organizing at Universities

As suggested in the preceding discussion, a key issue in organizing service work is whether a new unionism is being forged by service workers. In the existing literature, it appears that groups of university- employed non-academic support staff who have organized are indeed changing unionism to fit their circumstances

At Yale, for example, the union ran a campaign which focused upon the positives of union organization rather than the disadvantages of Yale as an employer, as often occurs in traditional union organizing. In contrast to the factory model of unionism, there was a stronger emphasis upon face to face organizing and the building of social networks associated with the union, with little reliance upon distributional literature (i.e. flyers). We might expect this emphasis on relationships to resonate with clerical workers in particular, whose labour is highly relational in nature. While the campaign certainly included instrumental demands such as wages, the focus was more upon “recognition, respect, and self-representation” (cited in Kurtz, 2002: 154). Again, such a demand is particularly significant for those whose labour and contributions are typically invisible, and who are marginalized in the workplace.

The Harvard union— HUCTW— explicitly adopted what they termed a “women’s way of organizing” (Easton, 1996: 301- 302; Hoerr, 1997: 152- 158; Hurd, 1993: 322- 323; Kurtz, 2002: 158- 159). They focused upon appeals which were organized around “speaking for ourselves” and “democracy and respect” (Kurtz, 2002: 158). As at Yale, there was a strong emphasis upon one-on-one organizing and building relationships between workers, and social networks centered around the union. HUCTW represented itself quite successfully as a vehicle for worker empowerment, rather than as a vehicle for achieving “bread and butter issues” as traditional trade unions have often done.

Columbia University departed from this pattern where, according to Kurtz, a much more “traditional trade union sound track predominated” (Kurtz, 2002: 86). While the union at Columbia had roughly similar demographics as at Yale and Harvard (i.e., disproportionately female, composed largely of clerical workers), it seemed to have had an agenda that did not engage directly with its membership as women or clericals engaged in emotional labour, as was the case at both Yale or Harvard. Having said that, while the packaging and rhetoric seemed very much focused on “regular ‘union business’” (Kurtz, 2002: 87), concerns centering around equity, in particular race and gender issues, were rolled into the culture, structure, and demands of the workers (Kurtz, 2002: 87). They adopted “a ‘do it, but don’t talk too much about it’ strategy of creating multi-identity politics” (Kurtz, 2002: 105). Their mode of organizing and mobilizing their membership was, however, quite similar to both Yale and Harvard. Their mobilization strategies hinged upon organizing their membership, building relationships associated with the union, and making the union process more inclusive, to encourage participation (Kurtz, 2002: 100).

In one form or another, all of these unions have adopted a strategy that

centered around issues not just of wages and benefits, but more fundamentally, issues of empowerment, respect, and recognition. With all of these campaigns, there is a very strong affective dimension rather than a strictly instrumental one, although both sets of concerns are present in all of these campaigns. As I suggested earlier, since their work is so systematically made invisible and taken-for-granted, these kinds of appeals and concerns resonate with clerical workers in particular. However, perhaps it is best to recognize that many of these same elements might be important in organizing in an industrial/manufacturing context.

These campaigns have also included an emphasis upon an organizing approach, characterized by the creation of participatory structures, rather than the more passive servicing approach which characterizes many other unions (Briskin, 1983: 264- 265, 267). In all of these cases, there seems to be a rather strong emphasis upon building social relationships and networks, which we would expect to resonate with a group of workers who are engaged in highly relational and emotional forms of labour (Hoerr, 1997: 236- 239). A relevant question to ask here is whether this approach is one that has been raised before by other equity seeking groups within the union movement? Is this approach one that is suited to women *qua* women, or women *qua* a group that has been traditionally marginalized in the union movement? As such, should we see these unions organizing service workers as opening up and revitalizing trade unionism more generally (Briskin, 1983: 259- 271)?

All of the examples that I have discussed so far deal with union activism and militancy among non-academic support staff at American universities. These are largely, of course, clerical workers. It is easy to underestimate the significance of clerical workers, perhaps as a condition of their invisibility in the workplace. In terms of numbers, clericals have an increasing importance in the economy, being located in a growth sector. Clerical occupations are currently the largest single occupation for women, representing one-quarter of all employed women in the USA (Kurtz, 2002: 2). In Canada, we find that in 1989, almost one-third of employed women were in clerical positions, with 80% of clericals being women (White, 1989: 199).

While I have reviewed the academic literature regarding this specific group of service workers in the USA, none of this work has been done in Canada. MUSA is one such union representing this specific group of workers— largely clerical, and disproportionately female. Organized independently, originally as a staff association, it has occupied a place largely outside of the Canadian labour movement. In contrast to the stereotypes of passive female workers, MUSA fought a five-week strike for a first contract with few resources, without a strike fund in particular. Conducting a case study which takes MUSA as its focus has much to contribute to the academic literature looking at service work and unionism in Canada, particularly in relation to gender. How did MUSA organize? Why did this campaign appeal to the clerical workers of McMaster and what were the issues which gave MUSA's appeals strength? Did MUSA engage or change the generic model of trade unionism?

The University Setting

McMaster University forms the context in which MUSA operates. As I suggested earlier, an important issue is whether universities should be seen as quasi-private or quasi-public institutions, as struggle in these sectors have quite different dynamics. The easy answer is that universities do not rely upon access to the market, which can be disrupted by workers to exert pressure as in private sector businesses. Universities rely upon tuition fees which are collected in a manner not unlike taxes, as well as various forms of funding that are generally not dependent upon access to the marketplace. Universities rely upon a mix of public and private sector funding that is highly reliant upon political (or politicized) decision-making processes, making MUSA a public sector union. As I mentioned, because the form of pressure relevant to public sector unions is based more upon political pressure and less upon economic disruption, different strategies are appropriate. Specifically, for public sector unions, building coalitions and appealing to the broader community is more efficacious, meaning in turn that the focus will tend to be more on issues which have relevance to the broader community. For example, teachers' and nurses' strikes tend to focus on issues related to service provision. In universities, a large part of the struggle seems to center around a perceived shift of the university system, away from being one located in the (quasi)public sector, to one more grounded in the private sector.

Universities, not just in the Canadian context, have held up ideals of institutional autonomy and academic freedom. These ideals emphasize a safeguarding of the intellectual pursuit, free from political influence, and "goals of cultivating creativity, autonomy, and intellectual resilience" (Axelrod, 1982:16; 2002: 35). Higher learning, typified in the University, is supposed to rise above the narrow agendas that dominate the rest of society, particularly in government and business, to seek "Knowledge". In particular, liberal education is supposed to stand for "broad cultural, humanistic, and social objectives" (Axelrod, 2002: 93). It should be mentioned that higher learning has often justified itself in instrumental terms, as a vehicle for social mobility, but this always existed alongside the values of "pure" academic research and equality of opportunity (Axelrod, 1982: 28, 152).

Having said this, corporate influence and support of universities is nothing new. Indeed, in the Canadian context, business has held a central role in sustaining the university system. As Axelrod points out:

Prominent businessmen from surrounding communities typically dominated and chaired university's board of governors, which raised money, lobbied governments, and managed the institution's financial affairs (2002: 88; see also Axelrod, 1982: 38, 57, 62, 70).

Moreover, in doing so, businesses often justified their support in terms of economic benefits, such as a skilled labour force. However, in the pursuit of these economic benefits, the business community pursued a "hands-off instrumentality". While they played a prominent role in the financial and

administrative control of the university, the business community left curricular and academic matters to academics in the university, thus preserving a sense of academic freedom and autonomy (Axelrod, 1982: 106; Axelrod, 2002: 88). This was in part related to a belief that, as the president of Imperial Oil put it, "industry has found that it can train an educated man, but it cannot necessarily educate the trained man" (cited in Axelrod, 1982: 107). For this type of instrumentality, it was not the specific training but the intellectual skills which one learns at university that were deemed valuable.

However, the pattern of university engagement with the corporate community has changed over the years. Sears links this to an ideological agenda, neo-liberalism, which has more broadly sought to redefine citizens as consumers (2003: 11, 54). What this has involved is an attempt to apply what he terms "market discipline" to all areas of social life, including academia. This "market discipline" is one that makes the immediate profitability of any activity its central concern, and seeks to "cut the fat". However, as Sears points out, this is at odds with the university ideal of free and independent scholarship, 'the lean ethos does not fit comfortably with the rather open-ended and contemplative tradition of the liberal arts' (2003: 82, 215). This disciplining by the market is aimed to force universities to "streamline their operations" and "develop courses for the student body which would give some understanding of the meaning, importance, and rationale for the private sector in Canada" (Axelrod, 1982: 183). The university and its tradition of free, open scholarship, faces a "death by a thousand cuts" (Axelrod, 2002: 95). Market discipline has restructured the public money which is given to universities to imitate market patterns, as in Alberta, where "new student spaces will only be opened in programs with high labour market demand" (cited in Axelrod, 2002: 95). Another proposal suggested that commercialization be made another fundamental objective of universities, alongside teaching, scholarship, and service (Axelrod, 2002: 101). This proposal would see "all recipients of federal grants...turn their research results over to the university, which would then be expected to find investors to market their 'discoveries'" (Axelrod, 2002: 101). Ontario's "Superbuild" program requires universities to match government funds with private funds for capital expenditures (Sears, 2003: 224). Furthermore, funding programs and university policies are being reoriented in a manner that heavily favours those programs that produce marketable research, such as commerce and high-technology (Sears, 2003: 224). This tying of the university system to the market also serves to overturn some major academic traditions, such as traditions of collegiality, as marketable research is more concerned with maintaining a monopoly over valuable knowledge to maintain a competitive edge than sharing research to advance knowledge (Axelrod, 2002: 104). What is at stake here is the very integrity of academic life. As Axelrod suggests:

...abuses aside, commercially oriented academic work, *by definition*, subverts a basic precept of liberal education in that research contracts

between academics and external sponsors inevitably encumber, in some way, autonomous intellectual inquiry (2002: 108).

In the university community the effects of market discipline have not gone unnoticed. Notably, in all my preliminary discussions about MUSA, corporate involvement and influence were cited as being important issues, without any prompting on my part. It is because of these kinds of pressures that Axelrod suggests that successful unionization of faculty at universities has centered upon issues related to the upholding and defending academic traditions (1982: 210-213).

For this study it is key to be mindful of the fact that the labour processes of MUSA members are all situated in a university context, a context which is shifting. It would be a severe oversight to fail to account for the effect of changes in the university on the labour process. It is also notable that a great deal of the work that is done by the support staff at McMaster, whether they be clericals or laboratory technicians, does not receive official recognition, and as such, is highly unlikely to be assigned a market value. As a result, programs of "market discipline", and the creation of the "lean university" serve to further marginalize and intensify the work of support staff, who are forced to "pick up the slack", as it were. Moreover, as caring work is devalued by market discipline, in broader society it is generally women who have to take over the care-taking functions which are "down-sized", further intensifying and making the labour of women workers marginal and invisible (Sears, 2003: 71; see also Thompson, 1989: 207).

Methodology

While I am drawing upon primary literature⁸ for contextual information, the key source of data for this study comes from face-to-face, semi-structured interviews. I conducted these interviews with staff who worked at McMaster around the time that MUSA organized as a trade union and went on strike. Where there were overlaps between what was discussed in the primary literature and what was discussed in the interviews, I have chosen to use interview data because it is "richer". The interview material generally had the same information as that in the primary literature, in addition to further information.

Indeed, this is a key contribution of a study such as this. While I could have attempted to focus upon the more "objective" primary literature, and developed more of a chronology of events, I chose not to. Human beings, in any situation, do not respond to events and processes as such, but upon their interpretations of, and engagements with, these events and processes, which thereby qualify and alter their engagement with the objective world⁹. Paying

⁸ Primarily in the form of local and campus media coverage (including letters to the editor) and MUSA documents (i.e. internal memos, minutes from meetings, flyers, bulletins, e-mails between MUSA, members, concerned faculty, and administrators).

⁹ I focus on this issue in my discussion of dialectical materialism, see page 16.

attention to objective events, over the understandings of these events by social actors, is not sufficient to understand the behaviour of these actors in social contexts. In the end, it is the behaviour of individuals in social contexts which creates objective social events, meaning that we cannot understand objective social processes without reference to subjective processes. As Portelli suggests in relation to oral history,

The first thing that makes oral history different, therefore, is that it tells us less about *events* than about their *meaning*. This does not imply that oral history has no factual validity. Interviews often reveal unknown events or unknown aspects of known events; they always cast new light on unexplored areas of the daily life of nonhegemonic classes... the unique and precious element which oral sources force upon the historian and which no other sources possess in equal measure is the speaker's subjectivity. (1998: 67; see also Thompson, 1998: 24).

In contrast to an analysis which places emphasis upon the objective dimensions of social processes, a dialectical analysis focuses on the inter-relation and inter-penetration of subjective and objective processes¹⁰. As I suggested in the opening chapter, a dialectical materialist perspective is one that focuses not upon economic antagonism as such, but the complex inter-relations between subjective interpretive processes and objective social interactions. In particular, I am suggesting that objective interactions in the labour process at McMaster have structured the interpretive processes of MUSA members (i.e. norms, allegiances, loyalties, etc). In turn, these interpretive processes have structured and altered the labour process itself. As such, the subjective engagement of MUSA members in relation to a dynamic and changing labour process is central.

In focusing on the ways in which the subjectivity of MUSA members has dialectically both conditioned, and been conditioned by, the objective labour process at McMaster, I have analyzed the unionization of MUSA in relation to the labour processes of research participants. As such, I cannot claim that this is *the* definitive account of the unionization of MUSA, that includes all perspectives and all the issues which can be addressed to this process. As I suggest in relation to dialectical materialism, such an all-inclusive account is strictly a religious possibility, one that is neither ontologically nor epistemologically feasible. This account is one that is partial, but as Portelli suggests, "[P]artiality' here stands for

¹⁰ I am trying to understand "objective" and "subjective" in the simplest way. Subjective processes are those that occur within the brains of social actors, whereas objective processes are those that occur outside of the individual's brain. Part of the complexity here is that, from the perspective of a given actor, the subjective processes of other social actors appear as objective (i.e. outside the consciousness of the reference actor). Of course, one can only understand the objective and subjective as they operate in a dynamic relation to one another. Interpretation is the action of a subjectivity, which defines the specific contents of a given individual's subjectivity.

‘unfinishedness’ and for ‘taking sides’: oral history can never be told without taking sides, since the ‘sides’ exist inside the telling. (Portelli: 73)” However, as I think Portelli means to suggest, just because we do not say everything does not mean that we cannot say anything.

In relation to the issue of “taking sides”, it is important to be mindful of how I shape the project as a researcher. To begin with, I have a pre-existing affinity with the members of MUSA, as the former vice-president of the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees and the son of a clerical worker at the University of Calgary. Staff were quite supportive of my research, which I would suggest related to the abstract commitments to research that are so important for so many staff¹¹, as well as the fact that finally staff could present their sides of the story. In the interviews research participants were generally enthusiastic about this research, and they were quite open in sharing their thoughts and feelings. Because of their openness and support I do feel a sense of loyalty and responsibility. Moreover, I do feel directly responsible to the workers I am taking as my subjects, as I study and work at McMaster. I also had to be mindful of the fact that all three members of my supervisory committee were faculty at McMaster when MUSA organized and went on strike, and all three were actively supportive, to differing degrees. While I construct my account based upon what literature I have been able to find and what staff have told me, the members of my committee were actually there, and were involved. It is a difficult position to be in, writing a historical account for people who have actually participated—would I be able to capture these events as staff and faculty remember them? What if my take on the issues involved are different than theirs?

The interviews were conducted between February and March of 2004, almost three years after the strike. While it would have been ideal to capture the changing structure of the labour processes of research participants by interviewing MUSA members before, during, and after the strike, that was not possible. Rather, I have had to rely upon the recollections of interview participants. As I suggested in my discussion of dialectical materialism, memory is distinct from fact because it is actively mediated by processes of interpretation. How people remember the past often tells us more about their lives and concerns in the present. The version of the past that one recalls can often be idealized in the sense that it emphasizes certain aspects of the past and de-emphasizes others. However, we are talking about events that happened relatively recently. While there have been some changes, there has also been a great deal of continuity. In the interviews, staff were not talking about issues that had faded into the background, nor were these processes distant.

Interviews were conducted on a one-on-one basis, and they ranged from about 30- 90 minutes. Interview questions followed an interview schedule¹², although probes and follow up questions were used where they seemed

¹¹ As I discuss in chapter 3.

¹² See Appendix 1

appropriate. Most interviews were conducted in offices, labs, and conference rooms that were scattered across the main campus. I also conducted interviews off- campus, generally with staff who were active in MUSA, but who have left McMaster in the interim. In my interviews I tried to tap into major currents of opinion among staff, and I feel that the breadth that I have been able to achieve through the methodology of snowball sampling is sufficient. I began by contacting past leaders in MUSA and vocal opponents of MUSA. From these initial contacts I solicited referrals, asking for the names of staff who might be able to offer me different perspectives. While this strategy has a potential to lead to rather uniform responses, interviewees often referred other staff whom they clashed with on union matters. Even though I conducted 24 interviews in all, the sample size for this study is 17 of those interviews. While the sample size was set partially by limitations of space and time, the interviews which were not transcribed and used as data for this study did not contain any novel information.

With a sample size of 17, questions can be raised regarding the generalizability of my findings. As I conducted this study I hoped to be able to understand the complex inter-relation of subjectivity and objectivity of McMaster staff in relation to the unionization of MUSA. As Portelli suggests in relation to oral history, “[I]f the approach is broad or articulated enough, a cross section of the subjectivity of a group or class may emerge. (1998: 67)” The question is whether the approach I use is either broad or articulated enough to represent such a cross-section, such that I can speak about staff in general, and not just the 17 staff members I interviewed. It almost goes without saying that a larger sample size would allow greater certainty, but even the largest quantitative sample fails to include 100% of the population to which findings are generalized. Not even the most scrupulously conducted study can claim to have perfect data, from which one can derive complete certainty of the generalizability of a given research project. However, as one male research worker in MUSA suggested,

I tell people that I’ve got this adjustable wrench in my lab that I use. Adjustable wrenches can be a problem, they round over nuts, and they don’t grab properly, they’re heavy, they’re clunky, you know they’re not perfect... but they’re a hell of a lot better than no wrench at all.

If the time and resources were at hand, it is possible that survey data could help shed light on whether the experiences of the staff that were interviewed were shared more generally. However, failing that, as Berg suggests in relation to generalizing from case studies,

The logic behind this has to do with the fact that few human behaviors are unique, idiosyncratic, and spontaneous. In fact, if this were the case, the attempt to undertake any type of survey research on an aggregate group would be useless. In short, if we accept the notion that human behavior is predictable— a necessary assumption for all behavior science research— then it is a simple jump to accept that case studies have scientific value. (Berg, 2001: 232)

There is no question that a sample size of 17 fails statistical tests of representativity, but as Grele argues in relation to oral history,

When historians claim that oral history interviewees are not statistically representative of the population at large or any particular segment of it, they raise a false issue and thereby obscure a much deeper problem. Interviewees are selected, not because they present some abstract statistical norm, but because they typify historical processes. Thus, the questions to be asked concern the historian's concept of a historical process (i.e. his own conception of history) and the relevance of the information garnered to that particular process. The real issues are historiographical, not statistical. (Grelle, 1998: 41)

The hope is that the data from my interviews have been able to allow me to speak about the experiences of research participants as they have typified the historical processes encountered, experienced, and altered by McMaster staff more generally. How can I be certain that I have adequately captured more general historical processes and not merely the idiosyncracies of individual staff? Perhaps the notion of "certainty" has no place in social science, or any sort of science for that matter, and this study is merely suggestive. However, an influential text outlining the "grounded theory" approach to qualitative sociology suggests that perhaps my sample is not that weak,

The criterion for judging when to stop sampling the different groups pertinent to a category is the category's *theoretical saturation*. *Saturation* means that no additional data are found whereby the sociologist can develop properties of the category. As he sees similar instances over and over again, the researcher becomes empirically confident that a category is saturated. He goes out of this way to look for groups that stretch diversity of data as far as possible, just to make certain that saturation is based on the widest possible range of data on a category. (Glaser and Strauss, 1999: 61)(see also Strauss and Corbin, 1998: 214)

Charmaz strikes a note of caution when she suggests that this notion of saturation can be quite elastic, depending upon the individual researcher (2000: 520). Perhaps this element of researcher discretion is better highlighted by Christians' notion of "interpretive sufficiency". Christians suggests that,

[W]ithin a feminist communitarian model, the mission of social science research is interpretive sufficiency. In contrast to an experimentalism of instrumental efficiency, this paradigm seeks to open up the social world in all its dynamic dimensions. The thick notion of sufficiency supplants the thinness of the technical, exterior, and statistically precise received view. (Christians: 145)

In pursuit of "interpretive sufficiency" I sought groups that "stretch diversity of data". To this end, I attempted to conduct interviews with as many different groups as possible within the staff of McMaster. To begin with, I was able to interview staff from all of the major areas in the university, in all of the major faculties, from the social sciences and the humanities, to the natural

sciences, engineering, and health sciences. Of course, if I was able to do more interviews the data and analysis would be richer and deeper, but I would suggest that “interpretive sufficiency” is determined by the ability to draw clear and consistent patterns from the data, particularly in ways that can account for apparent anomalies.

I have been able to talk to clerical staff in not just administrative departments, but also administrative staff in academic departments in every faculty, three of the four university libraries, and research units. I have also been able to talk to research staff, mainly from the natural sciences and engineering, as well as researchers associated with the health sciences. I have talked to research staff who work on projects, and those who supervise student laboratory work. Moreover, I have also been able to talk to staff who work off-site.

I would describe all of the research participants as long-term employees. All of the participants worked full-time in the period that MUSA unionized, although there were participants who had worked in part-time positions at McMaster. In the transcribed interviews the shortest term of employment was 14 years, and the longest was 30 years. In the interviews that were not transcribed there were participants who have worked fewer years, including one staff member who was a relatively new employee at the time of the strike. The majority of staff that I interviewed have worked at McMaster between 20 and 30 years. While I did not collect data on the age of research participants, I would describe all of the research participants as middle-aged, between roughly 30 and 60 years of age. This seems to reflect the dynamics of staff more generally at McMaster University, as I discuss earlier in this chapter, staff have tended to stay at McMaster. I am fairly confident that I have been able to tap into the general sentiments of staff at McMaster and that I have been able to get an overall picture which is broadly representative. The confidence that I have developed that my interview data offers a description not just of individual staff, but of broader historical processes as experienced by staff, relies in part upon the fact that I achieved “saturation” within the first five interviews. As my sample expanded I continually attempted to interview staff in different groups, different social networks, different jobs, different departments, with different engagements with MUSA, and all of these interviews enforced my sense of “interpretive sufficiency”. From the interview data as a whole and the primary literature a remarkably consensual and coherent overall depiction of the events and processes under study has emerged, bolstering this sense of “interpretive sufficiency”.

In terms of the engagement of research participants with the union, I was able to tap into a broad range of positions. I was able to interview staff who crossed the picket line, rank and file members whose contact with MUSA was generally fleeting, as well as members of MUSA executives and negotiating committees. Even for those staff who support MUSA (the overwhelming majority of my participants), a number have expressed positions that are quite divergent. I had to be mindful of gender in my interviewing strategy because MUSA is a female-dominated union that has a history of a male-dominated

leadership¹³. While my initial interviews were mostly with men, I am quite confident that I was able to get a sample which was able to account for these dynamics, as my final sample was predominantly female. In the end my sample included four men and thirteen women. In terms of the other demographic features of my sample, I would describe fifteen participants as “white” Canadians, and two participants as “white” Europeans. In relation to family status, at least six participants were parents, at least one participant was a single parent, nine participants were married, four were single, and I do not know the family status of the other four participants.

In the interviews participants shared a great deal of information with me, some of which was highly personal and privileged in nature. If one does research which focuses on conflict that involves groups and people who are in on-going relationships, such as this study does, confidentiality is a major issue. This is particularly pressing in this study, given the degree to which staff are dependent upon the whims of their supervisors. As I discuss in the final chapter, there are staff who are still afraid to file grievances, on the grounds that they fear that they will be singled out for punishment. With this in mind, I have not identified my participants, either directly or with pseudonyms. Both the McMaster Research Ethics Board (MREB) and research participants underlined the fact that pseudonyms, in either alphabetic or numeric form, would be insufficient to guarantee confidentiality. To this end, I have used composite quotes. The majority of quotes in this study are actually composed of statements by a few different staff, which I have blended together, meaning that the chances of identifying participants by their quotes is lessened. Moreover, beyond issues of confidentiality, it is my hope that the use of composite quotes can be useful in drawing out and emphasizing the collective dimensions of the labour processes of staff at McMaster. The predominant use of composite quotes to draw out the collective dimensions of the labour process at McMaster is in keeping with Sangster’s worries regarding what she terms as the dangers in “stressing deconstruction of individual narratives over analysis of social patterns. (1998: 97)” Rather than focusing on the deconstruction of individual narratives, I have sought to use composite quotes to focus on the shared elements of staff experiences in relation to the labour process.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have set up the case study of MUSA by outlining the relevant areas of substantive academic literature. Specifically, I have reviewed literature relating to the labour processes experienced by clerical workers and laboratory technicians, collective organization in reference to groups of workers that are similar to McMaster’s support staff, and the changing university setting.

In this study, clerical work is understood as a specific type of service work, because of the demands of emotional labour that are part of the labour

¹³ An issue I address in the “Looking Forward” chapter.

process of clerical work. In clerical work emotional labour tends to take a gendered form, as the particularistic relations involved in support work often create close, quasi-familial bonds. As support workers, clericals are responsible for coordinating the work of the people who they support, as well as buffering their offices from contingencies. In the most general sense, their job is to enable the work of other people to continue without disruption. However, because *informal* processes of coordination and managing contingency are such an integral part of the labour processes of clerical workers, this work is often rendered invisible in *formal* organizational terms, and thus, it is also devalued. Because of this devaluation, respect and wages are often tied together as key issues for clerical workers.

Organizing clerical workers requires a sensitivity to the issues which emerge from their specific labour processes, although it can be argued that one should be equally sensitive to the particularities of organizing *any* group of workers. Organizing in this context takes more time, a more interpersonal approach, and a sensitivity to fears that a union presence might disrupt the particularistic, affectively charged arrangements which are so key to the everyday work lives of clerical workers. Laboratory technicians have a distinct set of tasks, but as support workers who manage contingencies to allow work to continue, they share recurrent problems relating to organizational devaluation and invisibility. Similarly, they tend to form very close particularistic relations with their co-workers, since they also work in a support capacity.

Turning from the labour process, I then looked at collective organization in a historical perspective. The Canadian labour movement is largely the creation of the post- WWII class compromise, one that has been focused on male workers in the manufacturing sector. In the struggles that defined the labour movement, a number of groups of workers were marginalized, particularly female workers. As this "class compromise" has broken down, predominantly groups of female workers have become much more significant. However, even as the trade union movement is becoming feminized in numerical terms, the traditional marginalization of women has generated "masculinist biases" within unions. Addressing these gendered biases has created an emphasis upon participatory union structures in general. There has also been an emphasis upon developing a sensitivity to womens' issues and the creation of autonomous female groups that are tied into broader union organizations. Looking more specifically at organizing amongst non-academic support staff at universities, we find there is indeed an emphasis upon developing participatory structures. Furthermore, in these campaigns we find that economic issues (i.e. wages, benefits) are closely tied up with non-economic issues, such as respect or empowerment.

I looked then at the changing university context. While universities have traditionally defined themselves in terms of an ethic of autonomous inquiry and broad humanistic objectives, these values are ones that are now entering into conflict with a market logic. As neo-liberal reforms have introduced market mechanisms into the university environment, contradictions and conflict have

begun to emerge. Even though these reforms have created a contradiction within the university environment more generally, this has had a particularly strong effect on staff, who have faced intensified marginalization as market mechanisms have been imposed. I end the chapter by reviewing my methodology.

Having considered the academic literatures which are relevant to understanding the changes in the labour processes of staff at McMaster, and the methods of research that I am using, we are now in a position to turn to the specific case study of MUSA and its unionization.

CHAPTER 3

MOTHER MCMASTER AND THE UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY

As I will show in the following chapters, the organization of MUSA into a trade union, and the strike which followed, was caused by changes in the labour process writ large¹⁴. In particular, these changes altered the way in which members of MUSA experienced working at McMaster University. These changes have been caused by the ascendancy of neo-liberalism, and the market fundamentalism that accompanies it. There are many ways of trying to come to grips with neo-liberalism¹⁵, but in the simplest terms, the neo-liberal agenda is thoroughly informed by an almost religious fanaticism for market discipline. Regimes of market discipline involve the use of a market logic in all areas of social life, particularly through pursuing privatization and subjecting what public institutions remain to quasi-market forces.

To understand the ways in which neo-liberalism changed the labour processes of MUSA members, I begin by looking carefully at the dynamics of the labour process before neo-liberalism. As these changes have occurred, they altered the relationship of members to MUSA, the kind of organization that MUSA was, and the relationship that MUSA had to the University. The key elements of the labour process for staff revolved around the university community, work groups that tended to have kinship-like bonds, as well as a great deal of on-the-ground collegiality and autonomy for staff. As I also discuss at the end of the chapter, this general labour process is also one that contained a number of tensions and contradictions.

It is worth noting that participants generally described the experience of work before neo-liberalism as “the good old days”. When staff were talking about “how the university used to be”, it is advisable to take these recollections with a grain of salt. As I suggested in my methodology section, memory is distinct from fact because it is actively mediated by processes of interpretation. How people remember the past often tells us more about their lives and concerns in the present. In this case, most of the research participants talked about this period in a manner that was generally favourable, and I run the very real danger of helping to construct a “Paleoterrific”, a highly idealized version of the past when everything was better.

¹⁴ The emphasis falls upon “writ large”. Because labour processes are here defined as the material social processes of work life, it is key to understand how work relations are two-sided. Because the organization of MUSA developed in reference to issues and processes which emerged from the labour process, and because staff organization altered the dynamic relations between workers and administrators in the labour process, I consider it crucial to consider this as part of a labour process analysis.

¹⁵ I discuss this in more detail at the beginning of the fourth chapter.

With that reservation in mind, we are talking about events that happened relatively recently. While there have been some changes, there has also been a great deal of continuity. In the interviews, staff were not talking about issues that had faded into the background, nor were these processes distant. In fact, in qualitative terms, on the day that I interviewed them most of the staff were doing very much what they did in the 1980s. While the labour processes experienced by staff have exhibited more continuity than change, this chapter is periodized in the past tense. It should be noted that staff often discussed the labour process in this period in the present tense, as they were talking about the aspects of their work that have not changed.

It was encouraging that research participants did not seem to be presenting an idealized version of the past. I say this because many of them talked about how things were not perfect, and pointed out some of the tensions that existed for them in that period. While overall the interviews developed a portrayal of McMaster that was generally positive (i.e. as an institution that most MUSA members were generally happy with), it was not one without its contradictions.

The University Community

It did not take long for it to become clear that one of the key features of working at McMaster, that structured the way in which research participants understood and experienced their work lives, was the notion of a "University community". Trying to unpack this notion of a "University community" can be quite difficult because it seems to have had a number of elements which operated on a number of levels. Before we get into discussing the outlines of the university community at McMaster in this period, we should consider how it evolved.

McMaster University began as a Baptist liberal arts college, originally oriented to providing a practically-oriented general education, informed by Christian principles (see Johnston, 1981: 4-5, 10, 24, 52- 53, 178). It was not until 1957 that McMaster finally split from the Baptist Convention, as part of a broader reorganization of the university (Johnston, 1981: 240- 267). With one fell swoop, McMaster became a secular institution. It was completely re-structured and it immediately expanded due to new provincial funding. While McMaster was bound to reject government money while they were under the authority of the Baptist Convention, in 1957 McMaster received \$400, 000 from the province, and in the 1958-9 fiscal year that was to increase to \$700 000 (Johnston, 1981: 265). New funds for capital grants totaling over \$2 million were used to build the engineering building and the nuclear reactor on campus. In this reorganization the old community was totally altered. The rapidity of the growth of McMaster is evident in Chancellor George Gilmour's changing forecasts of the size of the student body. While originally Gilmour predicted that the student population of McMaster would triple between 1957 and 1985, from roughly 1 000 to 3 000 students, within six months that date was revised to 1965 (Johnston, 1981: 265).

Even before the reorganization, the rapid growth and transformation of the campus was clear in the period from 1945-1955, as McMaster's expenditures

expanded fivefold (Johnston, 1981: 253). As Johnston suggests, “to enable McMaster to broaden its scope of operations and so ensure its survival as a full-fledged university”, sweeping changes were needed that were “constitutional, academic, structural” (1981: 121). Through the period leading up the reorganization of 1957,

McMaster’s past [as a Baptist college] was being eroded by economic, social, and intellectual circumstances that were speedily remodeling the environment in which the university had traditionally functioned (Johnston, 1981: 203).

Secularization and the shift from a small liberal arts college to a specialized university was already becoming an on-the-ground reality at McMaster before the reorganization. In the decade from the 1920’s to the 1930’s, Baptists went from about 2/3 to about 1/4 of the student body (1981: 55). By the 1950’s, only 16% of students were Baptists, as compared to 30% who belonged to the United Church and 12% who “defied religious classification” (Johnston and Weaver, 1986: 91). It is in this context that a letter to the editor of the student newspaper lamented that, “[A]lthough not as visible as the revolution in architecture on the campus, it is equally evident that a revolution... is taking place... in the tradition and character of McMaster” (cited in Johnston and Weaver, 1986: 91).

Because an accelerated expansion happened after reorganization, new staff and faculty did not even come into contact with the organizational routines that were part of the earlier periods of McMaster’s history. While senior administration was to be dominated by faculty who were at McMaster when it was a Baptist college, reorganization pulled these administrators out of the day-to-day functioning of most departments.

As I discussed in relation to dialectical materialism in the first chapter, culture is not removed from material realities, it is not a metaphysical force. Rather, culture is created, sustained, and communicated in real, objective, material interactions. We would expect to see discontinuity at McMaster if newer staff and faculty were not interacting with routines or people from the period before McMaster began to change. However, even as this culture was being remade, the higher echelons were able to exercise a conservative influence over the rest of campus, as bearers of an older heritage at McMaster. One of the mediated ways in which this happened was through the ability of senior administrators to vet academic hiring. In their control over the process of hiring faculty, senior administrators have been able to quite effectively influence the contours and culture at McMaster. The use of the hiring process to shape the organizational culture at McMaster was explicitly acknowledged by Chancellor Gilmour, who advised a new hire that,

[This] university has an historic church connection, which I value personally very highly... we do not want... to fall into the hands of men who are out of sympathy with the aims and convictions of Christian men (Johnston, 1981: 224).

This concern highlights the importance of the exercise of mediated forms of control by the administration (i.e. over faculty hiring), which allowed the secularization of McMaster to occur while sustaining a conservative culture of patronage within the McMaster community.

Having considered the emergence of McMaster as a secular university, we can begin to consider this “community” as it existed before neo-liberal reforms on campus. A community may be defined as a locality in which a group lives, or as a similarity or identity (i.e. a community of interests) based upon sharing, participation, or fellowship¹⁶. To begin, it seems that McMaster was a community in the sense that it was a community of interests. As a university, McMaster was a place for learning and research. There are a number of ways that this abstract commitment emerged as staff interacted with students, faculty, and administrators on campus. In the first place, before a number of my research participants began to interact in the social processes at McMaster *as staff*, they were students. As two female clerical workers, who worked in academic and research departments, informed me,

Well, I started here even before work, I was a student ... I've been watching the University for many years, because I started studying here in '65. So, it is my alma mater as well as my employer... And maybe I'm unusual, in that regard. I was around before MUSA became a union, my relationship with the university, with people on the campus, has been that of student to supervisor, student to administrative staff, student to faculty member, and then staff to student, staff to faculty member, staff to other staff....

As these research participants performed daily tasks that were very similar to work in private industry, they experienced their engagement with McMaster *as staff* as an extension of their engagement with McMaster *as students*. Either directly or in a support capacity, many staff at McMaster saw themselves as engaged in the pursuit of knowledge and the broad humanistic objectives associated with academia.

Particularly for staff that had attended McMaster as students, most of my research participants have literally oriented their entire adult lives around the McMaster campus. This shifts us to looking at how, at least on the main campus, McMaster was also a community in the sense that it was one of their primary reference points. For these staff, McMaster was much more than a place where they worked, it was where they lived. For many participants, it also seems that their social networks were ones that connected to other people who were part of this “community”. Here community was understood in a more interpersonal sense; as a place where relationships and interactions occurred and were embedded. This was the more concrete element of the McMaster community,

¹⁶ See dictionary.com

compared to a more idealized abstract community of interests (i.e. the scientific community).

One of the places where the interpersonal and ideological senses of community converged was in dealings with students. It is worth noting that these interactions involved not just for clerical staff, but also many staff in research. When asked what they enjoyed or valued the most about their jobs, research participants in both areas gave answers relating to interactions with students. This was expressed clearly by two female administrative clerical workers in academic departments and a male laboratory technician who commented that,

... I wouldn't have a job if we didn't have students and something that I really enjoy is the student contact... I almost watch them mature, both academically and personally... If I have to think about my positions at Mac, the jobs I enjoyed the most, were one where I worked with students... The contact with students always made the day fly by, and you always had fun... and now I'm sort of dragging them out of the hallway, come in, talk to me... it's the light in the mind... it's the "oh great!", it's seeing a thesis come out, and you know, even getting acknowledged in them sometimes. That's just a joy... that really pumps you for the year.

These interactions with students, in tandem with a general commitment to education and universities as a progressive force, were not just taken as something pleasant about working at McMaster. For research participants, interaction with students was a key aspect of how they experienced work and structured their work lives. The labour process at McMaster generated commitments that had a great deal of influence on how change unfolded on the university campus. For example, in discussing coming back and working after the strike, I was told by a female clerical worker in a research department and a male research worker that,

When we went on strike, it was early enough that it shouldn't have gotten in the way of exams and stuff... And that's one of the reasons we went back, because it was screwing up exams, it was making life difficult for so many people... with all that, I still put in 9 hour days. But that's not for the University, that's for the students...

As noted previously, part of what seemed to make working with students rewarding was the element of interpersonal interaction and being able to watch them mature. This seemed to involve a certain amount of mentorship, and, in that context, there was a sense that staff could make a difference. This highlights another key theme of the experience of the labour process of research participants. While staff might have had problems, on the whole they generally experienced work as more enabling than constraining. The majority of research participants clearly derived a great deal of intrinsic pleasure from their work lives: it was a way in which they could be part of this idealized "University community". By working in their jobs, research participants felt that they were part of an organization committed to the pursuit of knowledge, as well as the communication and sharing of knowledge with students.

For a number of research participants, particularly those who worked in research and who had limited contact with students, what figured more prominently than learning was a mission of pursuing knowledge by participating in, and supporting, research. For example, a female clerical worker responsible for designing forms for survey research commented,

[Y]ou asked me a while ago what was one of the best things about my job... Because what I do has an impact on somebody's life, I have potential to make it better... it might sound like a bit of a stretch to say that if I design a form that collects data, that's going to help someone's life, but if I don't design the form, they can't ask the questions.

By and large, research participants did not seem to experience work as alienating. In fact, many of them opposed their own work lives to those of other groups of workers, whom they saw as having alienated work. This sentiment was made clear by participants who worked in research and clerical positions,

We're not dealing with a product... we're not dealing with a widget that somebody has to stand by a dangerous machine and make 75 an hour of these things, or the big mean boss is going to fire me. We're dealing with research... We're dealing with people- we're dealing with students... It's a product you can believe in... I... enjoy what I do, because it is part of my training... this is something that I decided to do in life, [a] long time ago...

There was a definite sense in which the work of staff was intrinsically rewarding. In this context, the university community appeared as a community of interests, a place where people were united in their commitment to the pursuit of learning and research.

However, to return to a conception of the "University community" in the geographical sense, research participants also talked about the university environment as a unique and special space. Regardless of what one was doing whilst one was there, the university was a place where people liked to be. As one male research worker informed me:

...in my job, and just in the McMaster community, I find most people are pretty good, a little bit different than in private industry ... I like just generally working in this environment, it's a very stimulating environment overall... I've always been here, I've never done anything else, I haven't gone to the real world yet, honestly. But I think that's the general rule for many people at Mac, lots of folks that I work with, and talk with, we love being here, and we love doing the things we do, for the most part.

There was a definite sense that, while "University community" was used in the more general and idealized sense as a community of interest, the main campus was also an attractive place to be. This was because McMaster seemed to bring people together who were committed to the same basic values— research and learning. It was partially this notion of the "University community" that allowed a union activist to say, "I haven't gone to the real world yet, honestly".

There was a definite sense that staff deemed the "University community" as separate and distinct from the "real world" (i.e. working in the private sector).

The dedication to learning that seemed to be tied into the more abstract notion of the university community was one that was concretized not just in the support of the research and learning of others. A number of staff valued their place at McMaster because it allowed them to participate themselves. For example, free courses were one of the benefits of being a full-time staff member at McMaster. Research participants in both clerical and research positions commented that,

Every day that I am there, I learn something... That's a good job, I mean, I'll be a student for the rest of my life, and to be able to be learning things, and be paid, and paid to learn things, that's wonderful as far as I'm concerned... It is an absolutely fascinating job. I never know from one minute to the next who I'll be working with, what I'll be working on, and in the 29 years, I've worked with just about every element in the periodic table... the questions are always interesting, and the opportunities to learn are abundant.

The more abstract understanding of a university community was one that was very closely tied to a set of notions of what a university was *supposed* to be. There seemed to be very clear normative ideas about what a University was and should have been. A key value in this idealization of what a University should be were norms of collegiality. For staff, the work they did was valuable because they saw themselves as being collaborators in research and learning. As we will see, feelings that staff were included in this community of learning, as valued members, was closely tied to how they felt about working at McMaster in general. For two female clerical and research workers,

It's very much a two-way street for communication, it's not question of them above me or me above them, it's just a question of getting the relationship to the point where it functions and has a job for both of us. So it's not a higher or lower thing, it's very collegial. We come in, we sit down, we talk, we exchange ideas... having a working relationship where you can speak more person to person, rather than staff to boss ... we call our bosses by their first names, as they do us... it makes it a little bit easier atmosphere to work in...

These abstract norms were more than ideals, many MUSA members had these abstract norms realized in their work lives. For example, one female clerical worker recalls that,

... sometimes (the supervisor) would come back from the VP Academics', and he would say, "okay gang, brainstorm time... so we would trot in, we would sit down, and he would tell us all this stuff... the latest horror that the bosses had handed down, and then we would brainstorm on how it could be done... you know, I could do this, and (a colleague) could do that, and (the supervisor) would do this and... you know, we would work it all out, and it was a real collegiality kind of thing, it was great.

The norm of collegiality was not just a pleasant idea for many members of MUSA, it was how they were treated in the day-to-day labour process. In policy terms (as we shall return to later), supervisors had the capacity to unilaterally control the work lives of their staff. However, in lived realities, power was often shared according to norms of collegiality in many offices. As such, research participants talked a great deal about how they felt like they belonged to the McMaster community as fellows, as valued participants, from these daily experiences of collegiality.

The collegiality that was often part of this idea of the university community was tied quite closely to University norms of autonomy, as a crucial guarantee of academic freedom and a way of pursuing academic excellence (Hoerr, 1997: 81). For staff, it seems that the way that this has traditionally filtered into workplace interaction has been mixed. I will discuss some of the problems later in the chapter, but at best, staff had input that was taken seriously in the process of task delegation, and once tasks were delegated, staff were autonomous in actually carrying out their work. This was true of research staff as well as clerical staff. As three research participants in clerical and research positions commented,

I'm generally left alone in both jobs that I've done here. I know the work, I know what needs to be done, and I do my own scheduling, for the most part... .. And I'm pretty comfortable with the job as it is, there's no real need to get guidance on things... I've been able to retain a fair amount of autonomy in my position, which is great... which you really need, to keep yourself alive... when you're in a job and you're a lifer... it is hard to keep yourself motivated, so I think that having that autonomy in your position really helps... we have been given a lot of responsibilities where we don't need to be told what to do, we're on our own, we know what has to be done, when, what times, what is important, what can wait... I just love the freedom.

As I discussed in the second chapter, recognition is generally a key issue for support staff. This is due to the fact that most of the work that support staff perform is rendered invisible in the labour process because they are supporting the work of other people who usually claim the credit for the work. Token acts ring hollow. Remuneration forms a key indicator of how much a person's work is actually valued. Thus, wages carry not just a literal, but also a figurative currency. In short, support staff want their bosses to put their money where their mouths are.

In this period, the claim that McMaster University was a community where support staff were valued as members actually had some material basis, beyond their workplace interactions. Virtually every research participant suggested that before neo-liberal changes, "...whenever faculty got a salary increase, the staff got the same percentage... now a percentage of our salaries was a lot less than theirs, but in essence, in principle, it was fair." The claim that the University was a community that included staff was quite a credible one at this

point, and as such, it generated a fair deal of loyalty and commitment on the part of staff.

It might be suggested that “the McMaster community” was an “imagined community”, i.e. an ideological construct which ties together a number of communities where people live and interact (see Anderson, 1991: 6). Such a construction is an abstraction because no Canadian ever *really* lives in the community of Canada. Rather, Canadians live and interact in communities *in* the geographical space designated as Canada. With regard to McMaster, this has an element of truth in that people never interacted with McMaster University as such. McMaster itself was an abstraction, people only ever interacted with individuals in departments that were part of McMaster. However, this abstraction had a very real, lived, objective dimension— this notion of a McMaster community was one that was not separated from the day-to-day labour process for research participants. Understanding McMaster as an “imagined community” leads us down the wrong path insofar as it does not capture the *interactional* processes that composed the abstraction of “McMaster”.

Indeed, Anderson uses the concept to describe nations as entities to highlight the disjuncture between the idea of a national community and the real, lived, face-to-face interaction that is implied in the term “community” (i.e. of a village). However, each member of a community need not interact with every other member to belong to a common community. Rather, I think it is more meaningful to understand a community, in the more concrete sense, as referring to shared senses of meaning, belonging, and reference generated in face-to-face, particular interactions within material social processes, in a bounded sphere of face-to-face interaction located in a specific, immediate physical area (i.e. the main campus of McMaster University, which is certainly smaller than a small town).

The notion of a “University community” was not just an ideology that had been constructed in the idealistic sense that Anderson discusses, in reference to national “communities”. McMaster was an abstraction that arose from localized interactions, from which faculty, staff, students, and administrators generalized about the less concrete “community”. The “McMaster community” was grounded in the material social processes that occurred within its boundaries. It might be easy to see the “University community” as an ideological construction used to manipulate staff by a cunning administration. A dialectical materialist understanding of the social construction of the “University community” highlights this community’s constitution through processes of interaction. These processes of interaction are ones that arose organically from the labour process at McMaster, primarily in the interactions between staff, faculty, and students.

The Work Family

For research participants, the loyalties generated by the notion of a “University community” were also tightly interwoven with loyalties to their work units. The university community was an abstraction that found its real existence in

people's daily interactions. While this "generalized Other" (McMaster University) was an abstraction, it was based upon peoples' concrete, immediate experiences in everyday settings. Generally these settings were one's own office, but more broadly, they included interactions with people outside of one's office, such as colleagues in other departments, faculty in courses that one took, with students, etc.. The sum of these experiences, which were highly particular, was the abstract concept of the university community. Participants who had good day-to-day relations generalized from these good experiences to form an understanding of the broader community that was generally positive. On the other hand, participants who had negative day-to-day relations formed an idea of the broader community that was negative in character.

The labour processes of research participants, as suggested by the broader literature on support staff in general¹⁷, tended to involve very intimate, often quasi-familial relations. These ties were generated because staff had to work quite closely with the people whose work they facilitated. Hence, the more general loyalty to the "University" was compounded by these more particular sets of relationships. While support staff often had a great deal of autonomy, work was far from a solitary affair. In this capacity, networks that often had a highly informal character were quite important to the lives of staff. According to one research worker, for example, informal networks helped with upgrading and access to areas of expertise, "[W]e all help each other, and we have a network... there's expertise that lies there." When they counseled students, a number of staff talked about the importance of mobilizing these networks. For another male research worker,

...if I can do what they want or I know someone who knows it better or I think they should talk to someone about it, I can refer them to people because I have the connections, I know the different people in different departments, or the people in the institute who have the skills or knowledge in that particular area.

It should be mentioned that these networks, in the spirit of collegiality, were ones that traversed the hierarchy at McMaster. In talking about how some of these networks functioned, a couple of participants in research told me about a now-closed coffee lounge in the Arthur Bournes building,

And what was marvelous in that coffee lounge was that all people from all those departments talked. They talked about their problems and somebody from geology would have a solution for somebody in physics... And we're not just talking about faculty talking to faculty. We're talking about the faculty talking to staff, staff talking to faculty, staff talked to staff, staff talking to students, students talking to students, the whole pairing, it was just a marvelous interaction. In university, the most important place, is a place like this... Stephen Leacock always said that if you're going to build a university, the first thing you should build is a common room. ... But he

¹⁷ Discussed in the second chapter.

was talking about education- he wasn't talking about training or making money. He wasn't talking about the "Ed. Buss." [Education Business], he was talking about education. And the word education it's... reading books and talking to people about it...

Part of what seemed to make the "University community" such a stable one was that people were tied together, across hierarchical levels, to interact in the spirit of collegiality. This was a big part of what made working at McMaster special, and generating these intense loyalties.

In this context, staff members often offered advice to people in higher positions in the hierarchy. In fact, in many cases staff told other staff or faculty higher up in the hierarchy what to do, for example, by exercising the power of their supervisor in their stead. Moreover, when supervisors tried to abuse them, interviewees reported being able (and having) to rely on people higher up in the hierarchy (i.e. faculty) who were tied into their networks to act as "sponsors" to protect them. This was generally done by intervening directly between the staff member and their abusive supervisor, or arranging a position for them to transfer into.

Of course, it seems like the key role for networks on a daily basis was co-ordinating and managing the relationship between the work unit and the larger university. Like so many other organizations, the on-the-ground reality of work at McMaster relied more upon informal networks among staff to buffer organizational units from instability and uncertainty and co-ordinate departments in the organization, than on the protocols and policies of the formal organization. To keep the university together and running, these networks integrated the work being done across the units and co-ordinated departments. As two female clerical workers in academic departments commented,

To do any job efficiently, you have to know where the resources are, so you have to do that networking... I would die without those. I have connections and friendships that I have made informally between all the units that I deal with, on a fairly regular basis... And every year at Christmas, I bake stuff for her and take it over. Because you need that connection. And I'm not doing it to manipulate, I just need these people to know that I really appreciate their help, because you can't survive without their help. You'll just have to go through a lot of problems... I'm always speaking with the other admins in the other departments... I have to be constantly building bridges, or else we wouldn't survive... so developing those social networks is vital, not only developing them, but maintaining them and keeping them healthy. And that, in itself, within the McMaster community is extremely time consuming and really draining, to try to keep... not everybody happy, but just trying to bargain, especially when you get into complicated issues...it is a constant negotiation.

In this context the formal and informal overlapped, and we find that the labour process drew staff into a network of relationships that were often quite tenuous. Maintaining these relationships required staff to do a great deal of emotional work

to sustain the functioning of the their units, and collectively, the university itself. While the abstraction of "the University community" was one that created a commitment to an abstract and idealized notion of what a university was supposed to be, these networks were equally affectively charged. However, as opposed to the more abstract commitment to an ideal academia, these networks rooted the McMaster community in particular interpersonal relationships. I do not think that I am exaggerating when I say that staff going for lunch was a major part of what knitted McMaster together as an organization, and allowed staff to manage organizational contingencies.

As the literature on support workers suggests, the highly informal relationships that structured the experience of work at McMaster had a tendency to represent more than just a personal affective dimension. For most clerical workers, their gender and subordinate status generated expectations that they would engage in emotion management in the office. The clerical workers I interviewed often highlighted these gendered patterns of emotion management, with research participants telling me that they were "office mothers". However, I should note that even MUSA workers who did not cast it in these specific terms cast their relationships in terms of kinship. For example, one clerical worker suggested that after, "years of working here, pretty much with the same people, we're a family. People that I've worked with here are as close to me as my family". Because people were working so closely with one another in the labour process, close bonds often formed. Over time these social bonds took on a significance that approached kinship. In terms of how this was experienced specifically for women, these close quasi-familial relationships often had a specifically gendered dimension, such as "office wife" or "office mother" (see also Garson, 1979: 228- 232).

To the degree that they approached the level of kinship, these informal social bonds helped to sustain a unique work context. This work context relied upon a high degree of trust and "give and take" to function. This kind of "give and take" relied not just upon an expectation, but a daily reality of reciprocity. The reciprocity that seemed to be tied to norms of collegiality made staff feel like they were colleagues (see also Burawoy, 1979: 61). In at least one case, I was told of a supervisor who took her secretary along on a two-week business trip in Europe, with a week backpacking in the Alps afterwards. Particularly for staff with children or taking classes, these kinds of relationships allowed for a great deal of accommodation. These accommodations were possible since there did seem to be a great deal of trust in most units. To give a concrete example, one male laboratory technician related that,

I have two children at home. That's why I come in for 10:30s, that's why my priority is what's happening outside the workplace, I have to send children off to school in the morning. So I can't leave the house, really before 9:00. I worked a modified, voluntarily agreed to [schedule]... my employment management area is pretty flexible about that...

In this “university community”, work was done through informal networks and people were tightly integrated into the “work family” which was generally marked by a fair amount of reciprocity and accommodation. It appears that a great deal of what support staff at McMaster did, both in the administrative and research sides, was to “hustle” to make things happen, to keep the university running. In this process, staff had room to manoeuvre, that is, to exercise autonomy and control over the work they did, as well as fashion a work experience that was often quite engaging. In the responses of four research participants, in clerical and research positions, this was quite clear as they stated that,

It's really interesting work and I've gotten into some of the most cockamamie ideas that you've ever seen in your life, but we make it work. And that's what's really interesting about the job. It's a job I love... What is the most important part of my job... that's a hard question, but probably maintaining some sort of order... I often quote policy and procedure to people, both higher and lower than I am...not only do I know what the current rule is, but I know how it came into play...that knowledge... is invaluable to the tasks that I undertake every day... My days are never the same, I have no idea what I'm going to walk into when I walk into work...

As suggested above, this “hustling” relied upon a general framework in which there was a great deal of trust. Such a high-trust environment was made possible by the dense networks that knitted McMaster together. These networks often cut across hierarchical lines, which helped to sustain a high degree of social integration, collegiality, and autonomy in the daily labour processes experienced by staff.

To this point we seem to have the “Paleoterrific”. In other words, working at McMaster sounds very much like a time when we were younger and the world was better. As we shall see, however, while the labour processes of staff seemed quite stable and harmonious, they also contained deep divisions and contradictions.

While the day-to-day “hustling” of staff was often quite rewarding, because it relied upon informal mechanisms, it was largely invisible from the point of view of the organization. Because of the way in which the contributions of staff were rendered invisible, this allowed for the intensification of work. One research worker captures this when he noted that,

[T]his is the McMaster context, you come in low, you get more and more responsibilities and you don't get promoted (laugh)... At this point, it's fairly common, particularly in a research environment, that people are brought in at a low scale and then you just do more, and they find that you can do more, than you do more, and you do more, and then they get more and more and more.

As issues came up, the temporary accommodation— the “hustling”— that got the unit through one crisis usually ended with the staff member having an added responsibility. This added responsibility came without a change in their job

description or pay because this work did not go through official channels. Because of the uncertainty and informality of the work that staff did, this work was invisible to the organization. This crucial function of managing change at the level of the work unit was not recognized as part of the job, because it was rather difficult to write unforeseen problems into job descriptions. As one clerical worker laments,

There are always problems that need to be solved. That is a big, big part of my job... it is just a lot of problem-solving... knowing who to call, who to get in to ...do certain aspects of the work that needs to be done... a contract had come in to renovate a lab, and of course nothing ever goes smoothly, ever, I'm not supposed to have anything to do with contractors, but somehow you get dragged into that too... all of a sudden that is my job. I don't mind, because it's a change, but it's just trying to find time for things like that. And how do you explain that in a job description? Each time, it's something different.

What They Did

Thus far I have been focusing more on how people experienced work, and relations in the workplace, in the course of daily labour processes, I have not really discussed what staff actually did at McMaster. In the most general terms, research participants generally worked in administrative/clerical positions and research positions.

Research staff generally seemed to work in laboratories or offices attached to laboratories. On campus, most researchers were linked into the larger structure of McMaster through affiliated institutes, and sub-units of departments in the health sciences, engineering, and the natural sciences. For some research staff, their work was primarily with specialized equipment in laboratories. For these staff, the focus of their work was conducting research. While most of the work that the more research-focused lab techs performed was actually in the lab, in some cases, research staff have presented their work at academic conferences as well. For other laboratory technicians, work revolved around students. These staff tended to spend more time writing lab manuals, demonstrating in labs, training teaching assistants, and assisting graduate research. In addition to these more specialized tasks, lab techs were also responsible for supervising labs, making sure that the labs were stocked with supplies, and performing general maintenance on labs and lab equipment.

In their work relations, lab workers could often be quite isolated. In terms of their place in the organization, most of them seemed to have a single supervisor, with whom they had little contact with on a daily basis. On a day-to-day basis, staff were generally able to maintain collegial work relations. In the case of those who worked with students, their interactions were primarily with students and colleagues. In the case of workers more focused on research, they tended to work more closely with the faculty whose work they supported. In some cases research workers worked primarily with a single researcher, while in other

cases research staff worked with a number of faculty. Because many research staff worked with faculty on a shifting basis, and because they often commanded technical expertise, staff were generally able to maintain a relatively high degree of autonomy and collegiality in their labs.

The staff who worked in clerical/administrative positions were generally located in offices. These offices were scattered in every unit at McMaster, as clerical workers generally held the responsibility of tying individual departments into the administrative structure of the university. Some of these staff had individual offices, some shared offices with other clerical staff, and many had desks in "open" offices or anterooms. Many of the tasks that these staff performed were intuitively associated with these sorts of positions, such as document production, filing, the organization of filing systems, making appointments, etc. A number of these staff were also the front line workers who dealt with students, often offering counseling in that context. As well, because many clerical staff were affiliated with academic or research departments, they were responsible for maintaining faculty curriculum vitae, as well as managing grant applications and deadlines. Moreover, in the academic departments a great deal of time was spent ensuring that the work that happened in the department could be coordinated with the rest of the university. In particular, this involved the co-ordination of course timetables, especially in the case of cross-appointed faculty, ensuring that faculty kept to various deadlines, e.g., submitting grades, and giving reminders to faculty and graduate students about grants and grant applications. Moreover, staff were drawn into such highly skilled tasks as accounting and the management of finances, trouble-shooting computers, graphic design, drafting contracts, organizing conferences, and quoting policy.

Part of the problem with trying to capture the work of McMaster clerical workers is that a great deal of it involved dealing with contingencies. Unlike researchers, clerical workers seem less tied to the performance of specific tasks and more to a location in the organizational structure of McMaster. It seems like it was the responsibility of clerical workers to make sure that the work that other people did could be coordinated, both inside and outside the department. As such, while other people had specialized work, clerical staff were generally responsible for making sure that this work was pulled together into the organization.

Beyond more immediate tasks, their jobs involved making sure that their departments "got through". Because of this, it seemed that any work that no one else was doing became the responsibility of staff by default. In this context, staff became responsible for all sorts of contingencies that arose and they "buffered" their departments from the effects of these contingencies. Particularly in periods of uncertainty and change more contingencies arose, and staff had to carry a greater part of the organizational burden. These contingencies ranged from helping other people finish grant applications for a deadline, to managing and coordinating contractors working in the building.

These staff tended to interact through both horizontal (collegial) and vertical (hierarchical) networks. In general, it seems that horizontal networks were

quite important for coordinating with administrative staff in other departments, and the vertical ties were more significant in staff coordinating the work of faculty in their departments. More so than the staff in research-related positions, these clerical workers tended to be more systematically drawn into networks for the purpose of coordination. There are definite substantive differences in the labour processes of clerical workers and research workers. However, as we shall see, the overarching feature of the labour process that defines the common experience of work for McMaster staff is their position in the University hierarchy.

Fiefdoms

One of the key contradictions in the labour processes of research participants related to the systems of patronage that were generated as McMaster became a secular university. As McMaster was created in its modern form in 1957, it was reorganized. In McMaster's earlier days, the Chancellor "had at times personally assumed the responsibilities of a dean, and even of a department head" (Johnston: 169). With the expansion of McMaster, this kind of an arrangement created an overload of work in the Chancellor's office. As such, the key problematic that drove this structural change was a concern with delegating work *out* of the Chancellor's office. In the most general terms, the reorganization served to create "a visible line of command from the department heads through the deans to the chancellor" (Johnston, 1981: 169). As such, the primary concern was delegating power out of the hands of higher levels of administration, into the hands of people who were "closer to the ground".

While the primary focus in this organizational change was re-distributing work from the center to the various units (i.e. departments), faculty were able to make their voices heard in this process. Perhaps not unlike in the case of the organization of MUSA, this attentiveness to the concerns of faculty followed the organization of the Faculty Association in 1951. Johnston suggests that in the immediate post-war years faculty had engaged in "frugality and cheerful sacrifice" (cited in Johnston: 214) to help McMaster through financial difficulties and shortage. However, Johnston suggests that by 1951,

the feeling grew in faculty circles that the commendable self-sacrifice of the post-war years ought now to give way to a reasonable pursuit of greater remuneration... and that this could be best assured through collective action (214).

As we shall see, this is eerily reminiscent of the organization of MUSA, as staff similarly sacrificed to help McMaster through difficult times caused by external economic circumstances. Much like faculty, staff organized when they failed to see their sacrifices acknowledged meaningfully in organizational terms. In trying to come to terms with this ferment, Chancellor Gilmour, presiding over the reorganization, commented that, "[T]he problem cannot be approached thus bluntly, but there is a growing insistence on the part of scholars that their status is not that of voiceless employees" (cited in Johnston: 259). For the time being, I

shall just note that it is not only the general form of the organization of faculty on campus that was similar to the organization of MUSA as a trade union. Beyond these similarities, the underlying solutions identified were similar, relating to wages, but more fundamentally, to the structure of domination at the university, and the ability of aggrieved groups to enter into the decision-making process. As in the case of MUSA, and as Chancellor Gilmour recognized, the fundamental problem was the distribution of power in the organization.

However, while this reorganization was sensitized to the issues of faculty, and included faculty in basic decision-making processes at McMaster, the concerns of staff were not considered. The general effect of this reorganization was to transfer power from the administration to individual departments, to make the workload at higher levels more tolerable. However, this delegation of power did not seem to come with checks on managerial fiat. Indeed, it seems like the power that formerly belonged to the Chancellor's office was simply placed into the hands of supervisors, without any means of oversight. It should be no surprise that staff highlighted arbitrary and inconsistent management as a key structural problem in their labour process. This is clear as one female clerical worker in an academic department suggested that,

[P]eople's experience at Mac depended primarily on who their supervisor was... even though I've been here long time, my job has changed, it's not the same job... when there is a change in the chain of command i.e. you get a new chair or director, the different management style means that you have a different job.

In the period under study, the university norm of autonomy and the specific structure of McMaster operated in such a manner that work units (i.e. departments or offices) were generally treated as the jurisdiction of their supervisors. While higher, more central levels of the McMaster hierarchy might have had influence over staffing, in terms of the number of staff and wages that it allowed the units for hiring, they had little control. It seems that there were virtually no mechanisms of oversight, or effective guarantees or requirements of managerial responsibility. As such, staff faced a situation in which their treatment was very arbitrary. This arbitrary treatment was discussed by participants who worked as laboratory technicians, as well as a participant who worked in a clerical position,

(supervisor) is like King of the (department), and nobody really has the power to influence him or to change that... what Mac has, in effect, is I don't know how many departments, that's an employer... every single faculty member who hires people, that's an employer. So we have a thousand, 2000... employers on campus... what I would like to see...[is] a program where the university has a progressive policy on how you supervise. You can't, like my boss, when things were not going right, (he) would go around and say "You're stupid", in front of everybody. I don't care how smart you are, you have no right to say that to anybody...

If a staff person had the good fortune of getting a good supervisor, then they were lucky. If they did not, there was little to nothing that they could have done about it. While there were a number of departments in which highly informal relationships were beneficial to staff, that was certainly far from always being the case. Again, clerical and research workers expressed the following grievances,

Working for (department #2) is like working for a completely different employer than when I worked for the (department #1)... And I think that sets the tone all the way down- if you've got a strong person at the top who cares about people and doesn't want to see people abused in the workplace, then he or she has a lot of free reign to make sure that is how the environment ends up being, but unfortunately, the opposite happens as well... there is very disparate treatment... and take that down to people's demands on their lives as well...

In at least one case, when a participant in a clerical position took her problem with an abusive supervisor to Human Resources (HR), the first thing that the officer of HR did was refuse to be involved. However, not only did the person in HR that she contacted refuse, "to have anything to do anything about it, that person went straight to (the supervisor) and ratted [staff] out." Consensus among research participants was that if you had conflict with your supervisor, your only choice was to leave, as there "[were] no checks and balances— at all". It is in this context that a number of staff sought "exit" through the use of informal networks, looking for other positions at McMaster.

Isolated Problems

While staff certainly recognized that there were problems at McMaster, these were generally treated as exceptional and isolated incidents. For example, research participants in clerical and research positions reported that,

... nothing was ever uniform, so there was grumbling about that... I used to think that these unfair things were isolated and I would say, well that's just this Department, but then, the longer I worked there, the more people I got to know, I realize that this so common because there is no real direction from the university to supervisors.

Because the labour process of staff was defined by particularistic relations and informal arrangements with supervisors, these exceptional problems were, on the one hand, normalized because they fit the informal structure of work life, and on the other hand, they were understood as exceptional because they could be attributed to supervisory caprice. For example, "hustling" to get the department past the current crisis involved a great deal of "give and take" between staff and supervisors. Supervisors made regular practice of allocating insufficient money for wages from research grants, convincing their support staff to "take one for the team". To keep staff wages within grant allotments, staff were cajoled into hiding parts of their job, or staying on as casuals so that they could be paid out of

existing funds. Research participants who worked as laboratory technicians, as well as participants in clerical positions, revealed that,

And all this time I was what was called roll 3 which was temporary casual, you don't have any benefits, and you barely get any holidays, even at that time you're supposed to be on roll 3 a year, no longer. They kept temporarily extending me... So I moved to roll 1 but actually at a lower level than the job was supposed to be, because when he sent in the job description, he was told that in order to have all these things in here, he would have to pay me more. And he didn't have the money, so they basically took out part of the job description. And that did not mean that I didn't do the job, I still did the job... the university has a job class called roll 3... temporary... There were people in that position for 15 years. That is just appalling, and they're all female, you know?

The main reason that this was not identified as problematic, for so many years, was that each staff person who went along with this arrangement seemed to be making a personal sacrifice. This was tied into a general environment, in which informal "hustling" encapsulated much of what staff did in the labour process. As such, this practice blended in, and seemed like just another isolated issue that staff were helping to solve. This came as a part of a high trust environment, one which often had quite concrete benefits to staff in their working lives. In discovering that their sacrifice was not a single heroic effort to keep the operation running, the feelings of betrayal that many of my research participants reported suggests precisely this interpretation. When it seemed that this underpayment was just the way things were done at McMaster, participants commented that, "[supervisor] had gotten away with little money and underpaid me because the university allowed that to happen". They felt like they had been taken advantage of, because they had trusted their supervisors and were willing to make that sacrifice for the project. When it appeared that it was a broader phenomenon on campus, this sacrifice stopped appearing like a special arrangement. It no longer seemed to be the case that this was a single, unforeseen contingency that staff were able to deal with, bloodied but unbowed. This was exactly how the university worked. It was not isolated. Instead, this practice was endemic. What kept this system in place for so long was that it appeared to be an arrangement between a hapless supervisor and staff themselves.

The Logic of the Material Social Process: Race, Class, and Gender

As I argued in the opening chapter, we cannot understand real life dynamics solely by analyzing the relation of concepts or ideas to other concepts or ideas. The critical moment of Marx's "scientific socialism"¹⁸ is the recognition

¹⁸ In discussing "scientific socialism" we must take care to distinguish between a *scientific* approach and a *scientistic* perspective. As Malatesta suggested, "a scientific mind is one which never cherishes illusions of having found the absolute Truth and is content with painstakingly approaching it, discovering

that we cannot understand or create social change through abstract moralizing. As Hegel stated,

...the content shows that its determinateness is not received from something else, nor externally attached to it, but that it determines itself, and ranges itself as a moment having its own place in the whole (32; see also Hegel, 13, 36).

A dialectical understanding seeks to grasp the moments within the broader material social process as it is actually lived, that is to say, the internal historical logic which is riven by contradictions and contraries of various sorts (see Williams, 1977: 121; Meiksons Wood, 2002: 52, 61). These contradictions exist not at the level of abstract ideas, but in real lived social relations—the material social process (see Smith and Thompson, 1999: 229; Burawoy, 1985: 29, 87).

Analytical concepts such as race, class, and gender are crucial to developing an understanding of material social processes. To understand these “forces” as part of a broader material social process we have to understand the concrete ways in which people experience their lives. While it is true that class, gender, and race structure social life, they generally do so in a manner that is not immediately apparent. The way in which domination gains a degree of invisibility because of its pervasive nature can be found in the following quote, drawn from a female clerical worker in a research position, who argued that gender was *not* a significant structuring principle in the labour process at McMaster (see also Forrest, 2001: 664),

All I can speak of is our department, where with the exception of the one professor, who is now retired, and is a real sweetie, called everybody pet if they were female. Nobody minded because he was a real sweetie, there was absolutely no differentiation based on gender. That in fact, people would be absolutely shocked... now we are predominantly female, but we do have male... we have had, and yes, the predominance, the male predominance is in higher jobs...

We must begin by understanding that *all* decisions are made in the context of constraints. Race, class, and gender form some of the basic points of orientation for the individual in material social processes (i.e. their daily lives). However, these are not apparent because they tend to be subsumed as assumptions upon which the activity of living proceeds, the metaphorical boundaries within which the “game” of social life is “played”. In the day-to-day activities that compose the reality of domination, these inequalities are generally taken for-granted and thus obscured. Burawoy makes this point forcefully when he argues that,

The very activity of playing a game generates consent with respect to the rules... consent rests upon—is constructed through—playing the game. The game does not reflect an underlying harmony of interests; on the

partial truths, which it considers always as provisional and revisable... The *scientism* that I reject... is the acceptance as definitive truths, as dogmas, every partial discovery...” (1965: 40- 41).

contrary, it is responsible for and generates that harmony. The source of the game itself lies not in a preordained value consensus but in historically specific struggles to adapt to the deprivation inherent in work and in the struggles with management to define the rules (1979: 81- 82).

One cannot understand work life without reference to meeting economic necessity, the ability of social actors to physically reproduce themselves in culturally appropriate ways (see Hyman, 1975: 29- 30). Beyond this, individuals are constituted as they are drawn into relations in material social processes, and only in their joint activities are these relations and processes created, sustained, and changed. For almost all of my research participants, work itself was quite satisfying and did allow many staff members to feel empowered in their work relations, structured as they were by paternalistic subordination based upon class and gender.

As with all material social processes, the labour process as confronted by research participants at McMaster was one that generated sets of norms, commitments, and allegiances. As Burawoy suggests, we should be attentive to how daily activities in work life generate “a framework for evaluating the productive activities and the social relations that arise out of the organization of work” (1979: 51).

Contradiction in the labour process: Class, gender, and paternalism

At McMaster, support staff occupied a position in which they were subordinated in the employment relationship, making them both dependent upon, and vulnerable to, the caprice of those who occupied a dominant position in the workplace hierarchy (i.e. supervisors). While supervisors were understood as active, support staff were understood as passive. This is perhaps most clear in the following anecdote that a female participant in a research position shared,

... a lot of employers...tend to look at their work forces as a liability... the department had said to the chair, technicians are not that important, technicians come and go. But yet we had been there between 10 and 25 years, and then they said “you come and go”. You know that is really a slap in the face, and you get that from a lot of people.

Because support staff were organizationally treated as appendages of their supervisors, they became invisible from an organizational point of view, as the work of support staff was recognized as the work of the supervisor. This invisibility was evident in the complaints of participants in research and clerical positions that their skills were not acknowledged,

They’re definitely not part of the formal structure. There is no process in place to reward people for bringing something extra to the job. There is no extra recognition, or compensation, for people that go above and beyond the call... [job evaluations] seemed really not based on any sort of a real... connection to how you actually did in your job, if you did a good job of not didn’t really seem to matter... We never got credit for it, but ...

whenever you worked for someone who was teaching... you were the first line with students.

As support staff, it seems that MUSA members held what could be described as a "feminized position" (Bradley, 1989: 223; see also 22; Thompson, 1989: 180). However, while it was true that support staff derived their organizational power from associations with others, the exercise of initiative allowed by that position was often quite substantial. Even though supervisors had the ability, in organizational terms, to dominate staff, most of my research participants suggested that influence was much more significant in their actual lived experiences. In fact, precisely because staff derived their power from their informal associations, the labour process was one that generated very close and cooperative relationships between supervisors and staff. As such, the labour process, as confronted by staff, was one that was rooted in informal and particularistic relations that approximated collegiality. As Anderson suggests, community tends to imply "a deep, horizontal comradeship" which often exists regardless of "actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail" (1991: 7). Because of this sense of equality, norms of collegiality were always in tension with the university hierarchy.

The balance of norms, commitments, and allegiances that confronted managers were often quite distinct from those confronted by the staff who supported them. For managers, their organizational power placed them in a position that gave them formal recognition for the work that their support staff did, and they had the *ability* to both dominate and command. The labour process, as experienced by the varying layers of management, involved the personal exercise of organizational power to dominate waged labour. In its class moment this relationship is typified in the ability of managers to hire, fire, and discipline, and the dependence of waged workers upon the very same employment relationship that is subject to the caprice of managers (see Meiksons Wood, 2002: 3, 100, 144, 196; Marx, 1998: 57). This placed enormous power in the hands of managers vis a vis staff, as staff were dependent upon their managers to earn a living and pursue work that they valued. It is because of this unilateral power that supervisors at McMaster could treat staff in an arbitrary manner, creating recurrent concerns surrounding respect and favouritism.

However, work in the "McMaster community" did not reflect the cold, calculating market rationality that defines the class dimensions of the labour process. Employment at McMaster was understood less as a contract and more as a matter of citizenship. The cold rationality of the labour contract was articulated through an analogy of kinship at McMaster, to generate paternalistic labour relations. Lerner defines paternalism in the following terms,

[Paternalism] describes the relationship of a dominant group, considered superior, to a subordinate group, considered inferior, in which the dominance is mitigated by mutual obligations and reciprocal rights. ... it can occur in economic relations, such as the *padrone* system of southern Italy or the system used in some contemporary Japanese industries... As

applied to familial relations, it should be noted that responsibilities and obligations are not equally distributed among those to be protected: the male children's subordination... is temporary; it lasts until they themselves become heads of households (Lerner, 1986: 239- 240).

Before we move further, we should note that gender is a relational notion which is distinct from "sex", a physical description. In the archetype of patriarchy, the patriarchal family, sons are of the male sex but occupy a feminized position in respect to the fathers. Likewise, regardless of the sex of a particular staff member, roughly similar "gendered" dynamics are often produced in paternalistic work relations (see Rogers, 1999: 66). In the context of these paternalistic work relations, it is primarily the case that it was jobs at McMaster that were gendered, whether males or females were occupying these jobs. This does not mean that there were no other processes of gendering at work, but only that the paternalistic structure of work relations at McMaster overshadowed these other gendered/gendering processes. It is relevant that virtually all of the clerical workers who participated were female, particularly since clerical workers tended to work in more intimate work environments than research workers. Research workers were predominantly, but not exclusively, male, and these workers generally reported less intimate work relations. Moreover, at least one female clerical worker expressed the concern that,

...technicians... get treated more as colleagues by faculty... And also some of them have attitudes towards secretaries. Secretaries aren't going to tell them what to do, secretaries are beneath them.

However, while these gendering processes were definitely at work, the key gendering process that defined the labour process for support staff was their subordinate position in the paternalistic structures of patronage at McMaster. Thus, even though there were research participants in both research and clerical positions who suggested that there were some differences in terms of gender between these two groups, when staff talked about their labour processes the overall dynamics of gender were the same. On a related note, power dynamics between staff did not seem have a significant impact upon the unionization of MUSA. Within MUSA there were staff who have supervisory powers over other staff, but in the interviews this dynamic did not seem important. Indeed, where staff did mention issues related to staff with supervisory powers it was to express concern that the exclusion of staff with these powers from MUSA, as members of The Management Group (TMG), was part of a strategy to weaken MUSA. As two female clerical workers, in administrative and research departments, suggested,

[T]hey [management] had managed to promote some of our strongest people to TMG, so that they could no longer speak... they make all sorts of people TMG, to make sure, if there is another strike action, that there is somebody on campus who can do the job...

Particularly in the period before the unionization of MUSA, the contradiction between the logics of social engagement at McMaster was diffused because paternalistic work relations mediated the collegial and hierarchical

dimensions of work organization experienced by support staff. In this context, paternalistic sets of obligations and responsibilities allowed a sense of collegiality to exist, without undermining authority relations in the organization of McMaster. Perhaps more importantly, the intense personalization involved in paternalistic relations allowed the problems generated by the contradictions in the labour process at McMaster to be easily dismissed by reference to the quirks of individual supervisors, thereby obscuring the broader institutional processes of domination that were at work.

Even though these internal logics of collegiality (i.e. informal networks) and hierarchy (i.e. ability of supervisors to dominate) were ones that generally made similar and compatible assumptions based upon gender, race, and class¹⁹, they were unstable because these logics exist in contradiction with each other. In the broader material social process, in which these processes of race, class, and gender were only moments, we shall see that the dynamism of the labour process led to an undermining of the hegemony that supported class and gender domination, that is to say, a process of emergence occurred in the material social process (see also Burawoy, 1979: 170). In other words, the processes of everyday life at work were ones that contained dimensions of class, gender, and race, but it was only as the labour process changed that these inequalities became explicitly and systematically problematic.

The problematization of class and gender might not have been explicit in any of the struggles that MUSA and staff were engaged in, nor in any of their grievances, but these concerns emerged as these struggles progressed. In the dynamism of material social processes, such as the labour process, new elements emerge, which in turn modify and alter them. In this case, the labour process served as a point of reference to, and an influence upon, the organization of staff, which in turn altered the labour process itself.

The labour processes that research participants at McMaster were drawn into created specific sets of norms and allegiances that stabilized the contradictions in the organization of work. As these contradictions became increasingly manifest and problematic the very organization of work itself became problematized, beyond the localized issues at stake. It is only as the work environment began to change that some of the contradictions in the labour process at McMaster became manifest. As a female clerical worker and a male research worker reflected,

In an ideal world, you'd like to think that it's a collegial environment, and for the most part, it can be. Is it always in practice? No... Is it collegial amongst my peers? Yes, I think we have a very... in terms of that networking scenario, yes. We know it's a hierarchical community, and sometimes the collegiality applies, and sometimes it doesn't... The whole

¹⁹ To restate the point, the pervasive nature of these assumptions obscured them in the immediate interactional context. Staff took class and gender inequality in the daily labour process to be relatively unproblematic.

university is based on hierarchy. I mean, even whether you get your BA, MA, or PhD... it's very hierarchical...

In virtually all of the interviews, participants attributed the successful unionization of MUSA to a deterioration of collegiality. The experiences of research participants in the labour process began to change as contradictions in the labour process became manifest. As this happened, research participants began to highlight the hierarchical nature of McMaster's structure as problematic, as one female clerical worker in an academic department suggested,

it depends- it shouldn't depend on whether you're working for nice people or not, there needs to be a bottom line level of integrity that people are treated with in the workplace and we still don't have that....

The emergence of underlying contradiction was also evident in the comments of another female clerical worker in an academic department. She reported that, while she always had a sense that more than 50% of MUSA members were female, it was not until the strike that she realized that the membership of MUSA was 70-80% female. As Burawoy suggests, "it is not the rules but the activities they circumscribe that generate consent" (1979: 199). Subordination based upon gender and class in paternalistic workplace relations were taken for-granted when staff were able to both earn decent remuneration²⁰ and do work that was meaningful and challenging. It was only as these bases of integration²¹ were undermined, as staff began to lose the ability to achieve the goals that they valued in their work, that the *means* of achieving these (i.e. paternalistic labour relations) became problematized.

The Place of Race

In the interview data the themes of class and gender seemed to exert very strong influences on what happened with MUSA. However, I could find little explicit discussion that related to how interactions at McMaster were structured by race, or had a racialized dimension. The issue of race was one that was conspicuous by its seeming absence—why was it that all of my research participants were “white” when Hamilton sits in southern Ontario, one of the most ethnically diverse regions in Canada. The image I have of MUSA is far from being representative of the general population in the geographical region. There are definite racialized patterns of exclusion. At McMaster processes of selection operate in a way that is systematically biased against hiring racial minorities.

As I suggested above, there was little or no oversight of the activity of individual supervisors, who had the power to select their own staff. In effect, there was no policy outside of the caprice of the supervisor. In trying to find some sort of an employment equity policy at McMaster which might influence hiring, the closest I was able to come was the sub-department of “Human Rights and Equity

²⁰ Defined by cultural expectations.

²¹ I.e. the empowering dimensions of the labour processes of support staff at McMaster.

Services” and McMaster’s “Anti-Discrimination Policy”. Both of these are only accessible to people presently employed at McMaster: it appears that there is no recourse whatsoever for processes of exclusion. In short, the policy only applies to those who have been able to get in the door. If you can’t even get in the door, there is no recourse.

In the interviews, staff made it clear that hiring was not organized. Rather, it was more the case that when a department received funding for a position, the supervisor immediately attempted to find a person to fill that position, for work that was *already* not getting done. As such, the hiring process seemed to be less one of carefully considering applicants, and more one of trying to get someone to do the work ASAP. Because of this, recruitment seemed to rely upon informal social networks. For example, while one participant had previously worked in a job that involved counseling, she was hired as a research assistant by the husband of a friend. This staff member was told that as long as she could “push buttons and add and subtract” she could do the job. Another MUSA member related that,

I started out as a temp, I was called in by someone who knew me, they needed help in a department, it was grant time. I was there for a week and I did grants, it was shortly after that that I was hired...

As Salaman documents in a parallel case(1986: 35-54), introducing equal opportunity proved particularly difficult in the case of the London Fire Brigade. This was because the London Fire Brigade relied entirely upon what Salaman refers to as a closed system of hiring. Because hiring was based entirely upon recruitment through informal networks, it drew only from the networks of incumbent firemen: “white” working-class men. From their perspective, this was not racial exclusion as “white” working-class men who had different social networks would be just as excluded as any other person. In a recent study, researchers in the United States focused on this issue, suggesting that,

The hiring process is perhaps the single most important but least understood part of the employment relationship... the question of who gets hired where is crucial to understanding subsequent inequality in employment outcomes. Moreover, to the extent that there is illegitimate treatment of women, ethnic minorities, and other groups, one may conjecture that the point of hire is the place where this most likely would occur... One reason is that subjective assessments carry great weight in hiring. The scope for prejudice is wide and probably harder to detect than in later parts of the employment relationship.”(Petersen, Saporta, and Seidel, 2000: 1)

This study found that *all* race effects disappeared when statistically controlling for the referral method. In fact, they found that 80.3% of whites in the study got their jobs through referrals by friends, whereas only 4.9% and 2.4% of blacks and Native Americans did so (13, 20). A 2001 study by James Elliot found that, “...it is insider referrals in particular that lead disproportionately to ethnically homogeneous jobs... (417)”. Elliot goes on to suggest that “workers

who acquire their jobs through insider referrals are more likely to... enter and... sustain, ethnically homogeneous jobs (420).”

A high degree of racial exclusion at McMaster seems to be rooted in the fact that social networks are generally quite racially homogenous in a racialized society. Because hiring at McMaster in practice relied mostly upon recruitment and selection based upon referrals from informal social networks, this excluded entire groups of people. Faculty, support staff, and administrators at McMaster were quite racially homogeneous because of the fact that some form of sponsorship by an incumbent was key to being hired. The problem was not that there were overtly racist policies at McMaster, the problem was that there were *no* effective policies regulating hiring that I could find. Controls over hiring were part of the fief-like powers that supervisors were able to wield more or less unilaterally, completely arbitrarily if it should please them. As one staff member told me,

...for every faculty member...there seem to be rules that are different from one another. Don't get me wrong I think a lot of them are very nice people. But they basically, like spoiled children, have been allowed to do whatever they want to do.

I would like to highlight the fact that this is an unintended consequence of action. Whether supervisors at McMaster were racist or anti-racist, the manner in which hiring was organized²² created outcomes which impacted differentially upon different groups of people, in a manner that excluded racial minorities. Whether this pattern of hiring was intentional or not, it was (and is!) very real in its effects.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have outlined the labour process, as experienced by research participants at McMaster. As this case study will examine processes of change in relation to the labour process, I developed an outline of labour processes at McMaster before neo-liberal reforms began to effect staff in the 1990s.

One of the key components of the labour process as it confronted research participants was the notion of McMaster University as a community. This sense of community existed in two key respects- as a community of interests committed to the broad humanistic and social goals of education and autonomous inquiry, and as a site of rewarding social interaction. For research participants at McMaster, work life was generally experienced as more enabling than constraining, particularly because of the collegiality that they experienced on a day-to-day basis. In their daily labour processes, research participants reported that this sense of collegiality was sustained through autonomy in their execution

²² Even though hiring was not explicitly organized there was a distinct and consistent pattern in hiring, i.e. a clearly discernable organization of the way in which hiring operated.

of tasks at work. This sense of collegiality also had an economic dimension, as staff remuneration was in proportion to the remuneration that faculty received. As such, the daily labour processes experienced by staff at McMaster, rooted in concrete, historically specific interactions, were ones that sustained a notion of the university community that staff found both meaningful and rewarding.

This abstract sense of community was one that was realized through affectively- charged particularistic relationships at work, that cut across hierarchical lines. In the informal context of daily interaction in the labour process, these relationships had definite undertones of kinship. These particularistic relationships were ones that created a sense of reciprocity in informal accommodations, and helped to integrate staff into a high trust work environment. This was particularly important for clerical staff, whose daily interactions were such that they were tied less to specific tasks, and more to a location in the organization, in which they were responsible for managing contingency. However, because of the informal nature of the “hustling” involved in managing contingencies, issues surrounding recognition and respect created tensions within the labour process.

Problematic as well was the fact that, while the informal structure of the labour process was quite collegial, the formal structure of McMaster was rigidly hierarchical. In this organizational context, supervisors seemed to have absolute power in relation to the staff that they worked with, allowing the arbitrary exercise of power. This unilateral power was evident in cases where staff came into conflict with their supervisors. In these cases staff had no recourse but exit. However, in relation to the particular relationships in the labour process that created the “work family”, these abuses of power were generally attributed not to the structure of McMaster, but to the characteristics of individual supervisors.

While in the introductory chapter I said I would examine change in the labour process in relation to patterns of domination shaped by class, gender, and race, up to this point in the chapter, none of these have appeared explicitly. This is because the dialectical materialist analysis that I am developing suggests that the *focus of inquiry should lie in a sensitive understanding and exposition of the internal logic of the material social process itself*. In exploring the material social process, race, class, and gender are often obscured because they generally operate as *background assumptions, upon which social interaction is premised*. Even though these forms of domination structure social interaction, and these social structures find their reality only in specific interactions, these structures are not usually directly or straightforwardly apparent in the material social process itself.

In the case of the labour processes experienced by research participants, work was structured in a paternalistic manner, in which gender and class formed the bases of domination and subordination. However, this paternalistic structure of work was one that created obligations and responsibilities that mediated the contradiction between the collegial and hierarchical dimensions of the material social processes at McMaster. This contradiction was further mediated by the fact that the paternalistic structure of work at McMaster allowed for the

individualization and isolation of contradictions when they were manifested in the labour processes of staff. However, as we shall see in the next chapters, the contradictions that existed between the collegial and hierarchical dimensions of work were to become systematically manifest as processes of organizational change altered the experience in the labour process, undermining the paternalistic system of mutual obligation and responsibility.

While a discussion of paternalism in the labour processes has teased out the influence of gender and class as structuring principles in the organization of McMaster, we had yet to consider the place of race in these processes. This is because race has yet to become explicitly problematized from the perspective of the material social processes at McMaster for support staff. Racialized dynamics are invisible to internal logic of material social processes involving MUSA members and the university administration, because, by definition, those involved are not excluded. Specifically, these processes of exclusion are ones that operate through institutional processes that rely upon recruitment through (racially homogenous) informal social networks. It is likely that neither MUSA nor administrators will raise this issue, as neither group has been negatively impacted by processes of exclusion. Indeed, by definition, if an individual is capable of entering into the material social processes at McMaster, then racial exclusion is not problematic for them.

CHAPTER 4 THE COMING OF NEO-LIBERALISM

As I discuss near the end of the second chapter, the university setting is one that has changed a great deal as a result of the macro-economic agenda of neo-liberalism. In this chapter, I examine the impact of neo-liberal restructuring at McMaster in relation to the labour process as experienced by research participants. In the broadest terms, neo-liberalism's effect has been to devalue the contributions of staff and cause an intensification of work. For staff specifically, the "lean university" is one in which they are required to do more for less, as their wages have stagnated and their benefits eroded. Beyond these more directly economic changes, however, the neo-liberal reforms on campus were ones that have cut *against* the grain of the kinds of relations and norms that were generated in the labour process at McMaster. As such, there is a definite sense in which the administration began to appear antagonistic to the university community itself.

Neo-Liberalism- A Quick and Dirty Sketch

As I discussed in the second chapter²³, neo-liberalism emerged as the class compromise of the post-WWII period began to break down, in the aftermath of the stagflation of the 1970s. While there is a meaningful sense in which neo-liberal ideology has acted as an objective social force in relation to McMaster University, on its own side neo-liberalism is created and sustained only through the activity of subjectivities (i.e. individuals who make decisions). In this section I briefly review the emergence and impact of neo-liberalism up to the point at which it has confronted members of the McMaster community as an "objective social force".

Following the stagflation of the 1970s, Budros highlights the significance of the Carter Administration's moves towards deregulation in the early 1980s (2002: 311). In this context, there was a revival of the "nineteenth-century market ideology that the greatest good derives from open competition..." (311). Moody points out that ideological revival has been driven by,

...the promises and predictions of neoclassical economists and neo-liberal politicians that deeper economic integration and regulation by market forces would (eventually) bring prosperity as the world's resources were more efficiently allocated... (Moody, 1997: 41)

It is in this ideological context that politicians such as Margaret Thatcher (UK) and Ronald Reagan (USA) became heads of state, pushing an ideology that "there is no alternative". This ideological approach is associated with privatization, designed to introduce market pressures to all areas of social life, as well as the creation of an intransigent approach to trade unions. This was to build into a near frenzy of market triumphalism following the fall of the USSR, with neo-liberal ideologues such as Francis Fukuyama (1992) declaring that the end of

²³ See the "Collective Organization" section in chapter 2.

history was nigh. Without understanding this ideological environment, it is difficult to understand the neo-liberal market fundamentalism that has predominated in politics and business since, and the intransigent approach to labour that has accompanied this approach.

Particularly in the unipolar “New World Order” that emerged following the fall of the USSR, we can see the neo-liberal “Washington Consensus” achieve international hegemony through a mix of ideological assertion, professional socialization, and raw force. The material processes that have sustained neo-liberalism on an international scale are particularly stark if we look at the ways in which neo-liberal ideologies have been imposed upon the so-called “Third World”, through the activity of the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Specifically, neo-liberalism has been imposed in the form of IMF structural adjustment programs (SAPs), that have been made necessary for countries to receive loans and financing from international monetary institutions. At the national level, governments have found that SAPs dictate neo-liberal policy changes, such as privatization, deregulation, selling assets to foreign multinational corporations (MNCs), and an orientation of the economy away from subsistence and towards export industries. Thus, it is meaningful to speak of SAPs as objective, as they confront policy makers in countries which are forced to implement them. In this context, SAPs confront national leaders as part of the external conditions within which decisions are made (see Stiglitz, 2001).

However, while it is meaningful to speak of SAPs as an external, objective social force as they confront individuals and policy makers in the countries where these are imposed, SAPs are only created through the activity of individuals making decisions at a prior point in time. Within their own organization, the IMF consultants, analysts, and decision makers who formulate these SAPs all experience neo-liberal ideological requirements as an objective social force²⁴. To begin with, IMF staff are chosen in part because of their allegiance to neo-liberal ideology. Furthermore, there are on-going institutional pressures for them to “toe the party line”. If IMF staff were to buck the neo-liberal consensus, they face discipline, termination of employment/contract, or other forms of censure. Ideological compliance is then a material force as it confronts individuals in their historically specific material social relations.

While the material imposition of the neo-liberal agenda has generally been less stark as it has confronted policy makers in the so-called “First World”, the same pressures have been at work. As an ideology that has become hegemonic in policy circles, neo-liberalism has been sustained both by processes of institutional

²⁴ In the sense that these “forces” confront individuals as part of the external environment within which these individuals make decisions, without negating the fact that these forces are only real to the degree that they were created by individuals at a prior point in time. In a not totally dissimilar fashion, if I build a chair out of wood, even though I created the chair, it confronts me as an object *outside* of my subjectivity at a later point in time.

selection, and a requirement for policy makers to use neo-liberal criteria to legitimate their activities. Budros suggests that, as new managerial ideologies emerge from periods of perceived organizational crises,

[M]anagers and state officials... debate their appropriateness, making power and conflict central to the rise of conceptions. Managers whose functional backgrounds are compatible with the rising conception especially are capable of handling competition problems as they ascend to power and promote the conception. As the conception gains momentum, its strategies and structures increasingly are viewed as legitimate, pressing one firm after another to adopt them... This theory proposes that a series of interrelated factors—economic and political turbulence, CEOs with specific functional backgrounds, and mimetic pressures—stimulate the dissemination of new conceptions of control and corresponding strategies and structures (2002: 309- 310; see also 316- 317, 322, 323, 335, 336, 337, 338).

In a very real material sense, the “Washington Consensus” at the international level has created pressures and incentives which are supportive of neo-liberal reforms at the national level. The effects of these “market driven” agendas on the public sector have been roughly similar across the world. Moody documents how the public sector has come under attack, as,

...local and state treasuries were drained to give tax breaks and subsidies to corporations willing to locate in their area, a form of competition that explained much of the fiscal crisis of government across the world by the 1990s. (Moody, 1997: 31)

Turning away from that broader context, research participants repeatedly highlighted the impact of neo-liberalism upon McMaster University. One of the most consistent themes that was raised in the interviews is summed up by male and female MUSA members in clerical and research positions,

[G]overnments change, economies change, universities all of a sudden had to operate as businesses. And as businesses they had to... deal differently with their resources... There was a paradigm shift, or a shift in mindsets... I saw the morale changing, I saw the fairness going down the tubes, I saw a University that had a mandate of teaching become a corporation, with a bottom line of dollars... and it became a business, it was numbers, it was money, it wasn't people anymore (see also Slaughter, cited in Axelrod, 2002: 91- 92).

Neo-liberal changes to education have been part of a broader erosion of funding in the public sector more generally. In Canada, the federal government withdrew more than \$6 billion from health, education, and welfare programs between 1994 and 1998 (Axelrod: 93). Across the country, provincial expenditures on higher education fell 12% from 1992-93 to 1999-2000 (93). In the public sector, neo-liberal political agendas have dictated massive privatization, cuts in funding, and re-structuring, for the purpose of subjecting these services to “market discipline”.

Ironically, for McMaster the effects of the broader socio-economic forces of neo-liberalism were ushered in by the nominally social democratic New Democratic Party (NDP) under Bob Rae, in the form of the Social Contract in 1993. Rather than taking a cut in pay, the idea was that public sector workers could take "Rae Days", in which they would take days off of work in lieu of pay. At the end of the Social Contract, these workers could ostensibly return to their previous salary levels. McMaster negotiated an agreement with MUSA in which staff agreed to forgo salary increases to save jobs. As one clerical worker suggested,

[D]uring the Social Contract, we said, look, they're going to cut a whole bunch of staff... We took a vote on it, as an association, and said we would rather not have a salary increase for a couple of years than to have any of our staff laid off, so they said, okay, that's great, we'll go for that, so we didn't get a salary increase, and they laid off the staff anyway.

As the neo-liberal project intensified under Mike Harris's Conservative government, there were deeper cuts. In 1995, the Harris government cut \$400 million in transfers to universities, roughly 15% of their operating budgets (*Hamilton Spectator*, November 4, 1995). For McMaster, this meant a cut of \$17.4 million, creating a \$14 million shortfall in revenue in 1996 (*Hamilton Spectator*, February 3, 1996).

An Uneven Burden

For McMaster, neo-liberalism came to campus in two discrete "waves". First, in a climate of increasing austerity, McMaster hired a new president, Geraldine Kenney-Wallace. Kenney-Wallace was chosen because she was purported to have had strong ties to the private sector²⁵, bringing with her a "business" approach to higher education. The second wave were the funding cuts that came with neo-liberal reforms in government, typified in the Harris "Common-sense revolution"²⁶. Not only did these funding cuts impact McMaster negatively, but, as we shall see, they were implemented by a university administration that had a market orientation. The key problem that emerged was that the burden of funding cuts was not distributed evenly. Rather, because neo-liberalism promotes regimes of "market discipline", staff generally took the brunt of cuts, because their bargaining position in the "market" is weaker than either faculty or students.

However, the changes at McMaster cannot be merely reduced to neo-liberalism. While McMaster as an organization was subject to neo-liberal pressures, not all universities in Ontario responded in the same way to similar

²⁵ It was hoped that she could use these connections to secure donations, to help McMaster manage these financial difficulties.

²⁶ Referring to a platform of neo-liberal reforms that the Conservative Mike Harris government implemented in Ontario, ostensibly to reduce provincial deficits.

pressures. For example, the University of Toronto was the only university that increased its library budget in the 1990's, in no small part due to its endowments. It is interesting to note that in at least one other case, a strike following unproductive negotiations resulted from the fact that these times of crisis created an uneven burden. In March 1997 a faculty strike erupted at York University. While the dynamics of staff organization are quite distinct from those of faculty in the university labour process, the general effect was that the least powerful members of that group were the hardest hit. As neo-liberal reforms impacted York University, it was charged that the groups of faculty who had the least power (i.e. women, gay and lesbian, and racial minorities in faculty positions) were disproportionately affected, creating systematic discrimination (Briskin and Newson, 1999: 109). Briskin and Newson link this directly to neo-liberal policies, claiming that,

University administrators are being called upon to restructure universities in ways that exacerbate the injustices and inequities experienced by women and other groups that have been traditionally underrepresented and marginalized. Even well-intentioned administrators have little if any ability to work against these pressures. (1999: 114).

As Briskin and Newson tell us, the major economic issues were "long-standing anomalies in pay, retirement, and workload..." (1999: 105). Beyond these economic issues, Briskin and Newson cite other important factors, the administration's persistent disregard for consultation and organizational democracy; the flagrantly corporate style of management and commercialization of university activities (105).

There are more than echoes of MUSA's situation in this summation of the issues. In relation to staff in particular, neo-liberal changes aggravated a number of the underlying contradictions (or points of tension) in the labour process. As changes were enacted in the university, groups that were best positioned to influence the political process fared much better than groups that were marginalized. As a result of this "voice", these groups held sets of interests that were "visible" to the administration. In other words, they were constituencies that could not be ignored. Both the staff at McMaster and female faculty at York were poorly organized as an independent force in this period, had no real mechanisms of entering into decision-making processes, and had little success in making their issues matter to the administration. While both faculty and students were effected by neo-liberalism at McMaster (i.e. through increased class sizes and higher tuition), they were able to make their voices heard during processes of organizational change. This happened, at the most obvious level, through the collective bodies representing them (i.e. McMaster University Faculty Association and the McMaster Students Union).

For staff at McMaster, it is also significant that beyond this lack of organized power, material social processes obscured their contributions. While the contributions and importance of faculty and students were generally recognized as crucial to the university community, the contributions of staff were

not. In this context it was only logical for neo-liberal administrators to shift the cost of funding cuts disproportionately onto staff, as staff were most structurally vulnerable. This devaluation of staff is clear in the following complaint of a female clerical worker in an academic department,

And there's too many primadonnas out here... like one professor that I can think of, he brings in lots of research money, he's high profile... they wouldn't want to lose him, it's easier to go through five staff members than to tell that guy "hey, you must treat staff appropriately" ... the staff person is going to get sacrificed... And again, it's part of the institution, it's part of the hierarchy, who brings in the money, who has got the prestige... staff are expendable.

Emerging contradictions

The way that neo-liberalism unfolded at McMaster was premised upon the fact that while staff might have been able to receive material and social rewards from their immediate co-workers, organizationally they were seen as having marginal importance. Beyond the face-to-face interactional contexts that were rewarding to staff in individual departments, the contributions of staff were not just under-valued, they were almost completely disregarded in organizational terms, that is, in ways that were explicitly recognized and rewarded in the broader institution of McMaster. Once the university started to "cut the fat", it became clear that most of the work that staff did was perceived as "fat". The fact that staff were not valued in organizational terms was a problem that only periodically surfaced in the earlier period. When the issue did arise, its effects were generally quite localized and as such, it was often treated as another "isolated problem". It was not until the organizational crisis created by neo-liberalism that staff really had to confront the consequences of having their contributions systematically devalued, and issues centering on recognition and valuation became central. As the experience of the labour process began to change for staff, patterns of dissent emerged. This is clear in the following comment, made by a female clerical worker in an academic department,

I think the treatment of people who earn less, or have less responsibility, to the point where they are disposable, or negligible, or something you can cast aside, or move to somewhere else, without the slightest consideration, I think is very disturbing... If we weren't taking home paychecks, does that then smack of slavery?

As the position of staff became more tenuous, and as the effects of cuts started to play out in a way that disproportionately affected staff, the underlying contradictions in the labour process started to become manifest. The overall effect of these changes seems to have made staff feel quite excluded from the university community. As one female research worker put it, "...staff is still unrecognized as a vital part of the university. There is the faculty, there are the students... and staff is a necessary evil."

Staff were not merely hurt by neo-liberalism— it goes deeper than that. Tied up in the labour processes of support staff at McMaster were an often complex mix of normative ideas of what a “University” was and should have been. Moreover, this commitment was tied into interpersonal relations and networks that cut across hierarchical levels, and drew staff into highly personalized relationships in social networks that often had familial overtones. At the heart of neo-liberalism, as I suggested, is a fervent market-fundamentalism, but the values associated with market discipline were antagonistic to the values which were woven into the fabric of McMaster University. As such, as neo-liberal reforms were implemented at McMaster, contradictions began to emerge. Before neo-liberalism, staff were integrated into the university community in the context of paternalistic systems of patronage. As neo-liberal reforms impacted the labour process at McMaster, this system of patronage, that mediated the hierarchical and collegial dimensions of the labour process through a system of mutual obligations, began to break down. The sense of outrage that accompanied these changes is almost tangible in the response of one female clerical worker who participated in this research,

There were times that we were told, hey, you have to tighten your belts a bit, or that it's going to be tough ... and we were told that our time would come and eventually, we would be dealt with, and we would get some sort of recompense for this... you can't say that we were all sitting around there being totally naïve... Although it seems like we just sort of sat there, like trusting individuals for all this time, it didn't eventually come out that way, because every time they would say tighten your belts, we've got another thing coming down the pipe that's going to make it hard, and we can't give you a raise, blah blah blah, you would see somebody in the senior administration getting a nice fat paycheck, you would see another vice-president position created out of thin air. And it starts to gall you after awhile.

Neo-liberalism speaks the language of profit maximization, and in this context, labour is treated as a cost. As neo-liberal changes impacted the university, staff began to feel that McMaster became “inhuman”. Whereas before there was some sense of reciprocity, under neo-liberalism staff were treated not as citizens of a community (see Sears, 2003) but as the abstract owners of a commodity, labour, which was being bought by the university. Built into a neo-liberal view of management is the idea that because labour is a commodity, it is the property of managers to do with as they please. Of course, labour is not a commodity that we can separate from the individual providing it. In the neo-liberal view, the manager has purchased that person for a set period of time— i.e. when they are at work, this “commodity” can be treated like any other

commodity²⁷. This type of cold rationalism was not just one that sat poorly beside academic traditions, the very close relationships that structured the labour process, and the citizenship which came with the university community. Rather, such a market approach was one that was irreconcilable and antagonistic to these conceptions of work, i.e these approaches were contradictory. The effect of neo-liberalism was to divide the community and cut across the grain of the sets of relationships and norms that held the university together. As such, these changes were experienced as inhuman and dehumanizing. Two clerical workers in academic departments remarked that,

... the senior management believes that they should be able to give an order and have it followed... I've heard it referred to by some of the women in (department) as "I'm treated like a piece of furniture or a computer, they can just move from one desk to another" ...so they are not treated as people ... they don't feel they're treated as people... the idea of being "human capital", the idea of being a resource that they can shunt around wherever they like, the idea that anything I might say has no value, simply because I was lower on the totem pole than they were.

Attrition and Lay-offs

As neo-liberalism re-structured the university, staff began to feel that they were being treated as costs. Since neo-liberal ideology is oriented to profit maximization, neo-liberal reforms at McMaster sought to "cut costs". In this context, virtually all of the research participants discussed the effect of attrition. Since the Social Contract, participants across campus have noted that the university has simply allowed staff to disappear. As a female clerical worker in a library and a male research worker recalled,

it's been creeping along...we've been thinking... things will get better, they're going to have to hire soon. No, they haven't done any hiring at all. Just dropped off to somebody else to do... someone retires, and they don't replace the person, the work is distributed, but the supervisor doesn't really make it clear how it is going to get done, I just want it done.

Over the past 15 years the impact of attrition has been dramatic, with almost every participant outlining how levels of staffing have declined. In a rather typical example, one staff member worked in an office that originally employed nine staff. This office has now shrunk to a single staff member.

However, this was not the sole method that neo-liberal university administrations used to lessen "labour costs". Administrators and supervisors at McMaster also fired a number of staff in this period, with an officer of MUSA suggesting that by 1997, two-thirds of inquiries about grievances were related to people being laid off. The impact on staff was sufficiently harsh that one female

²⁷ Hence the earlier suggestion that the situation "smacks of slavery", the idea of purchasing, or perhaps renting, another human being sits quite poorly with most notions of human dignity.

clerical worker in a research department referred to this period as the “Night of Long Knives”,

...if somebody went for lunch, they would lock the office door, they'd come back, they couldn't get in, they were escorted off campus with all their stuff still in the office. They will be sitting at their desk working, security guys would come in, two of them, and march them off campus. They would be working and security guys would come and pop them in a security car and take them to Hurst Place, at the so-called employee wellness thing... which I think has changed now, in those days they had a psychotherapist down there, who was supposed to be telling them that this person was actually crazy, and they should get rid them... there could be a person in office next door, and Monday morning you come in, and they're not there, nobody knows what's happened.

Work intensification

As I suggest in the second chapter, the changes that were introduced under neo-liberalism have served to intensify the work of support staff as they have been forced to “pick up the slack”. While the university was purging staff, enrollments have progressively grown, as has the university. Because of this, staff have to do more work than ever before. Not only have staff had their work lives disrupted by more direct attacks on their place in the university community, these changes have also made it very difficult for staff to cope. As a result, a number of participants were upset that their work has suffered, staff working in libraries and research remarked,

... the situation where you constantly... have backlogs, and ... new things are being added on, and changed, and sometimes you are not aware of it... It has gotten to the point it's a choice of what gets done, it's not a choice of options to get done... so there are things that don't get done as much. For instance... there might be maintenance on things, so unless it's absolutely necessary to do, I won't do. It always seems to be the immediate thing gets dealt with. So sometimes it means you don't have opportunities to do ... like quite often I would like to try to go to the library at least once a week to look at some of the new technical journals...

For research staff, the intensification work meant that tasks that were not immediately pressing simply did not get done. Ironically, for at least some staff on the research side, it has meant they have had dramatically *less* time to do work with industry. This has also meant that long-term considerations at McMaster have suffered because technicians were starting to find that there was no longer time for things like equipment maintenance or keeping track of technological change. While the notion of a university community, arising from the labour process, was a strong conservative force in the period before neo-liberalism, we can begin to see objective economic forces have their effect on the subjective experiences that people had at work. Through changes in the labour process, we

start to see support staff beginning to perceive the McMaster administration as irresponsible.

For clerical workers, a similar speed-up meant that work simply could not get done. Here we also see a prioritization of the work which was pressing and had deadlines (i.e. grant applications). As with research staff, we can see the tasks relating to long-term maintenance fall by the wayside. As one female clerical worker in an academic department informed me,

...when I worked for (supervisor), it started out in the summer, it was calm enough then that you get all the committees organized, and all the binders for those things organized, you could clean up the files... get the things all in order... [for] next year when the blitz happened... Then it got so that those summers weren't so quiet, so you were really scrambling to get things ready, forget about fixing up the files, you just kept cramming more stuff in, there was no more time to do all of that. And it just got worse and worse and worse.

Neo-liberal changes have made the less pressing, more infrastructural elements of the organization (i.e. organization of the filing system, equipment maintenance, etc) difficult to do, if they are done at all. However, the increases in workload often disrupted another important element of the labour process before neo-liberalism: contact with students. As a female clerical worker in an academic department noted,

...everything is streamlined now, and we're supposed to be leaner and meaner... well, sometimes I don't see the files that come through, and I like to see the student files, because there is a personal touch that gets lost.

It was not simply the case that working at McMaster became less pleasant when relations with students become de-personalized in this manner. Rather, this undermined one of the key elements of the university community which research participants found gratifying. For many staff, their ability to interact with and mentor students, a relationship that was often expressed in a manner that had strong parental overtones, was an important part of their lives. De-personalizing these relations and "processing" more students through a more bureaucratic process served not only to reduce costs, it cut against the grain of the very conceptions that staff held of what the university community was, and why it was worthwhile for them.

Not only was a growing workload being handled by a shrinking staff within individual units, as female clerical and library staff noted in the interviews, there was also a re-distribution of work,

... there are probably more tasks, and more responsibilities, more work was downloaded... partly as a result of decentralization in the University... and partly as a result of computerization... And I can still see that more work is going to come down to the department level... I think central areas have decided that they're not doing certain aspects of what they used to do, and now it's downloaded to departments. And in some cases, it has been a good change. But they also need to think, if

they're doing that change, where's the slack? Somebody has to do the rest of the work.

It is perhaps worth highlighting here that staff did not blindly oppose change as such. Rather, staff opposed the types of changes that cut against the grain of the norms and relations established in the labour process. Staff may not have opposed change, but they had an expectation that change would be carried out in a manner that was perceived to be a net benefit to the university community.

Technological Change

It is difficult to look at overall changes in the workload that McMaster's support staff faced without a consideration of technological change, specifically, computerization. As discussed above, this has meant that staff have seen work downloaded onto the departments from more central administrative units. However, staff have also had to do a great deal of work to integrate the new technology, which has not always been helpful. In fact, in implementation, new technologies often had unintended effects that created more work. In the context of a general intensification of work, the rapidity of new information technologies like email has meant that timelines have become much shorter for individual clerical workers. These problems were expressed in more immediate terms by clerical workers in academic departments and libraries that,

I think that is a result of computerization...I'm no expert... but I just know that people expect... you to be done faster. They expect secretaries to be able to multitask, ten different things, and it's all because of computerization ...you remember when they said that computers are going to come in and we would have the paperless society, that it would be much easier... everything they said about that is just the opposite... it takes that much more time. And so for every job that we get, it's just impacting higher and higher... it's increasing the workload, to the point where we are all staggering under it.

It seems, however, that the problems that research participants identified, in relation to processes of technological change, were more related to *implementation*, rather than the intrinsic effects of new technology. For example, in the library system, remote access²⁸ was intended to reduce the amount of time that reference staff spent with students. However, remote access is useful primarily for the routine users of the library system, who place relatively little demand on the time of library staff, particularly reference staff. As a result, reference staff found that the time spent responding to student questions did not decrease. The managers who implemented the technology expected, and planned, that reference staff would spend less time working with students, simply because the number of students coming into the library was expected to decrease overall. However, this was done without considering that remote access would not reduce

²⁸ I.e. internet access to the library catalogue

the number of students seeking help from reference staff, as remote access was only helpful to routine users.

In looking at the issue of technological change, it has been suggested that the implementation of information technologies has the strongest negative effects (i.e. subjectively experienced stress and dissatisfaction) on those staff who have the least input and power in decision-making processes (Korunka, Zauchner, and Weiss, 1997: 407, 418; Zauchner, Korunka, Weiss, Kaka-Lutzow, 2000: 129). Those with power will make decisions that reflect their priorities and concerns, and those without that power are not likely to see their concerns, issues, or priorities reflected in new arrangements.

From this point of view, as technological change altered the labour process, in the sense of how people experienced their work lives, struggles over the direction and implementation of new technologies were more significant than the actual effects of new technologies, considered in their intrinsic aspect. It seems to be the case that an increasing workload and the marginalization of staff in decision-making have caused major changes in the labour process, and that the effects of these problems were expressed in the course of technological change. It is my contention that without computerization, objective changes in the volume of work and disempowerment in the labour process would still have been problematic for staff at McMaster.

End of Faculty/ Staff Linking

Not surprisingly, neo-liberal restructuring at McMaster ended the practice of linking staff and faculty remuneration. This is opposed to the previous period, when staff were eligible for the same benefits as faculty and received raises that were commensurate to wage increases received by faculty. The sense of indignation that this generated amongst staff is evident in the following comments, made by clerical and research staff,

that was the beginning of the end... to the fairness between faculty and the staff. Now individual faculty members were still great, but the administration drew the line- us and them... more and more of the staff saw the departure from how the faculty were being treated versus how they were being treated. I think that's what really was the problem... People take a lot of mistreatment, and they will take underpayment, but make us equal, don't treat us as if we don't matter, as if we were something you pick off your shoe when you walk down the street.

Much like the other ways in which staff began to feel that neo-liberal administrations de-valued and excluded them from the university community, the end of the linking of staff and faculty finances was experienced as an attack. The end of this linking aggravated issues that were latent in the earlier period, meaning that concerns that centered around recognition and respect became more salient. One participant described a year when the average MUSA member, earning a wage that was around \$25 000, was offered nothing while McMaster offered an 8% increase to help lower end faculty "catch up to the

university community". These lower end faculty made roughly \$40 000, which she described as a "slap in the face"— were staff not part of the university community? Did their work not matter? As staff began to feel besieged and excluded, the structures of patronage that had mediated the hierarchical and collegial dimensions of the labour process began to break down. Research staff commented on this break down of collegiality,

you asked if there was collegiality, if there is collegiality fair and reasonable happens, for the most part... it wasn't happening. I think respect sometimes was also an issue as well, for the group... a lot of... nonunion employers tend to work at their work forces as a liability... the situation in the university deteriorated... it was no longer the place it had been, there was no such thing as collegiality.

Much like the manner in which the neo-liberal project altered the experience of work that research participants reported, problems of stagnating and declining remuneration developed gradually. At the beginning of the Social Contract, staff agreed to freeze their wages to prevent lay-offs, which occurred anyway, while faculty were not forced into a similar freeze. Later the university withdrew semi-private hospital coverage for staff, followed by the administration unilaterally removing drugs that were covered from the benefit plan. Another incident that became a focus of anger for a number of staff came when the administration created a requirement that the dependents of faculty attending McMaster needed a lower GPA to receive a university bursary than the dependents of staff²⁹.

These issues were compounded by the fact that McMaster could not recruit new staff because wages were so far behind starting wages in the Hamilton labour market. This was caused by the fact that staff salaries had been frozen for so long. To recruit new staff, McMaster began to hire new people at wages that were higher than the wages of staff who, in some cases, had given 20-30 years of service. Two long-term female staff in clerical positions, and one male research worker remarked that,

...it is very disappointing to see new people hired in and you have to train them... and they're two levels or three levels above you... People in some departments were working for a level 5 job to find a new hire, doing the same work, being given a level 7. And they're doing the same work, day in and day out... If you're doing a job, you're doing a job, and it is worth it.

While I have been emphasizing the changes in terms of how they effected the labour process and experience of work for support staff, they also had very real effects on the lives of staff beyond the workplace. A number of support staff at McMaster, even to this day, earn the same wage that they did in 1985. This situation is made worse by the fact that there were a number of staff who were the

²⁹ GPA- Grade Point Average. The grading system that is used at McMaster University to evaluate students.

sole income-earners for their households. It is in this context that it was reported to me that some staff had to resort to alternate employment. One clerical worker reported that,

I was working three jobs to try and help my son get through university... my parents were helping, (son) was working. I was working fulltime for (supervisor), I was teaching (at another post-secondary institution), and I was running a... business from my home— I was just exhausted...

The effects, however, were far from being simply economic, even though they were rooted in material social relations. Research participants in clerical positions related that,

... everybody's getting sick, and everybody is extremely stressed, and to be perfectly blunt, most of our staff are on antidepressants. Because we came to work in a culture where you did everything you could do, and you put in your best day. But when you feel like you're only running up against a wall and never having an opportunity to actually finish the job, or to do anything because you're so busy, and so rushed, that you're doing a half-assed job of everything... it really gets to your psyche after awhile. I'd say the majority of our staff are on antidepressants, because it has affected them that much... That's a sad, sad statement... that we're all taking drugs, just to keep ourselves going... And most are suffering some kind of physical stress as well, migraine headaches. You're watching people, including myself, get sick... and then they feel guilty, because they know how much work in here, so they don't stay home... so it just makes the situation worse.

"Give and take"

As I outlined earlier, the changes that have impacted on support staff so heavily have been caused primarily by the imposition of a neo-liberal agenda at the provincial level. Nonetheless, these broader changes were enacted in an extremely uneven manner, which contributed to emerging notions that the administration was an irresponsible one, that was threatening the long-term viability of the university community. In 2001, for example, McMaster apparently ranked fifth among 780 provincial agencies for the number of employees paid over \$100 000 (*Hamilton Spectator*, April 6: A1). Senior administrators at McMaster increased their wages rise faster than the cabinet of the provincial government, and taking inflation into account, it would have taken the average administrator 11 years to double their salary, when it would have taken staff 100 years to do so (*Hamilton Spectator*, April 21 2001: D15). Kenney- Wallace, the President who is credited with bringing a market approach to McMaster, apparently used university funds to pay for a limousine and chauffeur, 365 days a year, 24 hours a day. By the time of the strike, Peter George, the President of McMaster, made more money than the Prime Minister of Canada, leading to concerns that "University presidents now appear... to behave and talk like CEOs" (*Hamilton Spectator*, April 20 2001: A10). Similarly, Harvey Weingarten,

Provost and the Vice-President of Academics, saw his salary increase from \$118 000 in 1996 to \$170 000 in 2000 (*Hamilton Spectator*, March 2 2001: A8).

Beyond this seeming opportunism, research participants raised the issue that with neo-liberalism there was an increase in senior administrative positions. These new positions were used by administrators to bring in more of “their” people, building a corporate culture in the higher levels of the administration. Prior to this change it seems staff generally felt like there was a “give and take” relationship between themselves and the rest of the McMaster community. Now it seemed like neo-liberal ideologies had precipitated an important change to this arrangement: staff would give, and the university administration would take. Work intensification relied upon the fact that staff were committed to their work and thus, they would “go the extra mile”. In effect, the commitment of staff to the university community was used to suppress their wages and intensify their work. This was able to happen because the administration knew that in the past staff had continually “picked up the slack”. As a participant who worked in research confided,

They have no idea... about the camaraderie and the going the extra yard... and the thing is that if the staff go the extra yard, the university administration should too. There is give and take. But you know what, we’ve been going the extra yard too damn long and not getting anything for it... And the sooner that Mac realizes that, the sooner that Mac will be a first-rate university.

The changes at McMaster undercut many of the bases of commitment that were important to staff— collegiality, inclusion, and a commitment to the ideals of liberal education. This led one professor to lament,

...as conditions in the workplace deteriorated... the noble ideals no longer seemed to apply. Working for the university became little different from working for a... corporation... Peter George recently spoke of McMaster ‘offering a good product compared to its competitor’ (*Hamilton Spectator*, April 20 2001: A10).

In this context, it should be of no surprise that staff generally chose to use the word “betrayal” to describe their feelings about changes at McMaster. With the coming of neo-liberalism, administrators began treating the university as a business. In doing so, administrators turned the university community against the administration and violated the basic expectations that staff had of what it meant to work at McMaster. These neo-liberal changes were ones that undermined the paternalistic system of mutual obligations and responsibilities that had mediated the hierarchical and collegial dimensions of the labour process at McMaster in the period before neo-liberalism.

Conclusion

In the first three chapters I have dealt with neo-liberalism as an objective social force, as it has confronted individuals at McMaster University. At the beginning of this chapter I have considered neo-liberalism from its own side, as

constructed through the historically specific activities of individuals in processes of social interaction. In particular, it is crucial to understand neo-liberalism in the context of broader national and international political and economic processes and struggles. In the province of Ontario these broader social processes were introduced by the nominally social-democratic NDP, under the leadership of Bob Rae. Neo-liberalism in the public sector in Ontario was to intensify under Mike Harris' Conservative regime.

As funding cuts impacted McMaster economically, a new President was hired, bringing a "business approach" to the academic setting. Because the marginalization of staff was so systematic in organizational terms, it seemed only natural that staff would bear the brunt of economic crises at McMaster. While a faculty strike at York University was dealing with different groups of workers, it reflected an underlying commonality in that the most marginalized groups, such as female faculty, were the one that were most adversely effected by neo-liberal reforms. As in the case of McMaster, the uneven impact of neo-liberal reforms upon the groups that had the least organizational power highlighted patterns of domination and hierarchy in the organization of the labour process.

As market mechanisms were imposed on campus, the paternalistic system of obligation that had mediated the contradictions in the labour processes of staff began to break down. As this happened, the manner in which staff *experienced* the labour process changed, as contradictions became problematic at McMaster, and organizational changes cut across the grain of informal relations that had integrated staff in the previous period. In practical terms, staffing levels fell both through attrition and processes of "downsizing", causing an intensification of work. This intensification was one that became so extreme that research participants reported that their ability to accomplish valued organizational tasks was impaired. Furthermore, this intensification of work was one that harmed the health and welfare of staff, as they struggled to keep the university functioning. While processes of technological change occurred concurrently with changes in the labour process, these changes seemed to accompany, rather than create, changes in the *experience* of work for research participants.

As neo-liberal re-structuring proceeded, beyond the more immediate material changes in the daily interactional processes experienced by research participants, staff were also effected in their lives beyond McMaster. Stagnating wages and benefits made economic life more insecure for a number of staff at McMaster, particularly those who were the sole wage-earners in their households. These changes became contradictions in the labour process not simply because staff were adversely effected, but also because market mechanisms began to undermine the bases of social integration for staff in the labour process. These specific organizational changes were ones that led to more general discontent, as underlying contradictions became problematic, such as the marginalization and de-valuation of staff and the breakdown of informal processes that had mediated the hierarchical dimensions of the labour process.

In the next chapter, the focus shall move from the impact of neo-liberal reforms upon the labour processes of staff at McMaster, to the response of staff to these changes.

CHAPTER 5 OF SOCKS AND BARBEQUES

This chapter looks at the responses of staff to the effects of neo-liberalism on the labour process at McMaster. In the mid-1990s, an unsuccessful organizing drive was initiated by the Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU). I will look at the reasons for the failure of the OPSEU campaign, and MUSA's subsequent successful certification as a trade union in 1999. Looking at these two organizing drives, it seems that the way in which the labour process structured the loyalties of staff created a situation in which an independent union of McMaster staff was more palatable than an external union like OPSEU. Finally, I look at the escalation of conflict at McMaster from the time that MUSA certified as a trade union until the strike. In this period, issues of contention centered around the way the changes caused by neo-liberalism aggravated contradictions in the labour process, that were generally latent in the period before the "lean university".

Why OPSEU Failed

Research participants suggested that staff have attempted to organize into a union a number of times before the certification of MUSA. However, an organizing attempt by OPSEU in the mid-1990s was the only union drive that I was able to find information on.

As two female clerical workers who were active this organizing drive related,

I was a major part of the initial drive to bring OPSEU in. And not because I hated working here, I love my job. But the whole atmosphere of the university had become very bad, and because staff basically weren't being recognized for anything...they wanted to recruit new faculty, but if the staff aren't working, faculty aren't...

McMaster staff first started meeting with OPSEU in 1993, during the introduction of the Social Contract. In December 1994, MUSA voted to invite OPSEU to organize staff on campus, forming a 50 person organizing team by February 1995 (Mentek, 1995: B3). However, on August 1, 1996, staff voted against joining OPSEU (*Hamilton Spectator*, August 10: C3). Why was it that OPSEU failed, especially in light of the fact that staff voted to organize into a trade union only a couple of years later?

At least part of the reason for the failure of the OPSEU drive was isolation within the McMaster community. While staff were tied into networks, these networks were ones that were in pockets. Most staff did not really interact with anybody outside of their more immediate networks. Some of the networks were closely tied into what was happening with OPSEU; for example, some faculties had 85-90% of staff sign up, while other areas were "abysmal". Apparently, organizers did not even know how many staff there were, much less where they

worked. As a result, OPSEU was not able to reach a number of members. As one clerical worker who was active in the organizing drive recalled,

...there are 500 members in health sciences, people that we tried during the OPSEU drive to reach, and we couldn't reach them because no one would tell us where they were. The administration was not going to tell us. We didn't know where they were or how to reach them... during the strike we find out that there's people in these nooks and crannies...

Even in cases where staff were tied into the same networks, it seemed that many of these networks were used to conduct business, but not to discuss the union. As staff talked about this period, it seems that there was quite a bit of intimidation. In libraries, academic departments, and research labs, staff commented that,

... at the beginning, you had to be careful about who you talked to, if you were really pro-union... But you found out quietly who was pro-union, and then you could talk union with them... it was really kept underground... there are some who feel that they must be quietly supportive, because... their office environments or lab environments are such that their supervisors don't appreciate the nature of a union on campus, and they feel the place would run much better without one, so they just don't talk about it... people would be so scared to talk to me that they would whisper to me in the hallways and they didn't really want to be seen with me...

Given the lay-offs and the arbitrary power that supervisors at McMaster wielded, the degree to which staff were intimidated made organizing much harder. The effect of this intimidation was to compound the isolation of different networks, because people were too afraid to talk about what was happening, even with people who were in the same networks as them.

In explaining why the OPSEU union drive failed, it was also suggested that staff "were not ready". There are a number of ways of thinking about this. One of the staff members who was most involved reflected that,

I think it definitely got them thinking and I think that it was something that just had to take time... they have to get there slowly... it's so drummed into you, all your life, to be nice, to be polite, especially if you're women... it's a huge leap to question authority, and to question authority that you've been in total awe of ... I think it's just a slow educational process and on top of that, I think the administration's gotten worse...

A staff member who did not support the OPSEU drive, on the other hand, suggested that, at this point, people were willing to "give the administration another chance". This would have been an easier position to hold at that time, as the President generally credited with ushering in neo-liberal changes on campus, Geraldine Kenney- Wallace, was replaced by a new President, Peter George. Unlike Kenney-Wallace, who was often seen as an "outsider" to the McMaster community, Peter George had been a professor in the Department of Economics at McMaster, and had served as the Dean of Social Sciences at McMaster from

1980- 1989. In his capacities both as an academic and as an administrator at McMaster, it was only natural that a number of members of the university community associated Peter George with the "good old days".

The stigmatization of Kenney- Wallace as an "outsider" brings in another major factor that caused the failure of the OPSEU drive. In the same way that Kenney- Wallace could be portrayed as an outsider, who was threatening the structures of patronage and paternalism that had mediated the contradictions in the labour process at McMaster in the past, it was easy for the administration to portray OPSEU as "outsiders". McMaster, like many universities, is almost a small city unto itself, and it forms a somewhat insular community. The university community was one that was characterized not only by a sense of common identity, but it was knit together by a network of informal networks marked by affectively-charged, particularistic bonds and personally negotiated agreements. As such, particularly for staff who did not know much about unions, it was easy to fear OPSEU coming in with an insensitivity to these processes and relationships. The fear was that OPSEU could upset the delicate, quasi-familial sets of bonds that had integrated people into the university community. Particularly harmful were basic misunderstandings of how trade unions operate. While it is an urban myth of sorts, many staff were afraid that OPSEU could force them out on strike. Of course, OPSEU could not force their members out on strike even if they wanted to. As we shall see in the next section, by the time MUSA certified as a trade union the situation was quite different.

MUSA Gets In

While OPSEU was viewed, at least by some, as an "outsider" to the university community, MUSA did seem to more closely fit with the structure of norms, commitments, and allegiances generated in the paternalistic labour processes at McMaster. As one female participant who was active in the attempts to organize staff in both the OPSEU and MUSA campaigns related,

when we decided to organize ourselves, I think that people were more comfortable with that because they were comfortable with the association, they knew the faces, they knew the names, they knew nobody new was coming in... so I think they were really comfortable, that is why we organized. Just from MUSA being 'in house'.

As an independent organization composed of peers, there was a very real sense that MUSA was an organic part of the McMaster community. As such, it was an organization that seemed to be more closely attuned to the McMaster context, and the web of informal relationships which tied work life together for staff. Moreover, MUSA was seen as giving staff an avenue for addressing the issues which were pressing to them, from respect and recognition to more directly economic demands, such as wages and benefits. These issues were to become more pressing as the actions of Peter George's administration made it clear that neo-liberal disruptions to the labour process were not the product of a single

administration. This sentiment was captured by a staff member who wrote to the local newspaper that,

At first I voted against unionization, but I voted in favor when it became obvious that the university administration had no intention of changing its policy of making staff pay for all its financial restraint." (*Hamilton Spectator*, March 21 2001: A12)

However, even though OPSEU's status as an outsider was perhaps crucial to the failure of its organizing drive, it is not accurate to suggest that OPSEU failed and MUSA succeeded simply because MUSA was an independent and OPSEU was perceived as being a "big union". The certification of MUSA as a trade union, and the struggles to get a first collective agreement, did not unfold simply on the basis of a parochial division of "insider" and "outsider". Rather, it unfolded according to a logic which was closely tied to the experiences and frame of reference generated in the labour processes of staff at McMaster. What makes this clear is the convoluted and "backwards" route MUSA took to certifying as a trade union, what we might call 'defensive certification'.

MUSA was founded in 1973, after a document which had been left behind in a photocopier revealed that Chedoke-McMaster Medical Centre staff were paid much more than university staff, who did similar work. In the following summer, while Personnel Services did not recognize them, MUSA petitioned the President of McMaster, leading to a 14% wage increase. In this period, MUSA was able to be effective through informal processes, relying upon "hustling" through networks. This drew upon the ability of staff to use their relationships to solve their problems, and it fit with the general structure of activity in the labour process. In effect, MUSA relied upon, and reinforced, the structure of patronage at McMaster. In this context, MUSA as an association was able to be somewhat effective. MUSA's ability to represent staff was strengthened in 1993, when the McMaster administration recognized MUSA as a bargaining agent, for the purpose of negotiating the terms of the Social Contract on behalf of staff (Mentek, 1998: A6).

However, in the period before organizing as a trade union, MUSA was still a voluntary association. As a voluntary association MUSA found that members would cycle in and out in a turnstile pattern. If members needed help or wanted to vote on a contract, they would join and quit shortly afterwards. Beyond this, the majority of staff who benefited from MUSA contracts were "free-riders", i.e. they would get the benefits that MUSA negotiated without supporting MUSA. To solve the issues relating to "free-riders", and to become financially stable enough to support their operations, MUSA asked for a dues check-off. A dues check-off means an automatic dues deduction from the university payroll, like the Faculty Association had for faculty members. It was originally an item which was not prioritized by MUSA's bargaining team, but McMaster's negotiating team agreed to it nonetheless, in 1996. This dues check-off was implemented with a pseudo-Rand formula arrangement (Rand, 1966: 165). In this arrangement, staff who did not want to belong to MUSA, or pay dues to support MUSA, could re-

direct the money deducted from their wages to a charity. When this dues deduction was introduced, a staff member at McMaster tried to mount a legal challenge. How could MUSA make such an arrangement if they were not a legal trade union?

As hearings began, the issue of the member who brought the case before the Ontario Labour Relations Board (ORLB) was rapidly pushed aside. As former officers of MUSA recalled,

[B]asically what was happening in the proceedings that I could see... was the university and lawyers were attempting to portray that MUSA as just a little association that never really did anything much, and shouldn't be treated like a union, and isn't a union, and they did their level best to prove we weren't... It was basically an attempt at a take-back of what we had achieved at that point, from the Social Contract... MUSA applied for intervener status to the proceedings, basically the issue of [staff member who made the challenge] got pushed aside, because the issue became, are we or aren't we [a trade union], because all of a sudden the course changed...

As the legal case unfolded, the administration appears to have seen an opportunity to get rid of MUSA. However, it seems that this was generally seen as an attempt, by an administration that the staff were beginning to regard as problematic, to attack an element of their community. This was not just any group in the community, MUSA was one group that many staff saw as "theirs". The final decision of the ORLB was to resolve the ambiguous legal position of MUSA as a bargaining agent with a certification vote. In polls held on March 10 and 11, 1999, a slim majority of McMaster support staff voted to certify as a trade union (McNeil, 1999: A4). As such, the certification and organization of MUSA as a union was less a result of organizing than it was a defensive action. However, while many staff saw the certification of MUSA as a trade union as a defensive response, this created the conditions for a qualitatively new set of relations, that of an independent organization of staff, that actually seemed to have a degree of efficacy and the ability to act autonomously within the McMaster community.

I Joined Because I Was Anti-Union...

One of the remarkable findings in my interviews was the extraordinarily high percentage of research participants who reported that it was only as their experiences changed in the course of the labour process that they became pro-MUSA. In fact, before this period, many of the staff who now support MUSA were anti-union. Though these changes in perspective were generally linked to changes that happened as neo-liberalism influenced the university, this was not exclusively the case. For at least a couple of the research participants, it was specific cases of harassment by supervisors that led to their changing perspectives. In either case, however, it was the concrete processes of working and interacting at work that created a distinct "experience", which in turn conditioned how staff perceived and interacted with their environments. The

influence of material social processes at McMaster on MUSA is evident in the following recollections, that participants in research and clerical positions shared,

I... joined MUSA to stop them from becoming a certified bargaining group (laugh)... your perspective changes with experience... many of my colleagues, and even my supervisor ... they voted, and then they quickly got out of MUSA, they denounced their memberships. So I was part of that group, I never wanted to be in a union... I guess I didn't realize the plight of other people... Actually, my relationship probably changed when I became more aware of the attitude of the University towards the units... If that is the way they treat their staff, there is something wrong, there is something seriously wrong. That is really when I became more of a union activist... .. You try to make a logical argument with them ...and they just stonewall... slowly over time, as I worked here, I began to have my own personal, very different kind of definition of what labour and unions did...and do.

While contradictions in the labour process were always problematic for isolated staff members, when neo-liberalism came to the campus it was a situation where push came to shove and the contradictions in the labour process became problematized on a broader basis. As structures of patronage and paternalistic obligation broke down at McMaster, it was clear that relying upon the good graces of the administration was no longer a feasible option. Whereas faculty and students had a basis of independent power in their organizations, staff had relied upon informal processes of negotiation that completely fell apart if the administration did not take them seriously. In the period before certification, for example, an officer of MUSA recalled that,

when we dealt with Personnel, we dealt with people who could make no decisions. They were just the people sent to talk with us, and go through the motions of listening to us, accept the briefs, do this, do that... and they would say, there's nothing that I can do... we want somebody sitting across from us who can make a decision...

The situation was worse when one considers problems related to grievances. Because MUSA did not have any legal or organizational status in representing staff, there was literally little to nothing that could be done by MUSA on behalf of its members. As one rank and file member told me, MUSA was sympathetic, but at the end of the day, there was nothing it could do. It seems that the closest thing to a grievance procedure would have been an appeal to HR. One female clerical worker in an academic department who tried to use the "grievance procedure" described it in the following manner,

basically the grievance procedure was a kangaroo court, and it actually, in a lot of cases, made things worse for the employee because the supervisor would dig in their heels and they would come up with all sorts of crap about you, just unbelievable, stuff that you didn't even hear, and it just became a persecution process.

It seems that in a number of cases, Human Resources itself was the source of the problem, yet it was supposed to be the arbiter in these grievances. As MUSA tried to enter into these processes in a spirit of collegiality and trust, they did not get satisfaction. Particularly the staff who had some experience with the "grievance procedure" were convinced that MUSA needed to organize. It was clear to these staff that they could not rely just on the good graces of management. What they needed was an independent organization of peers that had a power base that could be used to compel the administration to include the concerns of staff in university decisions. I would submit that many staff saw MUSA holding a role not unlike the other organized groups on campus, like the Students' Union and Faculty Association, as well as the other unions on campus.

On "Gossip" And Informal Social Networks

It seems quite clear that informal social networks were key in this period. In trying to understand the manner in which the struggle unfolded, we have to consider how staff were tied into these networks. The pattern of communication through these informal networks, which is too easily dismissed as "gossip", was crucial in MUSA's organization. As a former officer of MUSA, a male working in a research position, and a female clerical worker in an academic department noted,

A lot of MUSA information, from my experience, and I have been involved since the 80s in MUSA... I have often quipped, and it's probably truer than we would like to think, that more information on MUSA, and MUSA problems has been spread by the coffee lounge gossip group... Gossip, I would say is a pretty strong force within the community at times... for the networking or what ever you want to call it. Gossiping sort of has a negative connotation, but it's a bit more than that.

It is difficult to talk about "gossip" because of the clearly pejorative and gendered overtones of the term. Gossip is often seen as unreliable and non-consequential, conjuring an image of petty intrigue, unimportant subject matter, and a demeaning portrayal of "housewives". In opposition to this way of looking at it, gossip appears more like a "subaltern" form of communication in this struggle. It was a way of sharing information that was not mediated through the administration, information shared between staff about their work lives. This process of communication helped to develop a unique staff perspective, through discussions of issues and perspectives that were being ignored by more official channels at McMaster. Moreover, while many people might have been intimidated, they were able to talk to those they trusted about the things that were important to them. Even if people were afraid, they could confidentially talk with colleagues whom they trusted in a private, informal setting. Through these highly diffused mechanisms, support staff were able to generate an independent analysis and perspective, and organize themselves.

However, as we saw in the last section, the fact that social networks were generally quite "pocketed" at McMaster hampered the OPSEU drive. This was

compounded by a prevailing mood of caution and intimidation, which prevented the organization of an alternative consensus that supported OPSEU. What was different in the case of MUSA?

I think that part of the answer is a chronological one. It was easy for a number of staff, at the time of the OPSEU drive, to try to link changes in the labour process to a single administration. It had become clear by the time that MUSA organized that the problems in the labour process were rooted in deeper institutional arrangements and relations of power on campus. What seems to have become clear to a number of staff was that if they did not organize to defend their interests, nobody else would do it for them.

Moreover, with the dues deduction, even the most passive staff were now drawn into a discussion about the future of MUSA, positive or negative. While before it was easy to ignore OPSEU, this was not the case with MUSA, as money was coming out of staff pay cheques to pay dues. Even staff who were anti-MUSA began attending meetings to argue against it. In attending these meetings, they began to be part of the emergence of alternative interpretations, and there seemed to be a linking up of networks. Once staff began attending meetings, they report that they would return to their units, and in their offices, over lunch, over coffee, they began to talk about their issues. As one participant told me, this had something of a snowball effect. People would talk about what was happening, they would go to meetings together, and word of mouth began to generate a new consensus. One rank and file member told me, "[P]eople discuss issues among themselves... you discuss around, finding solutions and reassuring... especially when hard decisions are ahead of us... they were important". As MUSA became more and more a topic of conversation, the atmosphere of intimidation began to break down. In turn, this made it easier still to talk about work issues and MUSA.

One of the other major changes that followed the widening of networks to these kinds of issues was that the isolation of problems began to break down. People started to find out that the problems they faced were not linked to the quirky habits of their supervisors. Instead, these problems were endemic to McMaster and the labour processes encountered by staff. As this happened, the element of caring and community that was part of the construction of the university community began to turn from a conservative force to a more radical one. This can be seen in the statements of a number of staff across campus, who began to feel that,

[B]efore ...in my own immediate working environment, it was fine...I realized that I'm pretty damned selfish...because being in a union is not just being on an island here, I had to start thinking about my co-workers... I think that's the thing, that people think that maybe I'm embittered because I've been poorly treated in my workplace, and it's terrible and I had a rough time. No I haven't, in all honesty, I am embittered because I have been fighting for people and not getting anywhere positively for them... and I think you realize that a lot of people have a much harder

time than you...Looked at from either a financial or health perspective.
And you could perhaps make a difference in someone's life.

Tokenism

It is important to recognize that the organization of MUSA into a trade union and the strike were not simply created by a couple of clumsy administrations that mishandled the situation. While there were certainly a number of situations in which administrators made things worse, these problems went beyond the Machiavellian skill of the administration. The problems that staff were organizing against were not resolvable through the application of clever management techniques. Indeed, when the administration did try to improve morale through PR exercises, they often succeeded in aggravating underlying contradictions in the labour process. On the occasions that the administration tried to engage in token displays, that tokenism backfired. Not only did these tokens fail to impress staff, they served as something of a focus for the anger of staff.

Fundamentally, the problematic issues were ones that arose in the course of the labour process (i.e. work intensification). In other words, these problems were related to the real material relations that staff engaged in on a day-to-day basis at McMaster. To be addressed, these problems required change in the way that university decision-making processes operated, as well as a substantive change in the structure of power relations in the university. As such, without this sort of serious structural change, the administration's attempts to address staff concerns come across as tokenism.

In particular, the administration's attempts at symbolic reconciliation tended to appeal to the loyalties that bound staff into structures of patronage. However, in doing so, administrators did not realize that they were only highlighting the real erosion of paternalistic responsibilities to staff. As such, rather than mediating the hierarchical and collegial dimensions of work at McMaster, these symbolic appeals sharpened the contradiction. For example, in this period Peter George recognized that staff morale was problematic, but suggested that it was nothing that could not have been fixed with a barbeque. A barbeque would have been a token of appreciation that might have been appreciated if it reflected an underlying context in which respect and recognition were not problematic on an on-going basis for staff. However, when staff *were* systematically de-valued and excluded on a day-to-day basis, such a token seemed, for lack of a better word, "tokenistic". As such these tokens were experienced as insulting and condescending. How could a token of appreciation address the concerns of staff when the day-to-day realities were the exact opposite? In the end these PR exercises not only fell flat, they drew attention to the underlying day-to-day realities and problems. Not unlike the cure that worsens the disease, these tokens served as a point of focus for anger and resentment. Clerical workers in academic departments and libraries related that,

...there's that duality of... particularly I would say at Christmas time, the Dean invites us all to the staff appreciation thing and everybody goes and eats their cookies, and my attitude is stick your cookies up your butt (laugh)- it's more important how you treat me the rest of the year and I don't need your cookies... don't patronize me, and don't pretend... I saw forced retirements... there was one situation where one lady was being forced to retire, and she said, 'You're forcing me to retire, I am not retiring, I do not want a party, I do not want anything'... the manager stood up and made a speech and gave this girl a gift. She handed the gift back and said, 'I told you, I am not retiring, you are firing me, this is forced. I still need to be working and I have a son'...

Poor Research Ethics

In the period before MUSA's certification, it was clear that there were deep morale problems among staff. As neo-liberalism's effects made contradictions in the labour processes of staff increasingly problematic, in 1998 HR conducted a study to refute MUSA's claims that wages of support staff were 19- 21% below Hamilton's market rate. As it turns out, this research suggested that these claims were true. Rather than trying to bury these findings, HR held a meeting to present data that suggested that staff were on par with Hamilton wage rates. However, a professor in the Department of Sociology, Carl Cuneo, noted that none of the larger employers in Hamilton, like Stelco or Dofasco, were included. Apparently when these companies were added, MUSA members were far behind. Because networks were already discussing MUSA-related issues, the word apparently spread over campus "like wildfire", sharpening suspicion towards the administration. Apparently the McMaster administration did not take this lesson to heart. Late in the fall of 1998, a Toronto company, Reacon Management Inc, was contracted to look at issues of morale.

In part because of the prevailing environment at McMaster and in part because of the structure of the survey questions themselves, a number of participants reported that they were suspicious of the survey. One male research worker commented that,

[T]o anybody with half a brain, it was a dreadfully biased survey but, I think it really crystallized for a lot of people how badly things were being done here by the university administration.

Even with these concerns, MUSA encouraged staff to participate in the Reacon survey. Over 50% of staff responded, and the results were unequivocal. According to *Courier*, a now defunct university newspaper,

[A]mong the positive findings of the survey: most staff (81 per cent of respondents) are proud of their association with McMaster and their relations with their colleagues, they enjoy the work they are doing, and they are pleased with leadership at the departmental level. On the negative side: many staff are unhappy with the environment in which the University must operate, and find the need to control costs and the amount

of organizational changes stressful. A full 40 per cent said they are dissatisfied with how the workplace is changing. (August 16, 1999)

Not reported in these articles was the finding that the primary problem identified by staff was “inconsistent management practice”. In addition, in an article in *Courier* on September 14, 1999, a representative of staff pointed out that the issues of compensation and University leadership were omitted from the discussion section of the report, even though they were identified as significant concerns. One male research worker recalls that,

... when it came out, the university spin-doctored this thing ridiculously... and people thought, what the hell goddamn bullshit is this? How stupid do they think we are? Well, I guess they think we are pretty fucking stupid. And that actually led to a lot of the dissension and interest in certifying and unionizing. Because the university obviously, even though they were doing the surveys, they weren't taking it seriously, they were trying to bullshit us into thinking that it wasn't as bad as it was, and it was patently obvious that things were dreadful.

These attempts to address low morale backfired because they came across as token gestures and highlighted the contradictions that staff were experiencing. This was clear in the interviews as a number of staff cited these incidents as galvanizing sentiment on campus. While in previous times the administration had more of an ability to impose its interpretation of the situation, in the context of the networks that staff were now drawing upon, the administration lost that privileged position. Now the exclusions and silences in their reports were a deafening roar in the ears of staff, sharpening the sense that staff were not respected, valued, or taken seriously. As such, while the reports were attempts by the administration to diffuse tensions, they magnified and focused these tensions, and fed fears that the administration could not be trusted. As one clerical worker noted, “...this way everybody thought that they were being deceitful and not up-front with staff.”

Escalation, From Certification to the Strike

As the breakdown of paternalist practices at McMaster made contradictions in the labour process problematic, staff discontent and organization developed. It was largely because of this that MUSA certified. These contradictions were to intensify as MUSA attempted to negotiate a first contract. Even in this period, a number of staff on campus only wanted to maintain older structures of patronage. However, as negotiations progressed these contradictions became increasingly compelling, as participants working in research and clerical positions related,

... I had one lady quote to me, “Mother McMaster will look after me” ...I saw enough of them disgruntled after the fact, after Mother McMaster bit them instead... and that really upset a lot of people. It was an awakening... I was expecting more people to cross but... the administration ended up, through... their actions... alienate[d] more people. Initially you had just over 50 percent of people supporting the

union... that number grew because it reinforced the fact that we need a union...

The key reason that staff felt that they were driven out on strike relates to the intransigent approach that the McMaster administration pursued in bargaining. The intransigence of the administration is difficult to overstate, as the MUSA strike was the fourth strike in two years at McMaster. Of those strikes, only one of them was resolved in less than five weeks. It is difficult to understand this intransigence without considering the ideological environment of neo-liberalism, and the institutional pressures upon administrators to justify their actions in terms of neo-liberal criteria³⁰. However, as neo-liberal pressures and understandings fostered an intransigent approach to labour relations on the part of the administrators, they also systematically drew the collegial and hierarchical dimensions of the labour process into sharper contradiction.

The intransigent approach is clear if one examines a chronology of the bargaining process³¹. This approach was clear at the first negotiating sessions with Mark Haley, the second head of the Employer negotiating committee. Reportedly Mark Haley declared that Peter George and Harvey Weingarten had given him instructions that issues of contracting out, job postings, hours of work, exclusion of staff on “soft money”³² from job security provisions, use of excluded persons to perform the work of members in the bargaining unit, scheduling and hours of work, the appointment of staff, priority placement, and job evaluations were “hills to die on”—that is to say, he refused to discuss these key issues (MUSA document).

Whether the term “stonewall” is apt or not in describing the administration bargaining team’s strategy, consensus among research participants does seem to be that the university refused to take MUSA, or negotiations with MUSA, seriously. Given that the key issues for support staff in general revolved around respect and recognition, employer intransigence did a great deal to escalate the situation, and eventually led to the strike. Through the process of “negotiation” the staff became more and more incensed, and they grew increasingly frustrated that the administration’s negotiating team seemed to refuse to even engage with MUSA and *pretend* to try to work things out.

As this was happening, there was very clearly a building momentum. More staff would attend each MUSA meeting, and every time a vote was taken, the decision was carried by progressively larger majorities. While MUSA certified only by a narrow margin, on February 12, 2001, staff voted 89% to reject the University’s contract offer. It is telling that fewer staff agreed to certify MUSA as a trade union than to go on strike. It seems that more staff turned out to picket, without pay, than even voted on the issue of certification. The more staff

³⁰ See chapter 4, “Neo-liberalism- A quick and dirty sketch”

³¹ See Appendix 2

³² Staff whose wages are dependent upon external sources of funding, such as grants.

talked about what was happening, the more momentum built up. As more momentum built up, staff talked more, came to meetings more, and became more involved in MUSA.

Not Just Money

The issues tied up in the strike are complex and difficult to deal with because so many of them are closely related. Moreover, it seems like a great deal of what staff felt was crucial was intangible: wages, job evaluations, putting “fair and reasonable” in the management clause, putting the expression “good faith” into the collective agreement, collegiality, respect, benefits— all were cited as key issues by research participants. A more comprehensive list, put together by the MUSA negotiating team to summarize the outstanding issues on April 5, 2001, can be found in Appendix 3.

Wages

Not surprisingly, wages were identified as one of the main issues by a number of research participants. Wages were a particularly pressing issue because a number of MUSA members were single mothers. A number of research participants reported that they are *currently*³³ being paid literally the same wages as they were paid in 1985, meaning that their wages have declined roughly 40%³⁴. A 40% wage reduction is a significant sum for anyone, particularly for someone who was never making that much money to start with. As one clerical worker commented, “...you can’t continue to live on the same salary for 20 years without an increase.” At the time of the strike, 48% of MUSA members earned less than \$32 000, and the median salary earned by MUSA members was roughly \$30 000 (*Hamilton Spectator*, April 24 2001: A6). For reference, in 2001, Statistics Canada suggested that the poverty line (low-income cut-off) for a family of four, in a city the size of Hamilton, was \$35 455 (Paquet, 2001). For a family of three, that figure was \$29 290. There had been no increase in staff salary grids since 1992, almost a decade earlier. However, for a number of research participants, at the same time as they identified wages as one of the key issues, they would make sure to qualify that the issue of wages was *not just about money*. As MUSA members in research and clerical positions explained,

...in the newspaper, all you ever hear about contract negotiations is money. It’s not about money. It’s about security, it’s about the job enjoyment, it’s about getting *properly* paid for what you do... I work for other reasons besides money, but that whole... I mean, how dare you?

It is also interesting because both rank and file members of MUSA and members of MUSA’s negotiating committee were quoted in *The Hamilton Spectator* that,

³³ In 2004

³⁴ According to the Bank of Canada inflation calculator, at http://www.bankofcanada.ca/en/inflation_calc.htm

“...McMaster seems to be ‘fixated on money,’ but MUSA members need basic contract language in place to protect them.” (*Hamilton Spectator*, March 2, 2001: A12; March 3: A3)

“Fair and reasonable”?

Some of the research participants have suggested that it was fitting that the main fight was article 4.02. This article of the collective agreement, Management Rights, stipulates that these rights be exercised in a manner that was “fair and reasonable”. While it is generally quite difficult to mobilize around abstract principles, that was exactly what seemed to happened in this case. Given that staff at McMaster saw arbitrary treatment, respect, and recognition as key issues, it was not surprising that this particular issue should prove to be explosive³⁵. A number of research participants emphasized that while the concrete issues on the bargaining table were important, the *real* issues were intangible. One female clerical worker in an administrative position summed up this sentiment when she suggested that the issues,

...were the trust and respect that had been blown away in the previous 10 years, but they had really been crushed in the last year-and-a-half before we walked the line...

Job evaluations

A number of these issues were to converge in concerns about job evaluations, which shape wages, and reflect the degree to which the contributions of staff are recognized and valued. We have already talked about some of the distortions that occurred at McMaster in relation to job descriptions. In particular, we have looked at the abuse of the “roll 3” temporary category to suppress “labour costs” (i.e. wages, benefits) in long-term staff positions, and “hiding” parts of a staff persons’ job in the job description. However, these both occurred at the level of individual work units.

Drawing out the systematic impact of neo-liberalism upon *all* staff at McMaster was the wholesale, unilateral restructuring of the job evaluation system by HR. Remarkably, in 1995, without telling anyone, HR engaged in what they termed “a sore-thumbing exercise”. In this process, HR essentially de-valued people’s job evaluations, seemingly slashing points more for the purpose of moving jobs into lower wage categories than to reflect changing jobs. I should note that it was not the case that a person’s wages would simply fall along with their job’s value. In the Hay system, if staff are paid higher wages than the job evaluation designates for their position, they are “red-circled”, meaning that, officially, they are being paid above their job’s value. Thus, these workers are not eligible for wage increases until their wage scales catch up to where they are in

³⁵ The very first time I heard about the strike, I was told that it was “all about respect”.

the classification scheme. Without some mechanism of finding out where their jobs were on the job evaluation system, such as a change in wages, few staff became aware of these changes. More staff found out about this as time went on, but the final admission of this process came, seemingly accidentally, in 2001. McMaster's final offer was sent around to all staff in a package that stipulated exactly what they would get if they accepted the administration's final offer. The package gave staff their level of points, their level in the salary grid, and the increase that they would be getting in dollars. The reaction that has been described to me by a number of participants was one of disbelief and shock.

What happened exactly, and why has it been referred to as pay *inequity*? As it has been explained to me, it was literally an inversion of the process of pay equity. The idea behind pay equity is that men and women are not paid equally for work of equal value because of gender discrimination. To correct this, one compares female categories of workers with categories of male workers who do comparable work (i.e. male comparators). In light of this, one re-evaluates the value of the female dominated jobs to bring them *up* to the level of their male comparators. What the sore-thumbing process did was to find the *lowest* male "comparator", and drag females down to the lowest possible level, which skewed the basic anchors of the job evaluation system. The distortions that were introduced were almost cartoonish in their magnitude. For example, one female MUSA member, a clerical worker, did most of her work in the area of contracts (i.e. drafting contracts), a job requiring a sound command of contract law. She found out that her male comparator was "the guy in the men's locker room" in the campus athletic center. Others told me that they were paid for the least valued thing they did. If these staff did ten different things, the basis for comparison would be the task valued at the lowest level. Because of this, the staff who did the most varied work seemed to find themselves in the worst position, as they were more likely to do work that fell into lower categories. To clarify, this was even though they did work that was rated at a higher level as well.

This issue is an on-going one, and, as I shall discuss in chapter seven, MUSA and HR are participating in a joint job re-evaluation process to correct these problems. However, at this point, these issues are still not resolved. In the meantime, a significant proportion of the MUSA members that I interviewed are red-circled. They describe themselves as facing a situation in which they will likely retire before they have a chance to receive a raise. This means that not only are their current wages tied to their wages from 1985, so is their pension. In some ways, this "sore-thumbing" process was one that touched many of the major threads of this struggle- class, gender, respect, recognition, devaluation, wages, and arbitrary treatment.

Surely That's Enough

A number of research participants said that they never imagined that the administration would force staff out onto strike. When they went out, many staff thought that they would never be out longer than a couple of days. That is not to

say that all participants thought this. Those who seemed more cynical before the strike said they expected it, but it is remarkable that even people who were at the negotiating table genuinely thought that the McMaster administration would try to avert the strike. As one member of the MUSA negotiating team, a male research worker, put it,

...honestly... it was never the goal to actually... when we actually had to do that... I saw that as a particular failure. I know that other negotiating team members, from the MUSA side, certainly saw it as a failure, that we were not able to achieve a respectable, reasonable outcome.

The strike was a remarkable testament to the strength of the loyalties and bonds that were part of the labour process at McMaster. While in the earlier period the networks that tied the McMaster community together seemed conservative, in this case, they pulled people into the struggle. While I suspect that they were likely a distinct minority, it seems that there were staff walking the picket lines who had actually voted *against* the strike. In some cases, these staff were *anti-strike*, but they came out because of their loyalties to their co-workers. Another staff member on the research side pointed out that crossing the picket line would be damaging to their work, as they needed to work closely with people in the trades for specialized research equipment. Of course, if they wanted to maintain those relationships, they had to respect the picket line.

The Exception Proves the Rule

As in many other strikes, there were staff who crossed the picket line. However, what I found interesting is that in talking with these staff the basic logic of the labour process was the same. Moreover, this interview data is consistent with letters to the editor, written during the strike, in which staff who crossed the picket line defended their choice (see Hillis, 2001; Mulvey, 2001; Stewart, 2001). While these broader processes were shared, there were crucial anomalies in the way that this broader logic impacted specifically on the labour process of these particular staff members. As a result, their labour process generated a distinct experience of these same processes.

To begin with, at least one staff member who crossed the picket line did get real, substantive recognition and rewards in her day-to-day work. Moreover, this staff member reported trust, collegiality, and autonomy in relations with her supervisor. However, as she began to talk in more depth about these things it seemed, perhaps by her own admission, that she was simply reaping the benefits of favouritism. After all, while favouritism was an issue for most MUSA members, it might not have been a problem for those who were favoured. As this participant commented,

...(supervisor) had people in tears at times, just the way she dealt with them. But on the other hand, if you did a good job, she recognized you and she was very shrewd at evaluating people ... And if she could trust you, she gave you more to do, and more responsibility... Now there are people who would disagree with me, in our group, but you know, I've had three

promotions since I started there, and they haven't had any... I wonder if that's why they don't agree with me. It's possible.

However, it is also worth noting that a number of MUSA supporters report having rewarding relationships in their immediate workplaces. A relatively significant proportion of the research participants who struck said that it was not just for them, that it was mostly for other staff who *really* needed help, that they supported MUSA and the strike. However, the staff members with rewarding workplace interactions who felt solidarity with less fortunate staff were tied into the patterns of informal networking that were generating a new staff consensus. In contrast, the participant who crossed the picket line related that,

[N]o, I don't see other people... I know... outside our group, maybe 3 or 4 people, that I've met once or twice. I came to Research Day in the fall [2003] and that it was the first time I've met a lot of these people.

A sensitivity to the issue of informal networks, and the sources that one trusts and relies upon for one's information, does seem to be quite illuminating. It does seem to be that case that one clerical worker who crossed the picket line was hooked into very different networks that relayed information informally. For example, I was told that a past president of MUSA had an ideological affiliation to a particular sect of Marxism, although the participant who made this statement did qualify the claim by saying, "...I have never have met the man, by the way." It is remarkable to me that a staff member who has never come in contact with a former MUSA President would know such detailed information about his personal preferences and affiliations.

Rather than refuting the general frame of reference, it is interesting indeed, in this case, that the exception fits the rule quite neatly. As such, a dialectical materialist labour process analysis is one that enables us to understand and analyze the ways in which workers' responses are based upon particular experiences. In this case, we can both explain the general pattern of staff responses to neo-liberalism (i.e. increasing support for MUSA) as well as the anomalies (i.e. opposition to MUSA) in relation to experiences that are generated in the course of day-to-day interactions.

Conclusion

In the case study of MUSA we can see the way in which staff responded to common problems generated in their work lives. These problems were created by the impact of organizational changes that were driven by a neo-liberal agenda. As these organizational changes impacted upon staff, we see them responding first in the failed OPSEU organizing drive. While this campaign to unionize failed, due to issues relating to the organizational isolation of staff, the timing of the organizing drive, and the perception of OPSEU as an "outsider", it set the stage for the successful certification of MUSA in 1999. Ambiguity in the legal status of MUSA led to a legal challenge, which the administration used as an opportunity to attack MUSA. As contradictions in the labour process were becoming increasingly apparent, staff experienced this legal struggle as an attack

upon their place in the McMaster community. In this context, MUSA's certification was largely a defensive move on the part of staff, even though it created the conditions for altering the balance of power on campus.

The sense that staff were under attack followed from neo-liberal reforms, that had impacted negatively upon staff. As the paternalistic order at McMaster was deteriorating, staff's experiences of work began to change, and research participants began to recognize the necessity of being organized into an independent organization. Unlike in the case of the OPSEU organizing drive, in this struggle staff began discussing issues relating to MUSA on a broad basis, leading to new interpretations of the labour process, the emergence of independent staff perspectives, and a consensus among staff that MUSA needed to fight back. In this process, the administration's attempts to make appeals to the old paternalistic order, through symbolic gestures, merely highlighted the contradictions that were already becoming increasingly problematic for staff.

Moreover, as MUSA attempted to engage in negotiations with the administration, the intransigence of the Employer's negotiating committee served to escalate the conflict, again drawing out the contradictions that staff experienced in the labour process. In particular, the issues that staff organized around were ones that were structured by the kinds of norms and loyalties created in the labour process at McMaster. Because the Employer was so steadfast in their intransigent position, more or less the entire collective agreement was at issue. In particular, participants identified issues centering on wages, basic union rights, job evaluations, collegiality, respect, and benefits as being significant. Staff experienced the more directly economic issues in a way that was *inextricably intertwined* with more intangible non-economic issues. The way that contradictions emerged in the labour process helped to draw out the dimensions of both class and gender, which structured hierarchy and domination in the labour processes of staff at McMaster. The process of "sore-thumbing" helped underline these contradictions, throwing the hierarchical dimensions of work at McMaster into sharp relief with the more collegial dimensions of the labour process.

Finally, this analysis is applied to the experiences of a participant who crossed the picket line. Even though the labour process produced a unique set of experiences for this staff member, I have shown that the same basic principles were at work, in short, that the exception proves the rule.

CHAPTER 6 THE STRIKE

The last chapter discussed the escalation from the certification of MUSA to the strike. In this chapter I will focus on the strike itself. It would be easy to get caught up in the strike and offer an account of the events and personalities, a project which is important and significant in its own right. This chapter will develop a more detached analysis, that focuses on how the norms, commitments, relationships, and allegiances generated in the material social processes at McMaster structured the strike. In turn, developing a dialectical account involves analyzing how the *experiences* of research participants in the strike have altered and changed the labour process at McMaster. Labour process analysis pulls us away from focusing on exceptional events, and pushes us towards a focus on the ways in which social life is constituted and developed on a day-to-day basis. As a MUSA volunteer suggested in a newsletter during the strike, what was important was,

the incredible enthusiasm, the strength of will, and the warm companionship... I just wanted you to know that it's not there just when there's *music and dancing and inspirational speeches*. All those help... but what's really magic is that spirit is there ALL the time.

While both are valid objects of study, this analysis focuses not on the rallies, but rather the experiences that were generated in the strike, and which continue to influence the labour process at McMaster. In this context, it is important to focus not merely on the dynamics of the strike itself but to also consider the process of coming back from the strike.

After staff at McMaster voted 89% against the university's contract offer on February 13, 2001, they voted to give the MUSA negotiating team a strike mandate on February 28. MUSA immediately returned to the negotiating table with the strike mandate, hoping that this might convince McMaster's bargaining team to take them seriously. By March 2nd, MUSA members were walking picket lines at the entrances of McMaster. As one MUSA officer, who worked in a clerical position, and a rank and file member in a research position recall,

... if know anything about union/strike stuff, you're lucky to get 30 percent of your people on the line. The first day, no strike pay, we had 60 percent of our people walking on the line. And when we did get financing, and were able to offer strike pay, that number increased— people who had not crossed the line, who had not gone to work, that stayed home, what we call passive supporters, they went out and got on the line... It was a positive thing for me. Aside from the financial hardship, I think it is one of the best things for MUSA, because the university finally learned, that we *did* get together, we did go on strike, and we lasted five weeks. And it hurt... a lot of us... [but] we had to do it.

In some ways it seems like the strike almost erupted, as one female research worker who was active in MUSA suggested,

the turnout on the first day was enormous, you have to remember that there's a lot of apathy, there's a lot of people who feel they don't need a union, and also a lot of people work in very isolated spots. And so for me it was absolutely enormous, I didn't think people would stay out.

Talking on the picket lines

When they hit the picket lines, staff began to talk to each other. As one female clerical worker in an academic department related,

And of course as the strike was going on... we're talking to each other on the line and what we're finding out is that we all had the same problems, it wasn't just our individual boss, we all were treated the same bad way, we're all treated as little individuals, no contact with anybody else, therefore we didn't know... basically there was a lot of game play going on.

In the period before the strike, the isolation between staff had begun to break down. Informal networks of staff began to become involved in creating a new consensus and mobilizing the membership, even though these networks still tended to be quite pocketed. Networks largely operated within individual departments or across departments that were closely tied together, e.g. if different departments had cross-appointed faculty. It is remarkable that every participant who walked the picket line reported two things. As they walked the picket lines, research participants reported that they found out what the working conditions of other staff across campus were like. Secondly, they also forged strong friendships, creating cross-campus informal networks.

In terms of the way research participants looked at their work lives, talking on the picket line caused two things to happen. First, staff had been able to dismiss a number of problems as isolated occurrences before. While this process was beginning to happen before the strike, it now became clear that these were not exceptions. Instead, these problems now appeared to be the way that things were done at McMaster. Secondly, while they realized that their problems were not just theirs alone, they also found out about people whose working situations were worse. It seems that in finding out how bad things could get for staff, a real sense of indignation arose. Both of these concerns helped to shape a sense of solidarity that many participants talked about. As one female clerical worker in an academic department recounts,

...I got to talk to people that I would never... in my normal working day at McMaster, run across. Stories of... it was scary... I can't believe that this was happening here at Mac... it was talking, it was being able to talk, myself and ...others... everybody all of a sudden realized that, 'hey, we're not alone', and there is a real sense of solidarity here, and... it gave people strength... it fed itself. And there were references made to the Dirty Thirties, going out without strike pay, and picketing 24/7... it just... builds you inside- 'You can do it, you can do it'... it was just body tingles,

you know? It was just incredible... just that whole "yeah!", it was in my head, knowing that they'd [administration] walked all over us before...

During the strike, the negotiating committee visited the picket lines when they were not in negotiations—a scenario which apparently helped the morale of strikers as well as the morale of the committee. However, beyond morale, research participants emphasized that this was a way that the committee could keep in touch with the membership. By doing this, the committee could report back and help keep striking staff abreast of what was happening. Reciprocally, the committee could also get information, feedback, and reassurance from the picket lines.

As I mentioned, beyond these informal meetings and staff learning about what other staff went through at work, research participants forged strong friendships on the picket lines. As a clerical worker relates,

And for me, the six of us who have dinner now, every five to six weeks, that has been a positive. And just learning about other people's difficulties at work, all of that was positive for me.

In the course of their interactions on the picket lines, staff created informal networks that now span across campus. Again, it is remarkable that more or less every participant who walked on the picket lines in this strike reported similar experiences—that they forged strong bonds and they have made life-long friendships. A number of groups of people who were on the picket lines together still meet, three years after the strike. People will still hug other people who were on their picket lines when they run across them on campus.

These new bonds and social networks have apparently had a major unintended consequence. A number of participants suggested that these networks have created a more tight-knit university. As if anything could make the general point stronger, through all of this, staff saw themselves acting in *defense* of the university community. The social networks created during the strike have established trust relations between staff on a broader scale than ever. This means that work networks are broader, making staff more effective in "hustling". As a female clerical worker in an academic department reflects,

...the other thing that I noticed was that, you're dealing with somebody in another department, oh yeah, you were my picket captain, what do you want? And so, you got extra service, people would put themselves out a little more, you would put yourself out a little more for somebody, because suddenly you had a face to the name, you *knew* the person, you'd *walked the line* with them, we became a real family.

A community effort

MUSA members had not unilaterally decided that they were acting in a manner that helped preserve the vitality of the McMaster community. The labour processes that constituted the McMaster community drew a great deal of the community into the strike, supporting MUSA *as* members of that community. To make sense of the MUSA strike, one has to understand the complex mix of

loyalties to principles and people generated in the labour process. One of the more fervently anti-union staff members reportedly donated a month's wages to the strike fund, even though he crossed the picket line. MUSA members who had been declared "essential" in places like the hospital, would reportedly take out hot chocolates every evening to picketers when they were on break. Quite a number of staff in The Management Group (TMG), staff who were excluded from MUSA in the creation of the bargaining unit, reportedly donated "envelopes of money" to the strike fund. I was also told that some TMG staff and workers from the physical plant, who belonged to a different union, would come out during their breaks to walk the picket line, until they were threatened with dismissal.

Perhaps most important was faculty support, both logistically and in terms of moral support from the community. To begin with, faculty helped to put pressure on the administration, which participants cited as one of the ways in which their informal networks at work were helpful during the strike. Again, this underlines the importance of networks that cut across hierarchical lines at McMaster. Within 50 hours of beginning circulation, a petition supportive of MUSA was signed by 23% of teaching staff. Within seven days, this had increased to 47% of teaching staff. Moreover, a number of faculty donated generously. The Department of English donated a day's pay to MUSA's Hardship Fund, as did the Department of Biology. Moreover, in a number of departments, faculty financially supported their staff out of their own pockets, in some cases offering the staff in their departments a sum equivalent to those staff members' wages. Through the whole escalation and the strike, faculty support was quite visible. This support was most visible in departments like Labour Studies and Social Work, where it presented the opportunity to engage in "experiential learning". For those purposes, professors in these departments would bring their classes along to the picket lines. A MUSA newsletter reports that the faculty in Social Work took a 7:00pm-1:00am picket shift, so that MUSA members "could spend more time with their families" (MUSA document).

This is not to suggest that all supervisors, or even all faculty, were supportive of striking staff. However, it does seem that the McMaster community was generally in support of MUSA. This support was aptly expressed by Denise O'Connor, a PhD student. In the following excerpt from an open letter to the administration, published in the MUSA's daily newsletter, she stated that,

As a McMaster student I have to tell you that I object very strongly to the fact that it appears that you are still not negotiating in good faith with the bargaining unit. I understand the fiscal constraints imposed by the Ontario government, nevertheless it is incumbent upon you to ensure that you have good labour relations with the university staff... You cannot be complicit with the government in downloading the cost of third sector services onto workers. It is unethical and reflects badly on the university. Please resume bargaining and settle this strike so that our colleagues can return to work and continue the good and important work that they do.

A number of students were also active in their support of MUSA. During the strike, students offered free babysitting at the Westdale United Church for strikers. Students also organized a rally on campus to pressure the administration, and 15 students occupied a foyer in the administration building during the strike.

Support and solidarity also came from broader community. Over 24 different groups gave MUSA financial assistance. These groups were primarily other unions or university staff associations, although MUSA also received support from social justice organizations and politicians from a couple of political parties. To avoid crossing MUSA picket lines, groups like the United Church cancelled conferences that were booked at McMaster. Furthermore, funding being offered to McMaster to establish endowed chairs was withdrawn, at least until the strike was resolved.

In part due to support from a number of different groups, but also due to the way in which informal networks tied staff together and extended across campus, MUSA was able to maintain a high degree of solidarity and cohesion. As a female research worker suggested,

[A]nd we made friendships, there is nothing that makes a strong union, I think, than a strike. That's what I think McMaster miscalculated. I think that they thought that this would probably wear out and we wouldn't be very cohesive. As it turns out I thought we were enormously cohesive...

As with any strike, morale was a major issue, and this community orientation was a major part of what helped MUSA keep the morale of it's members up. Besides more informal social support and consultation, MUSA developed "On the Line", a daily newsletter with updates, information, songs, letters from supportive faculty, and the like. For some morale did not seem to be a problem, as clerical workers in a research department and an academic department suggested,

...the days of the strike were very very heady, I was higher than a kite because finally after all the years of abuse at the hands of [supervisor]... at that time, there were so many people who had been hurt, that finally, they were able to stand up and say, we're not going to take this anymore. Morale stayed really high, particularly among those who had been hurt... they don't think we can do it, they keep calling us "pink collar workers"- we're pit bulls with lipstick, and we're going to do this... when the vote came through I was thrilled. I was thrilled. I mean, you never think you would be thrilled to go on strike, but when that vote came through, it was very exhilarating, it was exciting because we thought "now let's do this. And let's be serious.

However, morale seemed to be problematic for other staff, as one clerical worker suggests, "[T]he people who hadn't been hurt, or people who were working for nice people, who felt kind of guilty about being out on strike, it was harder to keep their morale up." As I suggest below, while some staff found the strike exhilarating, others found it depressing.

As I will discuss in more detail in the next chapter, throughout the strike it seemed that there was strong aversion to "framing" issues in a confrontational

manner. The rhetoric in MUSA flyers, in general, seemed to use levity and emphasize togetherness, solidarity, and community. Levity was an important element in the approach that was developed by MUSA during the strike. As one clerical worker remembers,

After the quote about the pink collar workers came out, we had a pink collar day, on the picket line on [university entrance], we all wore pink. ... and of course we formed the MUSA Minstrels, that helped keep morale up. What we did to keep morale up was to tell jokes about stuff, to make light of some of the things, like one time, Peter George said, oh I can't keep tabs on all that strike business, I can't even find my socks... because, really, that was what was more important than what's happening to my staff, that sort of thing... so needless to say, we brought him some socks. The students really pitched in on that, and we had boxes of socks, we had socks on clotheslines on the picket lines, silly stuff like that, it is a way of saying, we're not letting this bug us, it was just a big laugh.

Singing was also important on the picket lines. In MUSA's strike "song book" I found songs like "We Are Gentle Angry People", as well as plays on popular songs. For example, one song went to the tune of "Let it Snow", "[T]he economies globalizing/ In the streets we're organizing/ And we're making our movement grow/ Share the dough, share the dough, share the dough..."

As the strike dragged on, the MUSA Minstrels were formed to help sustain morale. Beginning with a sign in the MUSA strike headquarters asking for singers, the MUSA Minstrels were created. During the strike, participants in the Minstrels talked about how singing in that group became a major morale booster for them. As one female research worker recounts,

I was depressed, very depressed. People recognized that... they were looking for singers, and I did that. And that picked me up, and I would go to the different pickets...so I am part of the MUSA Minstrels, and I would sing at the different picket lines when I saw that we could make people happier, we saw too many people, myself included, who were not doing well. It didn't matter whether it was...they were not defiant songs, necessarily. Most of them were union songs, but now we're singing artistic songs.

As I will discuss in more detail in the final chapter, the MUSA Minstrels are a group who still meet, both to sing and as friends. Members of the Minstrels were able to find an outlet in singing, and they found social support in the other members. Moreover, they were able to visibly improve morale when they went around to the various picket lines to sing.

Even at the best of times, however, strikes are difficult and trying experiences. For some participants, the MUSA Minstrels and the general sense of levity seemed inappropriate, perhaps indicating a failure to recognize the gravity of the situation and the difficulty that some staff were in. However, the participants who did appreciate the MUSA Minstrels seem to have generally suffered similarly to those who did not. It seems that these staff were able to

connect to the Minstrels and the attempts to create levity in the midst of the strike *because* the situation was serious. These seem to have been seen as a way for staff to relieve some of that stress, and find social support to manage their problems.

There is no doubt that the situation was quite serious. Volunteers at the MUSA strike headquarters reported that the phrase that kept coming up was “financial disaster”. At the time of the strike MUSA had no strike fund. One of the “jokes” around the strike headquarters was that the treasurer was giving out hugs, since that was all MUSA could afford. Luckily, because of the financial support that primarily came from other unions (i.e. other university staff unions in Ontario, OPSEU, CAW, CUPE, etc) MUSA was able to offer strike pay and hardship loans. Nonetheless, this was a difficult period, particularly since there were households in which either one or both of the household’s main income earners were on strike.

To keep things running, to have a place that members could come to, phone, or email if they needed help, as well as to provide a general base of operation, MUSA opened a headquarters, which staff tried to keep open 24 hours a day throughout the strike. As well, MUSA had a webpage that was updated daily, with photographs and information updates that helped them keep in touch with members. The demands of maintaining the headquarters and the webpage was such that a number of participants felt that they actually worked harder during the strike, on a voluntary basis, than they worked regularly.

Of course, particularly for those who were more involved in MUSA, trying to keep everything running and coordinated 24 hours a day was difficult. This was particularly because many staff had significant responsibilities outside of work, most notably younger children. Because a number of staff were volunteering hours that were much more *irregular and longer than their normal work hours*, this made it particularly problematic for those who had to try to co-ordinate this work with the demands of parenting. As a female clerical worker and a male research worker commented,

At that point, my kids were [young]... and they wanted me to be the picket captain over the dinner hour, which is just like the worst possible time of the day when you’ve got young kids... I ended up doing it, and enjoying it... I had childcare issues ...basically, I had to be there to send the to kids off to school in the morning, plain and simple, and we worked around that as best we could.

Sensitivity to the McMaster Situation

As a dialectical analysis focused on the issues generated in the labour processes of staff would suggest, MUSA placed a particular emphasis on making sure that the health of the university community was the priority throughout the strike. Beyond the rhetoric, it does seem that MUSA actually did make a number of concessions with just that goal in mind. Thus, through the course of the strike the contradiction between the administration and the university community intensified.

After the staff had voted down the Employer's offer, Peter George sent a letter to staff, which stated, in bold, that, "The University will not walk away from the bargaining table". In terms of sharpening the contradictions in material social processes at McMaster, this came less than a month after the administration's bargaining team had walked away from the bargaining table. In many strikes, activity at the bargaining table is a key issue, but given the intransigence of the administration, the key issue before the strike, during the strike, and after the strike was the very process of bargaining itself³⁶. Before the strike had started, MUSA agreed with the administration to designate certain workers "essential", meaning that these workers could cross the picket line. In doing so, MUSA accommodated staff crossing the picket line to work at the reactor on campus. This was done because of the fear that the administration would accuse the union of endangering the public by not allowing reactor staff to work. In fact, the reactor shuts down every weekend, but such accusations could generate bad publicity for the reactor, whose existence has been controversial in the past.

When the strike started, picket lines were set up from 6 a.m. until 7 p.m., from Monday to Saturday. It soon became clear that the administration plan was to simply work around those hours, so picketing was made round-the-clock, with the help of volunteers from the community (*Hamilton Spectator*, March 9: A5). The administration then sought an injunction to limit picketing, which MUSA responded to by offering to limit delays on the picket line to five minutes (*Hamilton Spectator*, March 15: A3). In response to faculty support, the Provost, Harvey Weingarten, announced that professors who did not perform work normally done by staff would have their pay docked (*Hamilton Spectator*, March 29: A5). Following student protests, at least two students reported being stalked by "three or four individuals with walkie-talkies", which university spokesperson Gillian Howard acknowledged as an administration action (*Hamilton Spectator*, April 6: A3). In all of these incidents, the administration maintained its intransigent position, and generally acted in a manner that alienated it from the broader community, while MUSA was actively cultivating these community ties. Even on the picket line female workers in research and clerical positions recalled that,

"Pink collar workers, secretaries, they're not going to walk", so we did, and we did it well, the police told us that they had never had such a well-behaved picket line ever in Hamilton... Other unions, afterwards, some said they thought that we really took the high road when it came to people who went through the lines... no violence, no rudeness, very few times that tempers flared.

In keeping with the sets of commitments and norms generated in the labour process at McMaster, some of the staff who did cross the picket lines were not treated with hostility by strikers. This was because these staff might have put

³⁶ See appendix 2 for a comprehensive list of the outstanding issues at the bargaining table, compiled on April 5th.

significant contracts or projects in jeopardy by going out. In some areas, *some* of those who crossed the picket lines were informally accommodated, but these were likely colleagues who were generally supportive towards MUSA. As we shall see, that was certainly not the case in some departments, and the hostility, it seems, has gone both ways.

Coming Back

Without a collective agreement, MUSA members returned to work on April 9, the first day of final exams for McMaster students (*Hamilton Spectator*, April 10)³⁷. It seems that the leadership made this decision for two main reasons. First, as the strike was grinding on, worries emerged that people might begin to drift back to work. Second, just as negotiations before the strike did not seem to be an effective strategy, at this point neither did the strike. Rather than dragging the strike on any further than five weeks, especially since it seemed like nothing was being accomplished at the table, MUSA decided to go back to work and request arbitration. As one member of MUSA's bargaining committee explained,

We did a lot of things atypically for a union on strike... storming back to work on the Monday morning, for one. We knew the administration had a collective agreement final offer, or proposal, we knew they had had it for approximately two or three weeks, if not longer... but they were only sharing little snippets of it with us, they wanted to strike to drag out, and be punitive, to a certain extent, I believe... we knew, from various clues and tips, and we kept telling them, before the strike period, we know you have a full final offer, why don't you give it to us? Because they were giving us things with page number 78, and we hadn't seen pages 1 through 77. But they might have sent us 52. But we knew they were snippets, and we knew... we kept track of these things.

At first the administration refused to go to arbitration, choosing to force a vote on their final offer. This offer was rejected, with staff voting 77% against it. By April 25th, the administration agreed to meet to discuss whether arbitration would be voluntary or binding (*Hamilton Spectator*, April 25: A13). Finally arbitration was arranged to begin on May 10 (*Hamilton Spectator*, April 27: A7).

For a number of staff, coming back without a contract was very difficult. The kinds of words that participants used to describe this are revealing: "disheartening", "...almost demeaning, in a way", "infuriating". However, MUSA did come up with an interesting way of helping striking staff deal with coming back. On the morning that they came back to work, the strikers met at the flag poles, roughly in the center of campus. From there, they went back to their respective buildings and offices together. A number of participants expressed that going back to their offices together with their colleagues helped reinforce a sense of solidarity. This was crucial at a time when they were going back to scattered

³⁷ There is no word on whether this had an effect on MUSA's level of support among the student body.

offices and laboratories, without a settlement. It is hard for me to capture the mixed feelings that staff expressed in the interviews. As one clerical worker recalls,

we walked to our respective buildings together, which was probably a really good move, because people were really upset. I know in my building... quite a number of people crossed the picket line, but then there is a larger group of us that were on strike. We all went together, people were choked up and near tears, but you know, we got through it.

As difficult as coming back was in principle, in some offices, particularly those in which faculty were supportive and where staff respected the picket line, work life was much the same after the strike as before. Regrettably, there were a number of staff who were not so fortunate. The administration had sent out a memo in which they advised managers to welcome back staff and try to move past the strike. In departments where faculty were of the non-supportive variety, these little parties came across in a tokenistic³⁸ manner. As one clerical worker said, it came across as,

very false... you're doing this because you're told to do this, you're not doing this because you want to do this... because, if you wanted to do it, you wouldn't have ignored us on the picket line. We are your staff.

Just as tokenism had previously served as a particular irritant to problems and tensions at work, some of the welcomes that staff received were interpreted as being both insulting and false.

In some of the worse cases, office environments became poisoned. The problems generally centered around workplaces in which some staff crossed the picket line and others were on strike. That meant that some staff stopped being friends, although this was certainly not always the case. Generally, it meant that relations became more formal, as both sides tried to be more "professional", rather than familiar, in their interactions. Worst of all, however, was exclusion. In at least a few offices, those who crossed the picket line would refuse to even speak to strikers. In an extreme case, staff who had crossed refused to talk to a person who had gone on strike, and then began to collaborate to divert her work instead of giving it to her, making her position appear redundant. However, even in the departments where tensions were not so extreme, weeks later there were staff who were reportedly "always on the verge of tears".

There was some resolution for staff on July 31 when the arbitration settlement came down. Because MUSA had constructed their proposals on existing language in the collective agreements of other staff associations and unions at universities in Ontario, it was suggested that, "basically we [MUSA] got 90% of the contract we proposed". In terms of wages, which had not even made it to the table at the time of the strike, the arbitrator awarded an 11.1% pay increase over four years, about 1.5% more than the administration's final offer (*Hamilton Spectator*, August 1: A3).

³⁸ Of, or pertaining, to token gestures.

MUSA now had a first contract. As one participant in a research position reminded me, this was not a collective agreement, but an arbitrated settlement. MUSA now had the ability to start to do the regular work of a union, and could begin to enforce the collective agreement to protect its members. As well, as I shall discuss in the next chapter, the university has taken steps towards resolving some of the issues that are important to the members of MUSA, through the creation of mechanisms for consultation and co-operation. Time will tell whether these will be seen as effective or tokenistic. However, even though staff now had a settlement, the fact that the administration did not actually agree to anything seems to have left a bad taste in the mouths of a number of staff.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have tried to understand the ways in which the experiences of staff in the labour process shaped the strike, and the ways in which the strike shaped on-going experiences of the labour process. In particular, when staff went out on strike they began to form social bonds to fellow picketers. In the process, striking staff formed informal networks that now stretch across campus, when before these tended to be quite pocketed. Moreover, discussions on the picket line further drew out the general character of the problems that staff experienced, building a sense of commonality among staff, and a very immediate, practical sense of solidarity. Ironically, some staff have suggested that the broad networks created in the strike have created a *more* rather than less cohesive university community.

While the university community acted as a conservative force in earlier periods at McMaster, these sets of commitments, relationships, and allegiances became a radicalizing force during the strike. In particular, the support of faculty was important, as they placed pressure upon the administration, offered financial support, walked picket lines, and otherwise offered support both of a moral and material nature. The support of a number of students was also critical in sustaining this sense of community.

On the part of staff, the ethic of community created an aversion to confrontational language. Instead of developing a confrontational approach, MUSA members made use of levity and song on the picket lines. As morale wavered, the MUSA Minstrels were created, a singing group that sang at the picket lines. However, the same material events can be interpreted quite differently by different people, and some staff felt that this levity was inappropriate and failed to address the difficulties that many strikers were going through. As in most strikes, financial difficulties were significant for striking staff. Luckily, MUSA was eventually able to offer strike pay and hardship loans, largely due to financial support and loans from other unions. To maintain a close relationship with staff, MUSA maintained a strike headquarters throughout the strike so that staff knew that there was a place where they could get in contact with the union. Furthermore, MUSA maintained a website which was designed to keep members in touch with what was happening during the strike.

As the strike began to drag on without any resolution in sight, MUSA made the decision to go back to work and seek arbitration. While many staff found it demoralizing to come back to work without a contract, by coming back as a collective group staff were able to maintain some sense of solidarity. For some staff, work life was much like it had been before the strike, while others found that the environment of their offices had become hostile. Even after staff came back to work, however, the administration refused arbitration. In keeping with their intransigent approach, the administration decided to force a vote on their contract offer, which was defeated by staff. After the administration finally agreed to arbitration, the arbitrator decided upon a settlement which MUSA has claimed as a victory. However, research participants noted that, even to the end, the administration refused to agree to a contract.

CHAPTER 7 LOOKING FORWARD

This chapter is an attempt to think about some of the major issues that face MUSA and the development of work relations at McMaster. I will begin by looking at some of the major challenges facing MUSA as an organization: gender imbalance, inclusion, mobilization, issues of autonomy, and the relation of MUSA to the broader labour movement. In the second part of this chapter, I will look at some of the major developments in work at McMaster, such as joint processes on job evaluations and pay equity, health and safety, as well as a "Working at McMaster" campaign. Since the first contract, MUSA has negotiated a second collective agreement, this time without a strike. I then consider what appears to be the biggest issue in the developing labour process at McMaster—staff renewal. Finally, I end with a discussion of the ways in which a strategy of "jointness" relates to underlying contradictions in the labour process.

The Mirror of Management?

Since the strike MUSA has had to deal with a number of issues which are potentially divisive. In the post-strike environment, the membership has become polarized in terms of their level of militancy. In addition, while the emergence of some of the gender contradictions in the labour process contributed to the unionization of MUSA and the strike, the leadership of MUSA itself has been predominantly male. Beyond this strictly gendered dimension, some rank and file members have also raised concerns that MUSA has replicated some of the basic flaws in the management of McMaster in their own structure. However, even though MUSA faces these potentially divisive issues, there does seem to be a consensus that MUSA's priority should be building stronger relations with the rank and file. This is cited as a solution to most of these problems. However, the issue which looms largest regards the relation of MUSA to the broader labour movement. I shall consider this issue in-depth, before returning to a discussion of the challenges involved in building a more democratic and inclusive union.

To begin, the membership has become polarized in their attitudes towards the union and militancy. As a couple of participants have suggested, the strike created a layer of staff who have become quite combative, while other staff are still hurt from the strike.

Secondly, while a number of members were able to connect very closely with MUSA during the strike, research participants have noted that the predominantly female membership of MUSA contrasted with its disproportionately male leadership. For example, two clerical workers in academic departments noted that,

The union, the whole management of the union, even the practices of the Union, mirror the university administration. And again, that's like textbook... Management at Mac is predominantly male... and even the whole management tactics are...they say that quite often the unions

pattern themselves after their employer, and I see that happening, I see a hierarchy getting established in MUSA, I see this 'Big Daddy thing' ... we need a spirit in our organization that we don't forget what we're about and we don't start behaving like the administration...

While on the whole members seem quite happy with MUSA, participants did express concerns.

While a cursory glance at MUSA's past executives suggests that the leadership has traditionally been quite male-dominated, in the period before certification MUSA was often portrayed as both an inappropriately masculine (i.e. male dominated) as well as an inappropriately feminine. On the one hand, some research participants described conduct at a meeting that was alienatingly "male", that is, it seemed overly confrontational. On the other hand, another female participant talked about MUSA in the period before neo-liberalism in the following manner,

... when I came on the scene, it was more of... having little Strawberry Shortcake tea socials for staff, and that seemed to be the extent of their activity, they really weren't dealing with workplace problems...

In trying to get by as best as possible in this period, MUSA was not taken seriously as an organization, as they operated without many resources or much clout. In some ways, it seemed that MUSA was getting shot by both sides.

As research participants talked about MUSA before certification, a number of staff chalked up the male dominance in MUSA to issues of greater confidence on the part of men. Perhaps more interestingly, a number of the women in MUSA also identified practical advantages to a male-dominated union. These participants cited the concern that MUSA had enough trouble getting the administration to listen to them and take them seriously in the first place. There seemed to be a general sense that men could access the "Old Boy's Club", i.e., they were viewed as generally more capable of making male administrators take them seriously (see Bradley, 1989: 69- 70, 229- 230, 232; Cockburn, 1991: 152- 153; Kanter, 1979: 25- 29). In support of this general feeling, one male leader in MUSA reported that, in his capacity as a MUSA official, "... I have dealt with faculty in a different aspect, but I always try to treat people with respect, but if they don't respect me, they will by the end of the meeting". As Cockburn suggests, this process of "getting respect" is one that is often based in gender, as men are more likely to oppose females acting in an authoritative manner (1991: 67- 71). It is much more difficult for women to get this basic level of respect than men, particularly when dealing with men. We still live in a male-dominated society, and at McMaster, to enter the "Old Boy's Club" one had to be male. As a female participant who had been active in MUSA suggests,

...I think there's a certain amount of what the administration is responsive to, dealing with men who are heading up MUSA and the joking that goes on in the meetings, it's all sort of male...

In an environment where MUSA had to rely upon the kind of back-room hustling that was part of using networks to convince the administration to give

concessions, being able to access the “Old Boy’s Club” in administration was crucial.

Beyond having a male-dominated structure, there was also a strong concern that MUSA was replicating some of the structural problems that existed in the university community more broadly. On a social psychological level, it makes sense that MUSA would be patterned in a manner that is similar to McMaster. As a dialectical understanding of subjectivity suggests, human beings act in reference to what they have learned in their experience. For staff who had worked at McMaster for most of their adult lives, the hierarchical and fief-life organization of McMaster was the template of organization that they were familiar with. Whenever anybody is confronted with an issue, they deal with it in terms of their frameworks of understanding, created by learning from previous experience. For MUSA members who had always worked at McMaster, who had to coordinate the activities of their fellow workers, organizing in a manner similar to McMaster made sense, it was how they were used to “getting things done”. This is clear if we look at how the strike was co-ordinated. A member of the MUSA executive at the time of the strike related that,

[F]or coordinating people, we depended very much... everyone sort of had their niche to deal with and we would just occasionally have meetings to deal with outstanding problems, if a problem crops up, we deal with that... we tended to have tasks for people and they were sort of King of their sort of task... that way someone knew what was going on and could organize it.

While I would like to make it clear that I am *not* attacking MUSA for this, their organizational practices did replicate the same hierarchical, fief-like processes as the university. As I discussed earlier, the labour process for staff at McMaster was similarly based around supervisors who seemed to have absolute power in their respective areas. MUSA leaders were not sitting in rooms trying to replicate these organizational practices, they were trying to deal with a difficult situation as best they could. Because so many MUSA members had worked at McMaster for quite some time, few had ever been on strike. In the interviews almost every participant who respected the picket line said the same thing: that mistakes had been made but they did the best they could for their first time. Having said that, a number of female participants expressed sentiments that,

...we need a lot of women’s liberation out here, and I think that it’s happening, just not fast enough for me. It is too slow and too many people look for the Big Daddy to come in and save them, and I’m kind of worried about our union

In the period since the strike, it seems that there have been significant changes in MUSA. To start with, MUSA has elected a female President, Mina Dizdarevic, and in general, gender parity seems to have increased throughout the union. This is clear if one looks at MUSA’s executive (six of eleven executive members are female) as well as the Representative Council (24 of 37 members of

the representative council are female). A man who had been accused of being part of the "Old Boy's Club" of MUSA commented that,

One thing that I think it is very important, we are just starting a Women's Committee up now...the membership is approximately 80% female, and I think that the idea of a Women's Committee is far overdue, I have noticed that it is primarily females that I am dealing with, so I think that is a terrific idea.

Issues relating to gender parity are ones that participants seem to be taking quite seriously, and MUSA seems to be working to fix some of these potentially divisive issues. Moreover, participants reported that,

...when you used to go to a general meeting, you would very rarely ever meet quorum- out of 1200 people, that would only be 40, but you very rarely even got that. Now, when you go to a general meeting, you had better go early, or you're not going to get a place to sit or stand. And that, to me, was the first sign that things have changed, when we had the first annual general meeting... and the place is getting too small for us... because the walls are starting to bulge... You notice that people are more involved...

Building relations with the rank and file

The good news is that all participants agreed that the single biggest priority is the union increasing the involvement of the rank and file and making the union more democratic. One member of the MUSA executive suggested that,

You need more involvement, and you need to spread out the involvement as broadly as you can. There is a tendency for people to be a bit control-freakish at times and hog it ... I'm not saying that somehow I'm more virtuous, I see everyone's side, but we recognize that it is just hard to get that volunteer base. And right now that seems to be improving. More members are getting involved, and we're getting a broader group involved in the decision-making and such. And we have twice as many reps now as we ever had.

A number of staff discussed the importance of education in this respect. For example, in talking about how MUSA needed more stewards, staff talked about the need for more steward training. While talking about the importance of the collective agreement, participants also recognized the importance of making sure that MUSA members know what it stipulates, so it can be effectively enforced.

Participants also noted problems relating to the fact that some areas are still quite isolated, both physically³⁹ and in terms of networks. There are still areas on the main campus where staff are afraid that filing grievances will single them out for punishment. In general, until staff see other staff filing grievances successfully, it seems risky, particularly in the light of the layoffs that happened before. One of the big issues for MUSA will be finding ways of trying to reach

³⁹ MUSA has a number of staff at off-campus sites.

out to those units that are not as closely connected to the union, and engage in communication with them.

More broadly, however, a number of participants also agree that communication is a key issue. Some members, for example, feel that email allows much closer communication within MUSA. As one female clerical worker suggests,

... we don't have any of that, what I call chitchat communication... Not that you need to be tapped on the shoulder every 10 minutes and ooh, there's another e-mail from MUSA that's not quite what I mean... And I think it's important that things do make it to the member, or at least, so they know where to get a hold of information, so that they can make decisions...

Through all of this, there seems to be what I would describe as quite a healthy stress on the importance of communication, education, and broader rank and file involvement and control in the union. The issue that seems to be more divisive is the question of affiliation with a larger union. Currently, MUSA is affiliated to the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) as a direct charter, but that is only for a term of three years. Before the strike MUSA created an Affiliation Investigation Committee (AIC), and they are currently meeting with several unions for the purpose of discussing affiliation.

Affiliation

One of the issues which appears to be more contentious for MUSA regards its relationship to the broader labour movement. Central to debates surrounding affiliation seem to be opposing views on how affiliation might affect relations with other university support staff unions, building infrastructure for MUSA to be effective, enhancing the autonomy of MUSA as an organization, and the identity of MUSA as a union, particularly in relation to the perceived threat of a confrontational style on the part of the labour movement. While affiliation does seem to show some possibility of being a divisive question, I think that the opposing sides have more in common than they think. In the end, while both the pro-affiliation and the pro-independence positions have what seem to be polarizing substantive positions, staff on both sides agree on the basic goals they want for MUSA as an organization.

One of the concerns that was expressed was that MUSA *has* built solidarity and information sharing with a number of other university support staff unions in Ontario. The fear here is that MUSA might become wrapped up in the internal politics of a larger union, and thus, inter-sectoral communication might suffer. While this is clearly a pro-independence position, it is one that still emphasizes the importance of building solidarity with other unions, particularly those in the same sector.

In all of the discussions surrounding affiliation the issue that looms the largest is the autonomy of MUSA. This is the issue that everything seems to pivot on, and I will return to this shortly. Beyond that, however, the pro-affiliation side

is arguing primarily that affiliating with a larger union will allow them to access more resources, such as strike funds, which will make them stronger in dealing with the administration. There is pretty broad agreement among staff that the administration allowed the strike to happen because they thought MUSA was weak, and they could drag out the strike and win. The pro-affiliation side argues that having the strength of a larger union would mean that the administration would be less likely to attempt such a strategy. Moreover, a larger union will have already developed infrastructure to deal with a number of the issues which are pressing for MUSA, such as education. A larger union would be able to help MUSA develop infrastructure and solutions regarding some of the issues which all unions face, such as involving and educating members and achieving equity in the workplace and in the union⁴⁰. As one female clerical worker in an academic department reflects,

it's the education that's hard... because you don't have the infrastructure in place... you don't have all the resources... and just developing all of those... we want people to become educated and make the decision. We want this to be done at the grassroots... just to realize that there are a lot of unions out there where you can retain your autonomy, and still have access to resources ...this whole affiliation is an issue that has to be dealt with... But they're afraid, and I want them not to be afraid. I want them to look at it, and say, okay, these are the pros, and these are the cons, and I'm going to make a decision now. And we will be stronger... I look at the CAW and they have got a Woman's Department... They have the infrastructure in place, why are we re-inventing the wheel? I mean, and a strike fund, you know? There are just more pros than cons.

The biggest concern that emerges from my interviews with those who are against affiliation is that a larger union will bring a confrontational style to campus. Some participants have expressed disappointment that they feel MUSA already seems to be tied more closely to the CLC than to their own membership. For example, some MUSA members have expressed discomfort with trade union terminology, such as using "Brother/Sister" in addressing other union members or referring to picket line crossers as "scabs". There is a definite concern that this "industrial mindset" is a poor fit in an academic setting. As one staff member stated, "it is just not our experience". Another participant, in discussing the male type of unionism she saw in larger unions, similarly asked if it reflected the experience of women workers. In talking about a male unionist, she asked, "[H]as he ever been patted on the head and asked 'Oh, are you alright?'" There is a sense among some staff that larger unions do not fit their experience and that being with a larger union could disrupt their community. One finds similar concerns nationally. As Axelrod suggests, faculty who have unionized,

⁴⁰ Although it is worth noting that these are on-going struggles within the labour movement, and that success has been limited.

...unintentionally and ironically, contributed to the 'corporatization' of campus life. When an adversarial 'industrial' model of management-labour relations is transposed to the university site... the environment conducive to ... inquiry can be impaired. (Axelrod, 2002: 115)

At the extreme, one member of MUSA warns that,

The problem with that is, that you no longer dictate how you're going to negotiate, when you're going to negotiate, if you're going to go on strike, when you're going to have a strike mandate. Basically, the big union says, you are going to negotiate now, you are going to go on strike, it doesn't matter what your membership wants, you are going to go on strike. And maybe the university is having hard times, and the staff would say, no. No, we don't want to go on strike now because money is a little tight, we just want to protect our members. Instead, they'll go on strike anyway because the big union tells them they have to, and the university can't do anything about it. It is still a community, it may be that you don't want to go on strike if it's really going to be a problem with students. The big union is going to tell you, you have to.

I should note before I go any further that this is not very likely to happen in Canada. To hold a legal strike, the bargaining unit has to hold a vote to strike. In this case, the members of MUSA actually have to vote to strike. There is not much a union official can do to make them go out beyond trying to convince them. Indeed, every strike likely has some people who cross the picket line. No union can stop that. Of course, not all strikes are legal, but an illegal strike requires a far higher level of dedication and commitment by the membership. In this case, it relies more directly on the membership and less on the leadership of the union. While I understand concerns centering on autonomy and an industrial identity in the labour movement, a scenario in which a larger union forces its membership on strike is both frightening and not really possible⁴¹.

In talking about their fears of a confrontational union, many participants also outlined the kind of union that they wanted MUSA to be. As one member of the MUSA executive suggested, "I hope that we're becoming a kinder and gentler place, because of the union, in time... we're not there yet." There is a strong sense that MUSA is a part of the university community, and their goal, ultimately, is to do what is best for that community. As such, there is a fear that a confrontational approach will disrupt the ability of MUSA be part of an inclusive campus community. Even one of the more pro-affiliation members reflects sympathy for supporters of MUSA keeping its independent status when she comments,

...I am a strong believer that we should join a larger [union]... and that's my head... in my heart, it would be... we're independent, we're

⁴¹ Which is not to suggest that there might not be workers, or groups of workers, within a bargaining unit that do not want to go on strike. This is often the case, but this does not negate the fact that this question is determined by a democratic vote by the members of the bargaining unit itself, not the leaders of the union.

managing, right? And ... there is a sense of pride there...just that whole "yeah!" ... knowing that they'd walked all over us before...

There are generally fears about losing control if MUSA affiliates with a larger union. In fact, there have been concerns that already, in affiliating with the CLC, the autonomy of MUSA has been compromised. As one participant active in MUSA suggests,

I'm one of those people who thinks that the we can exist effectively as a small union- I think we're better served when we lead ourselves, not when we have someone else lead from outside...in the way things work for us, having our individual concerns here on campus... will be limited... I believe that if we stayed relatively small and close to one another and we maintain our personal relationships we're not likely to try to pull wool over one another's eyes, and we'll act in the good of the entire membership, who are our friends as well as our colleagues.

These concerns are often tied to a concern about identity, i.e. currently MUSA seems to be an organization that members think fits with their experiences. A number of staff have expressed the feeling that the kinds of organizing that are appropriate in more industrial settings fit less well for the predominantly female support staff at McMaster. However, while this may have been true of the Canadian labour movement midway through the 1900's, rates of unionization are now higher in the public sector. In fact, workers in education take the lead as the most unionized group of workers in the public sector in Canada (Akyeampong, 2003: 2). Moreover, the unionization rate of women is higher in the public sector than men, 74.3% of women as opposed to 69.6% of men. That is to say that the labour movement in Canada is one that has become feminized, in numbers if not in character. Organized labour is increasingly rooted in offices rather than factories. Indeed, as I outlined in the second chapter, the labour movement has begun to address these issues and develop effective strategies of dealing with "masculinist biases" (Briskin, 2002: 34; Briskin, 1999: 83; Creese, 1995: 163- 164).

Beyond this more directly gendered context, it has been suggested that unions can do a great deal to re-define themselves in a way that *is* suited to the university environment. As Briskin and Newson discuss in the case of problems facing the faculty union at York,

union support of collegial and academic goals promotes a more democratic collegiality... the building of a democratic collegiality through unions... can be mutually supportive processes. (1999: 112).

Such a vision of unionism is one that can speak quite directly to the concerns that have been raised by MUSA members. Such a version of unionism can help staff at McMaster feel like their union is "theirs".

More generally, in the interviews it seems that MUSA could be more attentive to concerns that staff have about the identity of their organization. The perception that the broader labour movement is one with a strong masculinist bias, which will foment confrontation on campus, is a very real concern that needs

to be addressed. As with any union, MUSA, whether it affiliates or not, needs to stay closely connected to its members, to make the members the locus of power in the organization, and for staff to feel that they see themselves in their union. Whether or not MUSA affiliates with a larger union it has to be attentive towards these issues.

On a practical level, MUSA does seem capable of standing alone. MUSA is now financially viable, in that they can afford to hire lawyers and put together a strike fund "in the millions, on our own". In quite a short period of time, MUSA has been able to pay back all of its debts from the strike, and is in good financial shape. Moreover, they do have a relatively broad membership base. As a research worker suggests, "... we have nearly 2 000 members, that's a good base to work from... it's a very big union, and it's one of the biggest unions in Hamilton, oddly enough...". As another member argues,

MUSA feels small, but I think we can be very powerful, and part of the power I think is coming from the fact that we're starting to bring other groups in, it's not just the staff, the nurses are now with us and that sort of thing. I think that one thing that MUSA hasn't done, or hasn't learned to do yet, is understand the fact that we're powerful. And that we can make changes and that we can make a difference...

In the end, the key issue is autonomy. All of the pro-affiliation participants said they thought that joining a larger union is a net positive largely because there *are* unions that allow quite a high degree of autonomy to their locals. The concern over whether being affiliated with a larger union would bring a confrontational, "industrial mindset" onto campus is one that I see as linked quite closely to basic issues of autonomy. If a union is structured such that its locals have autonomy, locals manage their internal processes. This would allow for flexibility in the way that MUSA interacts with McMaster, without compromising strength at the bargaining table. To give a concrete example, in the United States the Harvard Union of Clerical and Technical Workers (HUCTW) is affiliated with the American Federal, State, County, and Municipal Employees union (AFSCME). In that relationship, HUCTW has been able to pursue a policy of "jointness" with Harvard University, that is, a cooperative union-management relationship (Hoerr, 1997: 244). Because they have autonomy in their relationship with AFSCME, HUCTW has been able to pursue a less confrontational approach.

Ultimately, I am not sure that affiliating or staying independent is the issue which will necessarily make or break MUSA. MUSA does seem to have sufficient resources to exist as an independent union. However, it is also true that MUSA is starting out as a trade union and there is a great deal of infrastructural assistance that can be gained by linking to the larger labour movement. In the area of education, and in developing strategies and structures that allow one to build a more inclusive and participatory union, other unions that have struggled themselves in the past with these same issues could lend their assistance and advice.

It has been my experience in the labour movement that autonomy at the local level can be a problematic issue, but it is a value that is generally respected. On an admittedly anecdotal level, in my experience as a vice-president of a public sector union in Alberta, the problem that I encountered was that I actually had very little power, because of the autonomy guaranteed to locals in the structure of the union. Because we tried to have an executive member attend all the annual general meetings of all of our component units, I was witness to a number of locals in which members had been able to monopolize power at the local level. Not unlike the way that supervisors at McMaster could use university norms of autonomy to carve out little fiefdoms, this happened in some locals of my union. Because of provisions of autonomy, I could do nothing to intervene in these situations as a member of the union executive. There are a number of unions in Canada that do allow a great deal of autonomy to their locals, particularly a local that would be MUSA's size.

Democratic Culture

At the end of the day, the issue that I think is most important for MUSA is building a strong democratic culture that links the rank and file to the union. If this accomplished, MUSA will be able to mobilize effectively. I think that MUSA can be quite effective, whether it stays independent or affiliates. However, I think that things could go more smoothly if MUSA is able to remain autonomous and in control of a relationship with a larger union, which could offer support, financial backing, and infrastructural assistance. In either case, the most important goal is maintaining an emphasis on broadening participation and involvement, and building a more democratic union. With the kind of autonomy that MUSA should be able to find either in a larger union or alone, it is possible for them to lead themselves, and for the leadership to remain tied closely to the membership. To this end, creating a more open and democratic union, one female clerical worker in an academic department suggests that,

maybe we need some education as to how to be in conflict with each other constructively... not just with the administration but with each other, that we have to have different points of view... that's what will keep us healthy and on the right track... Because the administration is not a democracy and you can't get rid of the bullies...

It is in this context that I now turn to the MUSA Minstrels. As research participants from across campus who belong to the Minstrels have suggested, ... the Minstrels would exist whether there is MUSA or not. We came together initially out of that... time of hardship or difficulty. But we found we have so much more in common. We have between the 12 or 13 core members... we still meet twice a week, Wednesdays and Fridays, and we attend functions ... and we do squeeze in a little bit of union work too. But we would exist even if the union did not. Between that 12 or 13 of us, there are four canoes ... seven of us are avid gardeners, there are two spinning wheels and five people within the group that spin wool... we

have a party ...once a month... we go to somebody's house, spouses or partners are involved... and if MUSA didn't exist tomorrow, if McMaster didn't exist tomorrow, these friendships would still exist... so although born out of the adversity of the strike, it very quickly became a unit of people, or a group of people- and people come and go as their commitments allow them- to exist simply for the pleasure of one another's company.

In talking about the need for "chitchat communication", there is very much a concern that, while MUSA was quite visible in the workplace in the period around certification and the strike, it is now not as "present". Some have expressed a concern that MUSA seems distant. At least a part of the problem is that, for the most part, the activities of a union are not generally visible to the membership.

Generally, unions are only really visible when things are going wrong. That is where groups like the MUSA Minstrels can be important. For a number of unions, holding social events is important because these help to create social groups that are autonomous from the union, but connected to it. As with the Minstrels, the participation of members is linked not just through directly job-related concerns, but through many-stranded links to groups affiliated to the union. Because members are tied into the union through these networks, with these many-stranded ties, the union becomes more a part of the fabric of social life at work. In that capacity, the union can become part of the labour process and stay quite closely connected to its membership. Because these networks are semi-autonomous, when there are difficult times in the union, there is a way of helping connect members to the union who might become disenchanted with a particular decision or leadership. If there should be political problems, these networks provide a way to keep members connected to the union who might not be happy with the way that the union is being managed. Moreover, these can form a basis of opposition, meaning that they can serve as a check on the power of executives at the local level, helping to curb the possibility of the emergence of fief-like local leaders.

This is something that has already started to happen. As a female participant in a clerical position suggested,

We have a good social network, we have a good grapevine too (laugh)
there is not much that happens around here we don't know about...with everybody having lunch from different departments on a regular basis.

While MUSA should develop its formal structure, it is useful for informal structures to exist as well. A great deal of what drove the certification and strike was the building of a consensus which emerged through discussions in informal networks. Building these informal networks can help to support and hold together the formal organization. For a number of staff, it is much easier to talk about some of these issues over coffee or lunch than it is to look at union literature.

It is also important to note that information that is relayed orally often changes in the re-telling. One member of the MUSA executive outlined his approach,

... you often hear about things through the grapevine... they have a dual role, as just a worker and [position in MUSA], if there is something that I don't like, that I hear on the grapevine, I will investigate it, or if there is something that... a lot of people do ask me about things they hear via the grapevine which could be just gossip... I say, well, you know who you heard it from, find out from them where they heard it from, this could just be a rumor, there is no point in getting upset, they may not be changing this or that...find out, you have to remember where it comes from...grapevines can be very helpful, but they can also be kind of harmful too.

I think the recognition that these informal networks are not perfect is important. Having said that, I think that they have been, and will continue to be, important for MUSA as a way to keep connected to the membership. A sensible approach would see MUSA stay connected to these networks, to track and detect problems, and keep "an ear to the ground". Moreover, these networks can be used to disseminate information and as a place where discussion occurs. If MUSA is able to stay tied into these networks, it will be easier for MUSA to stay close to the membership. As such, MUSA will be able to deal with problems and mobilize much more effectively, while building a democratic culture surrounding the union.

Working at McMaster

The general hope seems to be that with the certification of MUSA, staff will be given an organized presence on campus. Through this staff can make their concerns heard, along with those of faculty and students. Through the union, staff can begin to deal with some of the problems in their work places. For example, MUSA can act as a curb on the abuse of supervisory power through the use of the grievance procedure. For many supervisors as well as staff, being in a union is a new experience, and they are learning what that means. Evidence of confusion can be found in an incident where an HR official told the Grievance Chair of MUSA that the administration could violate the collective agreement, because they had management rights. Of course, management rights apply to areas *not* covered by the collective agreement, and as I understand, that particular HR officer has been transferred. It is a good sign that, at this point, MUSA has been able to negotiate a second collective agreement without having to resort to a strike.

The hope is that things will settle in, that MUSA will be able to negotiate good language in the collective agreement, and back their agreements up with a system of stewards, who are well supported in the grievance process. Again, the ability of the union to connect with the membership will make this process easier.

One of the areas in the collective agreement where there are still major problems concerns "bumping" provisions and seniority. Some participants suggested that as many as a third of MUSA's membership is on "soft money". Whether this estimate is accurate or not, this group of workers form a significant part of the membership of MUSA. Associated generally with the research side of McMaster, these are staff whose positions are paid entirely from funds that come from outside the university, mostly from grants and contracts with industry. As such, these are contractual, limited term positions because they are based upon limited-term funding. Because of these contractual arrangements, a number of staff at McMaster are in quite a difficult position. Compared to staff whose wages come from the university budget, the employment of staff on "soft money" is not secure at all. If grants or contracts run out, without new grants or contracts there is no money for the project, much less the wages associated with said project. In the problematic offices and laboratories at McMaster, favouritism has always been a problem, and this is particularly the case in "soft money" positions. There are a number of staff who have witnessed their contracts come to an end, and, just like that, they are left out in the cold. One of the major issues will involve finding some way of implementing an effective solution to deal with these problems.

Jointness

While I have not heard much rhetoric about "jointness" at McMaster, it does seem like this is being pursued. In the Reacon study, staff involvement was one of four areas identified for improvement, and it seems like some action is being taken. The general sentiment that seems to be coming from the interviews is one of cautious optimism: staff are waiting to see if these initial attempts at co-operation will be taken in good faith by the administration. One clerical worker suggested that,

[O]n the surface it does look like they [administration] are trying to change, I think we just need more time to see how this... if this is a surface change or whether the attitude is really changing and there will be some significant changes. I think that we still need time to figure that out.

At the same time as many staff are cautiously optimistic, if staff begin to feel that the administration is still not taking them seriously, the situation is one that could become degenerate very quickly.

Probably the biggest issue right now is job evaluations. A Joint Job Evaluation Steering Committee (JJESC) has been established, and it is working on developing a new job evaluation tool for MUSA members. The JJESC is composed of three representatives each from MUSA and the university. It is expected that this new system of job evaluations will be implemented by June 16, 2005. As of May 2004, the JJESC has completed "the development of the new system and the pilot test phase" (MUSA document). Orientation sessions were being held mid-May 2004 to describe the new process and the new job evaluation system to staff.

The main problem that has been raised is that a number of MUSA members are near retirement, and most of these staff are red-circled. As such, it is possible that they will retire with the same wages they had in 1985. The more serious issue in the long-term, however, is that staff pensions will also be tied to this same figure. I am not sure if there is a way to make these re-evaluations retroactive, but as it stands, a number of MUSA members are in a rather difficult position.

Another area where it seems that “jointness” is perhaps beginning to be developed is in the area of health and safety. Occupational health and safety is an issue that participants have suggested is only beginning to be taken seriously at McMaster. While it is easy to think of McMaster as being a relatively safe working environment, it contains many diverse workplaces. As such, there are a plethora of different health and safety issues across campus, and only now are staff and administrators beginning to really take this seriously. MUSA members have suggested that their supervisors are supposed to take responsibility for safety, but staff have taken the initiative when they have had to. One MUSA member in a research position has a very practical solution,

I think we should get more time-off for some of the people who are doing a lot of the work, because there's still conflict between the person's job and doing those sort of union activities. And we're not talking about things that aren't a net benefit to the university... we've had problems here because we're not really industry, we do have a diverse campus and there's lots of things, so there have been problems with health and safety and violations of the laws and regulations, and it would be better to address those issues then have an inspector order us to do things and be subject to fines to the university.... It has to be dealt with seriously and one thing that would go a long way to dealing with that would be the administration giving some of the people involved in that more time away from their job to do the work supporting that...

Again, with the issue of health and safety, we find that MUSA is beginning to take the initiative for quite an important issue. The administration has an opportunity to support this kind of an initiative by allowing paid time-off. As this member points out, such funding would be a net benefit for McMaster.

Finally, one of the projects that had begun before the strike was the “Working at McMaster” campaign. This campaign is supposed to be a staff-driven project, in conjunction with HR. On the one hand, some participants have reported that they have felt it was not really staff driven,

...I went to the first meeting and they handed us a thick 3 inch binder, told us the guidelines, and I thought this was supposed to be a staff driven thing. You're telling us exactly how this is going to run... I can't take part in this. ...how is this going to be driven by staff then? ... I understand that you need some structure— this was more than structure.

On the other hand, other participants suggested that, while they questioned their involvement in the campaign after the strike,

...we decided that we have to make changes, and if nobody will take ownership, then you will not be part of that process... because it was hard, to come back, and start... a new relationship between McMaster and staff members. That's the biggest kind of change. You feel empowered in a sense of deciding about your own life, up to a certain degree, of course, and ... working on projects across the campus to ... influence other people's lives for the better.

I think it would be premature to say whether these attempts at including staff in McMaster will actually alter relations between staff and the administration. Over the long-term, however, I think that there is good reason to be optimistic about the future of MUSA. While sometimes union-management "jointness" is pursued by management as a way of neutralizing unions (see Moody, 1997: 93), staff constituted into an independent organization such as MUSA could use that power to reconstitute power relations on campus. However, to prevent co-optation, it is key that MUSA organize itself in a manner that it is closely tied to its membership, and maintains an independent base of power that allows it to resist— if necessary.

Another issue which is quite pressing is staff renewal. As one MUSA official warns,

...they talk about faculty renewal but they haven't given any thought to staff renewal. Because you do have a very large knowledge base among the staff, and you will really notice it when some of the senior staff start to disappear, because they have all the knowledge about all the different things.

This could prove to be a very serious issue, particularly because informal networks and arrangements are such an important part of getting things done on a day-to-day basis at McMaster. If there is not a plan in place for staff to train their replacements as they retire, McMaster could become extremely unwieldy, and a great deal of confusion and administrative chaos could ensue. If there is not some mechanism of passing the tacit knowledge of McMaster from departing staff to incoming staff, the ways to co-ordinate the activities of departments with other parts of the university, McMaster could face an organizational nightmare.

An Intractable Conflict?

While I have suggested that the possibility exists of re-integrating MUSA into a more democratic and inclusive campus community, I should note that there are definite limits to "jointness". As I have suggested, underlying this conflict has been a *contradiction between the collegial and hierarchical dimensions of the labour process at McMaster*. It is only as the system of paternalistic obligations that mediated this contradiction broke down that staff began to experience the labour process as systematically problematic. If MUSA is able to build a democratic culture, it can act to both curb the unilateral power of supervisors, and through policies of jointness, it can allow staff to enter into decision-making processes at McMaster. In both of these cases, MUSA could act to build

democratic collegiality, by tempering the hierarchical dimensions of the labour process through the use collegial mechanisms. By subjecting hierarchical processes to more collegial forms of control, the underlying contradictions in the labour process could be made less problematic.

However, not unlike the previous system of paternalism, as long as an underlying contradiction exists, tensions and instability will continue. This is not to suggest that strategies of democratic collegiality are commensurate with paternalism. Strategies of democratic collegiality do actually address the relation of the hierarchical dimensions of work to the collegial dimensions. Nonetheless, while such an arrangement might create a generally stable workplace, such a strategy can only *contain* a conflict that it can never *resolve*. As Hyman suggests, "there is no 'one best way' of managing these contradictions, only different routes to partial failure" (cited in Thompson, 1989: 238; see also Hyman, 1975: 188-189, 191, 199). As long as the labour process is organized in a manner that places collegial forms of organization alongside hierarchical forms of organization, this contradiction will exist, and it will generate conflict. As such, in the labour processes of staff at McMaster, contradictions will always exist, and work relations will also contain instability. Short of a literally revolutionary re-constitution of the labour process, in a fully collegial, non-hierarchical manner, this conflict is ultimately intractable.

Conclusion

While MUSA has a number of issues to deal with, such as affiliation with a larger union, on the whole it seem that it is settling in quite well. In the past MUSA has had problems with inclusion and male-domination, problems that were at least partially attributable to the ability of females to access the "Old Boys Club" at McMaster. Moreover, MUSA tended to organize in a manner that was quite similar to the university, in some ways re-creating structural problems. Since the strike MUSA appears to have been able to achieve gender parity in union positions. However, perhaps more importantly, MUSA also appear to have become more inclusive and participatory in general.

While the post-strike period has created a membership that is polarized in terms of their approach to the union, the two biggest issues that confront MUSA are building a more rank and file oriented union and the future relation of MUSA to the Canadian labour movement. I argue that, while the question of affiliation with the broader labour movement is important, it is ultimately a *contingent* issue. Ultimately, in whatever way that MUSA decides to deal with the broader labour movement, the priority should be on developing a democratic culture that is attached to the union. In particular, developing such a culture relies upon the creation of autonomous informal networks that are linked to the union. The development of such networks has already begun to happen, with groups like the Minstrels. While this process has begun, it will be easier for MUSA to develop such a democratic culture among the membership if it is able to have access to the resources and advice of other unions, who have had to deal with similar issues.

There is also reason to be optimistic in looking at future relations at McMaster, as it seems that the administration has taken steps towards fixing some of the problems from the past, such as by developing a degree of "jointness". By involving staff in decision-making processes, the administration can begin to address some of the more contentious and problematic issues in the labour process: the status of staff on "soft money", job evaluations, and health and safety in particular. If MUSA is able to maintain its autonomy and an independent base of power in the McMaster community, a joint approach holds promise for *mediating the underlying contradictions in labour processes at McMaster*. Even though there is some reason for optimism, one of the biggest issues facing McMaster in the near future will be that of staff renewal. At the risk of administrative chaos, McMaster has to make sure that it does not lose the knowledge of the institution that is held by staff, the knowledge that helps keep the university running.

While so far I have painted quite a rosy picture of a "joint" future at McMaster, I end the chapter by discussing the contradictions which continue to *underlie the organization of work at McMaster*. In particular, jointness is an institutional strategy for mediating and managing the contradiction between the hierarchical and collegial dimensions of the labour process. However, not totally unlike the way in which paternalism mediated and managed the contradictions at McMaster previously, as long as the collegial and hierarchical dimensions of the labour process exist alongside one another, the organization of work will be problematic, and it will contain instability. However, at the very least a strategy of democratic collegiality can stabilize this relationship over time, as it begins to address the relation of the collegial to the hierarchical dimensions of work, unlike paternalism, which tends to manage this contradiction by simply obscuring it.

APPENDIX 1

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

[a] Working at McMaster

- Can you tell me about your work history at McMaster. How long you have worked here? What Departments have you've worked in? What are jobs you have done?
- How long have you been in your current position?
- Could you outline/describe the major tasks and responsibilities associated with your current job. Have these tasks and responsibilities changed over the time you have performed this job?
- What would you consider to be the most important part, or parts, of your current job? The jobs you have held in the past?
- What do you most enjoy about your job? What do you most enjoy about working at McMaster? Has this changed over the time you have worked here? How?

[b] MUSA & The Strike

- MUSA has been around in some form or another for quite some time. In the period leading up to the strike, what was your relationship to MUSA?
- In the period leading up to the strike, what were the important issues for you? Why were these issues important to you?
- What were the important issues for your immediate co-workers? Why were these issues important to them?
- Did you think that you were going to go on strike?
- Did you agree with taking strike action?
- What did you do during the strike?
- How did the strike affect you?
- Did the strike change how you saw or related to MUSA?
- Did the strike and the negotiations for a contract change your opinion of MUSA?
- Did the strike and the negotiations for a contract change your opinions and feelings for the University?
- What was the importance of the strike for you?
- What do you think the impact of the strike has been on your job and working relationships with your co-workers? Supervisors? Students?
- Since the strike, has your relationship to MUSA changed? If so, how?
- How well do you think MUSA is doing in representing your interests? The interests of the membership more generally?
- What changes, if any, do you think would benefit MUSA and its ability to represent your interests? To represent the interests of the membership more generally?

APPENDIX TWO

A BRIEF CHRONOLOGY OF BARGAINING

1999

March 11, 12- Vote to certify MUSA as a trade union

May 17- Ontario Labour Relations Board (ORLB) rejects Employer's allegations that MUSA engaged in an unfair labour practice, upholds the MUSA's status as a trade union

2000

January 20- Agreement on the definition of the bargaining unit

March 3- April 5- MUSA and administration negotiating committees agree to prepare contract proposals for April 19

April 19- MUSA presents proposal, Employer negotiating committee has not prepared a proposal

May 12- Employer provides a restatement of pre-certification employment policy as a proposal

May 12- August 29- all clauses remain in dispute, including the Recognition Clause

July 14- Employer cancels meeting without notice

August 2- John Bowman, the head of the Employer negotiating committee, is not present, progress is made

August 17- Further progress

August 29- Bowman returns, all agreements reneged by the Employer

August 30- Agree to Preamble and Recognition Clause; Recognition Clause is identical to MUSA's certificate

September 1- Back on campus for bargaining, after the Employer had insisted that it be moved to the Sheraton in downtown Hamilton, in mid-August

October- Employer negotiating team changes; John Bowman replaced by Mark Haley

November 24- MUSA applies for conciliation

2001

January 10- Bill Cormier appointed conciliator

February 1- Mark Haley announces a desire to take a hiatus until late March

February 2- Employer attempts to dissuade MUSA from filing a "No Board" report, announces desire to take a hiatus until April 27

February 12- Staff vote on Employer offer, 89% against

February 23- Bill Cormier is joined by John Mather, they are now mediators

February 28- Strike mandate

March 1- Karen Belaire (VP Administration) and Harvey Weingarten (Provost, VP Academic) attend meeting to discuss "essential" designation. No substantive bargaining.

March 2- Under the supervision of mediators, Mark Haley and Alan Harrison (Dean of Social Sciences) first agree to the terms of a communications blackout, then renege on this agreement. Mediators point this out, Mark Haley questions their credibility and honesty. Mediators withdraw.

Strike begins
March 5- Mediators rejoin process
March 13- Employer does not show up for mediation session
March 29- Employer does not show up for meeting
April 5- Employer declares its offer is final, not open to substantial change
April 7- Employer forces vote on its offer, MUSA charges that it contains illegal demands relating to pay equity
April 9- Staff return to work
April 20- Employer circulates their final offer, cover page indicates that both parties agree to the offer, MUSA alleges dirty tricks
April 23- Staff reject University's final contract
April 25- Employer agrees to arbitration
May 10- Arbitration begins
June 16- Employer suggests that staff lay offs might be imminent in the *Hamilton Spectator*
September 6- Final arbitration settlement

APPENDIX 3
OUTSTANDING ISSUES, COMPILED ON APRIL 5, 2001

- Definitions
- Association representation on search committees
- No strike or lockout
- Rights and privileges of the association
- Contracting out
- Hours of work and overtime
- Probationary period
- Appointments and promotions
- Technological change
- Position redundancy/layoff
- Schedule of severance benefits
- Priority placement
- Redeployment
- Recall rights
- Job evaluation system
- Compensation
- Benefits
- Pension plan
- Consulting and freelancing
- Leaves (including sickness leave)
- Grievance procedure
- University policies
- Amalgamation, consolidation, or merger of the University
- Miscellaneous issues
- Term of agreement.

REFERENCES

- Adams and Griffin. 1983. "Bargaining for Equality" Pp. 182- 199 in *Union Sisters: Women in the Labour Movement* edited by Linda Briskin and Lynda Yanz. Women's Educational Press: Toronto, ON.
- Adams, Roy. 2001. "Support staff strike a symptom of McMaster malaise." *Hamilton Spectator* March 6: D7.
- Akyaempong, Ernest B. 2003. "Fact-sheet on Unionization." *Perspectives on Labour and Income* 4 (8): 1-25.
- Ames, Lynda J. 1996. "Contrarities at Work: Women's Resistance to Bureaucracy." *NWSA Journal* 8 (2): 37- 59.
- Anderson, Benedict. 1991. *Imagined Communities: Reflections of the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Verso, London, UK.
- Attewell, Paul. 1989. "The Clerk Deskilled: A Study in False Nostalgia." *Journal of Historical Sociology* 2(4): 357- 387.
- Armstrong, Pat. 1993. "Professions, Unions, or What? Learning from Nurses." Pp. 304- 324 in *Women Challenging Unions: Feminism, Democracy, and Militancy* edited by Linda Briskin and Lynda Yanz. University of Toronto Press: Toronto, ON.
- Aylward, Sandra Elizabeth. 1991. *Experiencing Patriarchy: Women, Work, and Trade Unionism at Eaton's*. McMaster University: Hamilton, ON.
- Bakunin, Mikhail. 1970. *God and the State*. Dover Publications: Toronto, ON.
- Balshem, Martha. 1988. "The Clerical Worker's Boss: An Agent of Job Stress." *Human Organization* 47(4): 361- 367.
- Barley, Stephan R. and Beth A. Bechky. 1994. "In the Backrooms of Science: The Work of Technicians in Science Labs." *Work and Occupations* 21(1): 85- 126.
- Berg, Bruce L. 2001. *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences*. Allyn and Bacon: Toronto, ON.
- Bongers, Agnes. 2001. "Mac staff may vote next week." *Hamilton Spectator* April 10: A8.
- Bradley, Harriet. 1989. *Men's Work, Women's Work*. University of Minneapolis Press: Minneapolis, MN.
- Braverman, Harry. 1975. *Labour and Monopoly Capital: The Degradation of Work in the 20th Century*. Monthly Review Press: New York, NY.
- Briskin, Linda. 1983. "Women's Challenge to Organized Labour." Pp. 259- 271 in *Union Sisters: Women in the Labour Movement* edited by Linda Briskin and Lynda Yanz. Women's Educational Press: Toronto, ON.
- Briskin, Linda, and Lynda Yanz. 1993. "The Feminist Challenge to the Unions." Pp. 3- 22 in *Women Challenging Unions: Feminism, Democracy, and Militancy* edited by Linda Briskin and Lynda Yanz. University of Toronto Press: Toronto, ON.
- Briskin, Linda. 1999. "Feminisms, Feminizing, and Democratization in Canadian

- Unions" Pp. 73-92 in *Feminist Success Stories/Celebrons Nos Reussites Feministes* edited by Karen A. Blackford, Marie-Luce Garceau, and Sandra Kirby. University of Ottawa Press: Ottawa, ON.
- Briskin, Linda. 1999. "Making Equity a Priority: Anatomy of the York University Strike of 1997." *Feminist Studies* Spring; 25, 1: 105- 118.
- Briskin, Linda. 2002. "The Equity Project in Canadian Unions: Confronting the Challenge of Restructuring and Globalization" in *Gender, Diversity, and Trade Unions: International Perspectives* edited by Fiona Colgan and Sue Ledworth. Routledge: London, UK.
- Brown, Stewart. 1999. "McMaster administrators, striking TAs talking again: Meanwhile, MUSA members get deal." *Hamilton Spectator* December 10: A2.
- Brown, Stewart. 2001. "Mac staff end 5-week walkout: Arbitration sought in contract dispute." *Hamilton Spectator* April 7: A1, A10.
- Budros, Art. 2002. "The Mean and Lean Firm and Downsizing: Causes of Involuntary and Voluntary Downsizing Strategies" *Sociological Forum* 17(2): 307- 342.
- Buckley, Neil. 2001. "'Free rides' are abused." *Hamilton Spectator* March 27: A10.
- Burawoy, Michael. 1979. *Manufacturing Consent: Changes in the Labour Process under Monopoly Capitalism*. The University of Chicago Press: Chicago, IL.
- Burawoy, Michael. 1985. *The Politics of Production: Factory Regimes Under Capitalism and Socialism*. Verso: London, UK.
- Burman, John. 2001. "McMaster moves to limit pickets: Four on campus hurt by fleeing truck; police charge man." *Hamilton Spectator* March 10: A3.
- Burman, John. 2001. "Mac staff association members to get strike pay: Other unions offer cash, lines of credit to keep fight alive." *Hamilton Spectator* March 13: A3.
- Brym, Robert J, and Bonnie J. Fox. 1989. *From Culture to Power: The Sociology of English Canada*. Oxford University Press: Toronto, ON.
- Charmaz, Kathy. 2000. "Grounded Theory: Objectivist and Constructivist Methods." Pp. 509- 535 in *Handbook of Qualitative Research* edited by Norman K. Denzen and Yvonna S. Lincoln. Sage Publications: Thousand Oaks, CA.
- Charlton, Chris. 2001. "How defending labour unions can kill a friendship." *Hamilton Spectator* April 11: A13.
- Churchill, Deborah. 2001. "McMaster braces for support staff strike." *Hamilton Spectator* March 1: A4.
- Churchill, Deborah. 2001. "Mac stikers back on job: Talks to continue as union calls off pickets." *Hamilton Spectator* April 9: A3.
- Churchill, Deborah and Christine Cox. 2001. "Mac strike puts \$1m on hold: Steelworkers' union suspends talks with McMaster until labour dispute is settled." *Hamilton Spectator* March 14: A3.

- Christians, Clifford G. 2000. "Ethics and Politics in Qualitative Research." Pp. 133- 155 in *Handbook of Qualitative Research* edited by Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln. Sage Publications: Thousand Oaks, CA.
- Cobble, Dorothy Sue. 1993. "Remaking Unions for a New Majority." Pp. 3- 18 in *Women and Unions: Forging a Partnership* edited by Dorothy Sue Cobble. ILR Press: Ithaca, NY.
- Cobble, Dorothy Sue. 1996. "The Prospects for Unionism in Service Society" Pp. 333- 358 in *Working in the Service Society* edited by Cameron Lynne MacDonald and Carmen Sirianni. Temple University Press: Philadelphia, PA.
- Cockburn, Cynthia. 1991. *In the Way of Women: Men's Resistance to Sex Equality in Organizations*. ILR Press: Ithaca, NY.
- Cornfield, Daniel B, Hilquias B. Cavalcanti Filho, and Bang Jee Chun. 1990. Household, Work, and Labour Activism: Gender Differences in the Determinants of Union Membership Participation." *Work and Occupations* 17(2): 131- 151.
- Cox, Christine. 1996. "Mac hit with campus-wide cuts: Students face longer days, larger classes, layoffs possible." *Hamilton Spectator* February 3: B1.
- Cox, Christine. 2000. "McMaster wants to use old courthouse: City hesitates over absorbing cost of the move." *Hamilton Spectator* October 4: A3.
- Cox, Christine and Peter Zimonjic. 2001. "Campus chaos looms at McMaster: Support staff strike today; classes, lectures to continue." *Hamilton Spectator* March 2: A1, A12.
- Cox, Christine. 2001. "Mac students caught in the middle." *Hamilton Spectator* March 3: A3.
- Cox, Christine. 2001. "Some Mac classes cancelled." *Hamilton Spectator* March 6: A3.
- Cox, Christine. 2001. "McMaster says strikers' demands 'unrealistic'." *Hamilton Spectator* March 7: A2.
- Cox, Christine. 2001. "Mac strike talks continue as politicians, union reps back pickets." *Hamilton Spectator* March 8: A6.
- Cox, Christine. 2001. "Union expands Mac picketing: Picket lines at McMaster will now be round-the-clock." *Hamilton Spectator* March 9: A5.
- Cox, Christine. 2001. "Mac union chose to be independent: President says members wanted to take control over their own destiny." *Hamilton Spectator* March 14: A1, A9.
- Cox, Christine. 2001. "Accord on picket line delay: 5-minute time limit set in Mac dispute." *Hamilton Spectator* March 15: A3.
- Cox, Christine. 2001. "Strike closes Mac open house: Labour dispute could have serious implications for university enrolment drive." *Hamilton Spectator* March 16: A3.
- Cox, Christine. 2001. "Mac strike threatens funding: Millions of dollars jeopardized if research grant applications don't meet deadlines." *Hamilton Spectator* March 17: A3.

- Cox, Christine. 2001. "Mac profs take a stand on exams: Some faculty refuse to do work of striking staff, urge fair settlements." *Hamilton Spectator* March 22: A8.
- Cox, Christine. 2001. "Talks in Mac strike to resume today: Pressure mounting for an end to three-week-old stalemate." *Hamilton Spectator* March 23: A3.
- Cox, Christine. 2001. "400 students spared exam." *Hamilton Spectator* April 6: A3.
- Cox, Christine. 2001. "Union alleging dirty tricks before vote: Staff association says it doesn't back McMaster's final wage offer despite confusing info sheet." *Hamilton Spectator* April 20: A5.
- Cox, Christine. 2001. "McMaster and union negotiate arbitration plan: Parties deciding between compulsory and voluntary processes." *Hamilton Spectator* April 25: A13.
- Cox, Christine. 2001. "'Tensions' exist at Mac." *Hamilton Spectator* April 27: A7.
- Cox, Christine. 2001. "McMaster support staff settlement may cost jobs." *Hamilton Spectator* June 16: A12.
- Cox, Christine. 2001. "Arbitrator awards 11.1% pay raise to Mac support staff: Salary boost 'slightly better' than what had been negotiated at some other universities." *Hamilton Spectator* August 1: A3.
- Cox, Christine. 2001. "Mac support staff awarded 11.1% pay hike." *Hamilton Spectator* September 7: A7.
- Creese, Gillian. 1995. "Gender Equity or Masculine Privilege?: Union Strategies and Economic Restructuring in a White Collar Union." *Canadian Journal of Sociology* 20(2): 143- 167.
- Creese, Gillian and Daiva Stasiulis. 1996. "Introduction: Intersections of Gender, Race, Class, and Sexuality." *Studies in Political Economy* 51, Fall: 5- 14.
- Cuneo, Carl J. 1993. "Trade Union Leadership: Sexism and Affirmative Action." Pp. 109- 136 in *Women Challenging Unions: Feminism, Democracy, and Militancy* edited by Linda Briskin and Lynda Yanz. University of Toronto Press: Toronto, ON.
- Cuneo, Carl. 2001. "Two different worlds." *Hamilton Spectator* April 21: D15.
- Diacon, Barry. 2001. "MUSA description 'flawed'." *Hamilton Spectator* May 11: A12.
- Eaton, Susan C. 1996. "'The Customer is Always Interesting': Unionized Harvard Clericals Renegotiate Work Relationships" Pp. 291- 332 in *Working in the Service Society* edited by Cameron Lynne MacDonald and Carmen Sirrianni. Temple University Press: Philadelphia, PA.
- Elliot, James R. 2001. "Referral Hiring and Ethnically Homogenous Jobs: How Prevalent Is the Connection, and for Whom?" *Social Science Research* 30: 401- 425.
- Evans, Mary Kathryn. 1987. "Departmental Secretaries: Unsung Heroines in the

- Resolution of Professional-Organizational Conflict." *Human Organization* 46(1): 62- 69.
- Erving, Lori. 2001. "Support is appreciated." *Hamilton Spectator* March 9: A10.
- Forrest, Anne. 1993. "A View from Outside the Whale: The Treatment of Women and Unions in Industrial Relations." Pp. 325- 342 in *Women Challenging Unions: Feminism, Democracy, and Militancy* edited by Linda Briskin and Lynda Yanz. University of Toronto Press: Toronto, ON.
- Frager, Ruth. 1983. "Women Workers and the Canadian Labour Movement, 1870-1940." Pp. 44- 66 in *Union Sisters: Women in the Labour Movement* edited by Linda Briskin and Lynda Yanz. Women's Educational Press: Toronto, ON.
- Frager, Ruth. 2001. "McMaster strikers mark International Women's Day: Pickets celebrate women's struggles for fair treatment- past and present." *Hamilton Spectator* March 8: A11.
- Fraser, Susan. 2001. "Students have a big stake, too." *Hamilton Spectator* March 10: D12.
- Friedson, E.1970. *Professional Dominance: The Social Structure of Medical Care*. Aldine Publishing Company: Chicago, IL.
- Frketich, Joanna. 2001. "Support staff at McMaster eye strike: They'll vote tomorrow, two sides at an 'impasse'." *Hamilton Spectator* February 27: A3.
- Frketich, Joanna. 2001. "Striking Mac workers cross line: Many of the 1, 650 support staff either returned to work or are staying at home." *Hamilton Spectator* April 4: A3.
- Fukuyama, Francis. 1992. *The End of History and the Last Man*. Maxwell Macmillan Canada: Toronto, ON.
- Fuller, Linda and Vicki Smith. 1996. "Consumer's Reports: Management by Customers in a Changing Economy" Pp. 74- 90 in *Working in the Service Society* edited by Cameron Lynne MacDonald and Carmen Sirianni. Temple University Press: Philadelphia, PA.
- Garson, Barbara. 1979. "Women's Work: Some Lousy Offices to Work in, and One Good One" Pp. 225- 238 in *Life in Organizations: Workplaces as People Experience Them* edited by Rosabeth Kanter and Barry A. Stein. Basic Books Inc.: New York, NY.
- Glaser, Barney G. and Anselm L. Strauss. 1999. *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*. Aldine De Gruyter: Hawthorne, NY.
- Glenn, Evelyn Nakano and Roslyn L. Feldberg. 1977. "Degraded and Deskilled: The Proletarianization of Clerical Work." *Social Problems* 25(1): 52- 64.
- Glenn, Evelyn Nakano. 1996. "From Servitude to Service Work: Historical Continuities in the Racial Division of Paid Reproductive Labour" Pp. 115- 156 in *Working in the Service Society* edited by Cameron Lynne MacDonald and Carmen Sirianni. Temple University Press: Philadelphia, PA.

- Gold, Irving. 2001. "It's one of life's lessons." *Hamilton Spectator* March 10: D12.
- Goldberg, Roberta. 1983. *Organizing Women Office Workers: Dissatisfaction, Consciousness, and Action*. Praeger Publishers: New York, NY.
- Goobie, Julie. 2001. "Students in middle- again." *Hamilton Spectator* March 9: A10.
- Gordon, Elaine. 2001. "MUSA official 'misinformed'." *Hamilton Spectator* March 22: A12.
- Gray, David E. 1989. "Militancy, Unionism, and Gender Ideology: A Study of Hospital Nurses." *Work and Occupations* 16(2): 137- 152.
- Grele, Ronald J. 1998. "Movement Without Aim: Methodological and Theoretical Problems in Oral History." Pp. 38- 52 in *The Oral History Reader* edited by Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson. Routledge: London, UK.
- Gwartney-Gibbs, Patricia A. and Denise H. Lach. 1994. "Gender Differences in Clerical Workers' Disputes over Tasks, Interpersonal Treatment, and Emotion." *Human Relations* 47(6): 611- 639.
- Hamilton Spectator. 2001. "Mediator halts Mac strike talks." *Hamilton Spectator* March 31: A16.
- Hardwicke, Peter. 2001. "Staff targeted for 10 years." *Hamilton Spectator* March 21: A12.
- Hartmann, Heidi. 1976. "The Historical Roots of Occupational Segregation: Capitalism, Patriarchy, and Job Segregation by Sex." *Signs* 1(3): 137- 169.
- Hayes, Lisa. 2001. "University offer is 'regressive'." *Hamilton Spectator* April 5: A10.
- Hegel, GWF. 1977. *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Oxford University Press: Oxford, UK.
- Hepfner, Lisa. 2001. "Mac support staff resume picketing." *Hamilton Spectator* March 5: A3.
- Heron, Craig. 1996. *The Canadian Labour Movement*. James Lorimer and Company: Toronto, ON.
- Hillis, Dave. 2001. "I'm opposed to union, too." *Hamilton Spectator* March 26: A10.
- Hoerr, John. 1997. *We Can't Eat Prestige: The Women Who Organized Harvard*. Temple University Press: Philadelphia, PA.
- hooks, bell. 1981. *Ain't I a Woman? black women and feminism*. South End Press: Boston, MA.
- hooks, bell. 1984. *Feminist Theory: from margin to center*. South End Press: Boston, MA.
- hooks, bell. 1988. *Talking Back: thinking feminist, thinking black*. South End Press: Boston, MA.
- Hurd, Richard W. and Adrienne McElwain. 1988. "Organizing Clerical Workers: Determinants of Success." *Industrial and Labour Relations Review* 41(3): 360- 373.
- Hurd, Richard W. 1993. "Organizing and Representing Clerical Workers: The

- Harvard Model" Pp. 316- 336 in *Women and Unions: Forging a Partnership* edited by Dorothy Sue Cobble. ILR Press: Ithaca, NY.
- Hyman, Richard. 1975. *Industrial Relations: A Marxist Perspective*. The MacMillan Press Ltd.: London, UK.
- Jackson, Andrew and Sylvain Schetagne. 2003. "Solidarity Forever? An Analysis of Changes in Union Density." Canadian Labour Congress, Research Paper #25.
- Johnston, Charles. 1981. *McMaster University: Volume 2, The Early Years in Hamilton, 1930- 1957*. University of Toronto Press, Toronto, ON.
- Johnston, Charles and John C. Weaver. 1986. *Student Days: Student life at McMaster from the 1890s to the 1980s*. McMaster University Alumni Association: Hamilton, ON.
- Johnston, Paul. 1994. *Success While Others Fail: Social Movement Unionism and the Public Workplace*. ILR Press: Ithaca, NY.
- Kanter, Rosabeth. 1979. "How the Top is Different" Pp. 3- 19 in *Life in Organizations: Workplaces as People Experience Them* edited by Rosabeth Kanter and Barry A. Stein. Basic Books Inc.: New York, NY.
- Kendall, Steve. 2001. "'Dictators' control the streets." *Hamilton Spectator* March 13: A10.
- Kurtz, Sharon. 2002. *Workplace Justice: Organizing Multi-Identity Movements*. University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis, MN.
- Leidner, Robin. 1996. "Rethinking Questions of Control: Lessons From McDonald's" Pp. 29- 49 in *Working in the Service Society* edited by Cameron Lynne MacDonald and Carmen Sirianni. Temple University Press: Philadelphia, PA.
- Lerner, Gerda. 1986. *The Creation of Patriarchy*. Oxford University Press: Oxford, UK.
- Leslie, Beverly. 2001. "'Vast majority' back union." *Hamilton Spectator* March 23: A8.
- Lively, Kathryn L. 2000. "Reciprocal Emotion Management: Working Together to Maintain Stratification in Private Law Firms." *Work and Occupations* 27(1): 32- 63.
- Luxton, Meg and June Corman. 2001. *Getting By in Hard Times: Gendered Labour at Home and On the Job*. University of Toronto Press: Toronto, ON.
- MacDonald, Cameron Lynne and Carmen Sirianni. 1996. "The Service Society and the Changing Experience of Work" Pp. 1- 26 in *Working in the Service Society* edited by Cameron Lynne MacDonald and Carmen Sirianni. Temple University Press: Philadelphia, PA.
- Mahoney, Jeff. 2001. "The Mac strike blues." *Hamilton Spectator* April 7: W2.
- Maker, William. 1998. "The Very Idea of Nature, or Why Hegel Is Not an Idealist" Pp. 1- 28 in *Hegel and the Philosophy of Nature* edited by Stephen Houlgate. State University of New York Press: Albany, NY.
- Malatesta, Errico. 1965. *Malatesta: Life and Ideas*. Freedom Press: London, UK.

- Marable, Manning. 2000. *How Capitalism Underdeveloped Black America*. South End Press: Cambridge, Mass.
- Marx, Karl and Friedrich Engels. 1978. *Marx-Engels Reader*. WW Norton and Co: New York, NY.
- Marx, Karl and Friedrich Engels. 1998. *The German Ideology*. Prometheus Books: Amherst, NY.
- McLachlin, Zora. 2001. "Claims are unfounded." *Hamilton Spectator* April 2: A10.
- McNeil, Mark. 1999. "Mac staff association votes to become union" *Hamilton Spectator*, March 15: A4.
- McNichol, Kimberly. 2001. "This is about equality, power." *Hamilton Spectator* March 29: A10.
- Mead, George Herbert. 1964. *Selected Writings*. The Library of Liberal Arts: New York, NY.
- Meiksons Wood, Ellen. 1995. *Democracy Against Capitalism: Renewing Historical Materialism*. University of Cambridge Press: Cambridge, UK.
- Meiksons Wood, Ellen. 2002. *The Origin of Capitalism: A Longer View*. Verso: London, UK.
- Mentek, John. 1995. "Union Targets McMaster academic support, research staff." *Hamilton Spectator* August 24: B3.
- Mentek, John. 1995. "Tough days ahead for McMaster." *Hamilton Spectator* November 4: B4.
- Mentek, John. 1996. "Mac, staff reach one-year deal." *Hamilton Spectator* October 30: A4.
- Mentek, John. 1998. "A union in al but name: Mac contract in limbo as status debated." *Hamilton Spectator* July 14: A6.
- Mentek, John. 1999. "Mac staff association votes to become a union: But 70 votes to get ruling on eligibility." *Hamilton Spectator* March 15: A4.
- Moody, Kim. 1997. *Workers in a Lean World: Unions in the International Economy*. Verso: London, UK.
- Morris, Jodi E. and Bonita C. Long. 2002. "Female Clerical Workers' Occupational Stress: The Role of Person and Social Resources, Negative Affectivity, and Stress Appraisals." *Journal of Counseling Psychology* 49(4): 395- 410.
- Mulvey, Selma. 2001. "MUSA doesn't speak for all the staff." *Hamilton Spectator* March 19: A10.
- Munro, Anne. 1999. *Women, Work, and Trade Unions*. Mansell Publishing: London, UK.
- Palmer, Bryan D. 1992. *Working Class Experience*. Butterworth and Company: Toronto, ON.
- Panitch, Leo and Donald Swartz. 1993. *The Assault on Trade Union Freedoms*. Garamond Press: Toronto, ON.
- Paules, Greta Foff. 1996. "Resisting the Symbolism of Service Among

- Waitresses" Pp. 264- 290 in *Working in the Service Society* edited by Cameron Lynne MacDonald and Carmen Sirianni. Temple University Press: Philadelphia, PA.
- Petersen, Trond; Ishak Saporta; Marc-David L. Seidel. 2000. "Offering a Job: Meritorcracy and Social Networks." *American Journal of Sociology* 106 (3)
<<http://www.journals.uchicago.edu/AJS/journal/issues/v106n3/030288/030288.text.html>>: 1-31.
- Portelli, Alessandro. 1998. "What Makes Oral History Different." Pp. 63- 74 in *The Oral History Reader* edited by Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson. Routledge: London, UK.
- Prete, Carmelina. 2001. "Church cancels Mac forum: United Church cites labour dispute on campus." *Hamilton Spectator* April 18: A11.
- Priestner, Kristen. 2001. "MUSA is offending its supporters." *Hamilton Spectator* March 13: A10.
- Puxley, Chinta. 2001. "Union dues rise at Mac: Loan payoff plan controversial." *Hamilton Spectator* August 3: A5.
- Rand, Ivan. 1966. "[18,001] Ford Motor Company of Canada Limited and the International Union United Automobile, Aircraft, and Agricultural Implement Workers of American (U.A.W.-C.I.O.)." Pp. 159- 168 in *Canadian Wartime Labour Relations Board Decisions: 1944- 1948*. CCH Canadian Limited: Don Mills, ON.
- Reeves, Joy B.; Ray Darville. 1986. "Female Clerical Workers in Academic Settings: An Empirical Test of the Gender Model." *Sociological Inquiry* 56 (1): 105- 124.
- Rinehart, James W. 2001. *The Tyranny of Work*. Nelson: Scarborough, ON.
- Roberts and Bullen. 1994. "A Heritage of Hope and Struggle: Workers, Unions, and Politics in Canada, 1930- 1980" Pp. 377- 405 in *Canadian Labour History* edited by David J. Bercuson and David Bright. Copp, Clark, Longman: Toronto, ON.
- Rodda, John. 2001. "Public is being misled." *Hamilton Spectator* March 13: A10.
- Rogers, Jackie Krauss. 1999. "Deskilled and Devalued: Changes in the Labour Process in Temporary Clerical Work" Pp. 53- 78 in *Rethinking the Labour Process* edited by Mark Wardell, Thomas L. Steiger, and Peter Meiksons. State University of New York Press: Albany, NY.
- Rollins, Judith. 1996. "Invisibility, Consciousness of the Other and *Ressentimen* among Black Domestic Workers" Pp. 223- 243 in *Working in the Service Society* edited by Cameron Lynne MacDonald and Carmen Sirianni. Temple University Press: Philadelphia, PA.
- Rose, Joseph B. and Gary N. Chaison. 2001. "Unionism in Canada and the United States in the 21st Century." *Industrial Relations* 56 (1): 34- 62.
- Salaman, Graeme. 1986. *Working*. Tavistock Publications and Ellis Horwood Limited in association with Methuen, Inc: New York, NY.
- Sangster, Joan. 1998. "Telling Our Stories: Feminist Debates and the Use of Oral

- History." Pp. 87- 100 in *The Oral History Reader* edited by Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson. Routledge: London, UK.
- Sargent, Lydia. 1981. *Women and Revolution: A Discussion of the Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism*. Black Rose Books: Montreal, Que.
- Scheffler, Ken. 2001. "Some nations value students." *Hamilton Spectator* March 14: A10.
- Schlechta, Christa. 2001. "Strikers don't want this, either." *Hamilton Spectator* March 22: A12.
- Seeman, Melvin, Alice Seeman, Art Budros. 1988. "Powerlessness, Work, and Community: A Longitudinal Study of Alienation and Alcohol Use" *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 29(3): 185-198.
- Shaw, Rhona. 2001. "Let's all go after the province." *Hamilton Spectator* April 3: A10.
- Shkimba, Margaret. 2001. "Labour relations same today as those of the last century: When will there be honest communication and a spirit of compromise?" *Hamilton Spectator* March 9: A11.
- Skinner, Mike. 2001. "It takes two to tango." *Hamilton Spectator* March 29: A10.
- Smith, Chris and Paul Thompson. 1999. "Reevaluating the Labour Process Debate" Pp. 205- 232 in *Rethinking the Labour Process* edited by Mark Wardell, Thomas L. Steiger, and Peter Meiksons. State University of New York Press: Albany, NY.
- Smith, Vicki. 1994. "Braverman's Legacy: The Labour Process Tradition at 20" *Work and Occupations* 21(4): 403- 421.
- Snook, Kelly. 2001. "Worried Mac students protest strike as exams loom: Group also stages sit-in below office of Mac president." *Hamilton Spectator* April 5: A4.
- Socket, Mandy. 2001. "Mac strikers shouldn't target students." *Hamilton Spectator* Mach 6: A10.
- Stepan, Cheryl. 2001. "McMaster makes final offer to support staff: Union representing 1,650 striking workers must put university offer of 9.2 per cent over 3 years to a vote." *Hamilton Spectator* April 6: A1, A10.
- Stewart, Clare. 2001. "I choose not to strike." *Hamilton Spectator* March 23: A8.
- Stiglitz, Joseph. 2001. "IMF's Four Steps to Damnation." *The Observer* April 29: London, UK.
- Strauss, Anselm and Juliet Corbin. 1998. *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*. Sage Publications: Thousand Oaks, CA.
- Sugiman, Pamela. 1992. "'That wall's comin' down': Gendered strategies of worker resistance in the UAW Canadian region (1963- 1970)." *Canadian Journal of Sociology* 17 (1): 1- 25.
- Sugiman, Pamela. 1994. *Labour's Dilemma: The Gender Politics of the Auto Workers in Canada, 1937- 1979*. University of Toronto Press: Toronto, ON.
- Spectator Staff. 2001. "McMaster strikers ready to resume talks." *Hamilton*

- Spectator* March 3: A8.
- Spelman, Elizabeth. 1988. *Inessential Woman: Problems of Exclusion in Feminist Thought*. Beacon Press: Boston, MA.
- Thompson, Paul. 1989. *The Nature of Work: An Introduction to Debates on the Labour Process*. MacMillan: Hampshire, UK.
- Thompson, Paul. 1998. "The Voice of the Past: Oral History." Pp. 21- 29 in *The Oral History Reader* edited by Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson. Routledge: London, UK.
- Tresidder, Warren. 2001. "Corporate mentality rules McMaster." *Hamilton Spectator* April 20: A10.
- Unattributed. 1993. "Ballot seeks re-opening of Mac Talks." *Hamilton Spectator* July 30: B6.
- Unattributed. 1996. "OPSEU fails in bid to represent Mac staff." *Hamilton Spectator* August 10: C3.
- Unattributed. 2001. "McMaster staff reject contract offer." *Hamilton Spectator* February 13: A10.
- Unattributed. 2001. "Mac, support staff to resume bargaining tomorrow." *Hamilton Spectator* March 12: A2.
- Unattributed. 2001. "More picket lines go up today in Mac strike." *Hamilton Spectator* March 26: A3.
- Unattributed. 2001. "McMaster faculty gets warning from administration." *Hamilton Spectator* March 27: A3.
- Unattributed. 2001. "No exams means no pay for profs." *Hamilton Spectator* March 29: A5.
- Unattributed. 2001. "McMaster support staff reject offer." *Hamilton Spectator* April 24: A6.
- Van Harten, Peter. 2001. "New face of organized labour: Not only blue-collar workers on picket line." *Hamilton Spectator* May 8: A1, A4.
- Walsworth, Scott. 2001. "Don't blame the workers." *Hamilton Spectator* March 14: A10.
- Wardell, Mark. 1999. "Labour Processes: Moving Beyond Braverman and the Deskilling Debate" Pp. 1- 16 in *Rethinking the Labour Process* edited by Mark Wardell, Thomas L. Steiger, and Peter Meiksons. State University of New York Press: Albany, NY.
- Weaver, Bruce. 2001. "Arbitration would be better." *Hamilton Spectator* March 27: A10.
- Wharton, Amy S. 1996. "Service with a Smile" Pp. 91- 112 in *Working in the Service Society* edited by Cameron Lynne MacDonald and Carmen Sirianni. Temple University Press: Philadelphia, PA.
- White, Jerry Patrick. 1988. *The Causes and Effects of the 1981 Hospital Strike in Ontario: Fiscal Crisis, Changing Labour Process, and the Role of Gender in Public Sector Conflict*. McMaster University: Hamilton, ON.
- White, Julie. 1993. "Patterns of Unionization" Pp. 191- 206 in *Women*

- Challenging Unions: Feminism, Democracy, and Militancy* edited by Linda Briskin and Lynda Yanz. University of Toronto Press: Toronto, ON.
- Wichroski, Mary Anne. 1994. "The Secretary: Invisible Labour in the Workworld of Women." *Human Organization* 53(1): 33- 41.
- Williams, Raymond. 1977. *Marxism and Literature*. Oxford University Press: Oxford, UK.
- Wilson, Guerriero. 2001. "Women's Work in Offices and the Preservation of Men's 'Breadwimming' Jobs in Early Twentieth-century Glasgow." *Women's History Review* 10(3): 463- 482.
- Wood, Jill. 2001. "Perhaps the exodus has begun." *Hamilton Spectator* April 5: A10.
- Yenerall, Josphe; Richard A. Colignon; and Timothy Casey. 1994. "The Power of Lower Status Participants in Educational Organizations." *Sociological Focus* 27(2): 161- 172.
- Young, Pat. 2001. "MUSA support is strong." *Hamilton Spectator* April 17: D14.
- Zimonjic, Peter. 2001. "Mac strikers get some relief at last." *Hamilton Spectator* March 24: A6.
- Zimonjic, Peter. 2001. "Mac students starting to fear loss of year: University denies risk, as support strike drags on into fifth week." *Hamilton Spectator* March 31: A16.